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Karen Morman

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Teacher Expectations of a Literacy Coaching Model

by

Karen Morman

Doctoral Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2016

Abstract

Public school instructional coaching programs are designed to improve pedagogy via collaboration between teachers and coaches. However, the utility of literacy coaching is limited because teachers may lack understanding of the instructional coaching model. The purpose of this case study was to explore teachers' expectations of literacy coaching in order to enhance professional development and teacher-coach partnerships. Guided by Knowles adult learning theory which states that adults benefit from designing and understanding relevancy of learning, this study examined elementary teachers' perceptions of the coaching model. The guiding questions explored ways to optimize teacher professional growth through coaching. Four teachers who had partnered with literacy coaches were selected as participants. Qualitative data were collected from the participants through in-depth interviews and a researcher-created, open-ended questionnaire. The interviews allowed for probing questions, and the questionnaires provided time for detailed reflections on the part of participants. Qualitative data were analyzed to determine coding categories, and consistent with Knowles adult learning theory, prominent themes regarding self-direction and relevancy of learning emerged. Results indicated that the teachers believed literacy coaches to have a positive impact on their pedagogical growth, but current methods provided inadequate clarity about the coaching model to be relevant to teachers. Based on the results, professional development sessions were designed to support teacher-coach partnerships which will benefit students, teachers, coaches, and administrators by providing a collaborative foundation to promote student success.

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Section 1: The Problem

School districts across the country are implementing coaching models to build capacity in teachers (Killion & Harrison, 2006; Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011). Stoll, Bolan, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006) defined building capacity as "a complex blend of motivation, skill, positive learning, organizational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support" (p. 221). Literacy coaches can help build capacity in teachers by supporting the development of competencies needed to apply innovative instructional strategies (Mangin, 2014). Neufeld and Roper (2003) found instructional coaches can increase teachers' instructional abilities by providing consistent, in-classroom support with a comprehensible approach throughout the school or district. Studies have shown a connection between literacy coaching and increases in students' reading achievement (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011). The National Reading Technical Assistance Center (NRTAC) (2010) reported that instructional coaching assisted students by offering teachers opportunities to improve their instructional practices leading to increased student achievement.

If teachers do not have an awareness of the goals and expectations of the coaching model, teacher resistance to the program can occur, which can impact the benefits of the program (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Morel, 2014; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; NRTAC, 2010). In addition, teachers can sometimes find it difficult to discuss their instructional practices with a coach (Russo, 2004). Teachers who have had experiences working with instructional coaches provided insights into their professional development needs to

optimize time spent with literacy coaches to improve instructional practices and lessen possible resistance to the coaching model.

Definition of the Problem

A suburban district in a Southwestern state in the United States was in its first year of implementing a coaching model using a collaborative approach, and the impact of coaching on teachers' professional growth had not yet been determined (Learner Support, personal communication, January 23, 2015). Coaches received extensive preparation, and teachers were provided with information about the coaching process through their individual coaches. However, a preparation plan for teachers explaining their role in the coaching process was not available during the 2014-15 academic year (Learner Support, personal communication, January 23, 2015).

The district was located in a suburban setting with approximately 24,000 students. One to four instructional coaches were assigned to each school based on student need (District A, 2015). Each coach interacted with a different number of teachers depending on need and grade level. Coaches were required to have a bachelor's degree, at least three years of teaching experience, specialized knowledge of effective instructional practices, and experience collaborating with teachers to increase student achievement (District A, job description, 2014). This study focused on four teachers who had experience collaborating with individual coaches for literacy support.

A study of teacher expectations regarding the literacy coaching model helped guide the direction of the program in relation to the needs of teachers as adult learners. Further, the results facilitated the design of professional development for teachers on the

coaching cycle. An examination of teacher expectations of the coaching model in the area of literacy was used to develop an understanding of teachers' perceptions in order to plan effective professional development. The study addressed teachers' insights to guide the continued development and progress of the literacy coaching model. Morel (2014) shared that teachers need "to prepare themselves for coaching by understanding it, reflecting on it, and then making the decision to use the process in their own professional growth" (p. 3). An in-depth look into the experiences of teachers with literacy coaches provided essential data to support a professional development plan geared toward teachers to help them understand the mission and purpose of the coaching model.

Many studies addressed the coaching story from the perspective of the literacy coach (Campbell & Sweiss, 2010; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Morel, 2014). However, there were fewer resources focused on preparing teachers to work with coaches (Jones & Vreeman, 2008). Morel (2014) found that books in the field were mainly intended for coaches or others who were preparing to launch a coaching model. Atteberry and Bryk (2011) mentioned in their study that many times coaches are instructed on how to effectively perform the responsibilities of their positions; however, there were fewer reports that teachers received similar preparation on interacting with literacy coaches and understanding the coaching cycle. It is essential that teachers receive professional preparation on how to work with coaches and how this collaboration can positively impact a teacher's professional practice (Bean & DeFord, 2012; Morel, 2014). Atteberry and Bryk (2011) surveyed coaches and teachers to measure their willingness to implement ideas and share new instructional practices with

their colleagues. Skiffington, Washburn, and Elliot (2011) suggested that teachers should participate in a coaching program with a receptive attitude and be willing to listen to new ideas. However, teachers may not be able to prepare themselves for a positive experience with the coaching model if they have not had guidance in working with a literacy coach to improve instructional practices or developed an understanding of their role in the coaching process. By exploring teacher expectations and perceptions, I developed a deeper understanding of the literacy coaching model and proposed a plan to introduce the model and provide preparation for teachers to collaborate with coaches.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Previously in the district, reading specialists provided interventions by working directly with students to improve achievement (Principal A, personal communication, January 23, 2015). Trained reading specialists have a deep understanding of the reading process and specialized instruction (Dole, 2004). In some schools, the specialist provided a pull-out program to help struggling readers increase literacy achievement. Although this approach was successful in helping small numbers of students, it did not address the subject of building capacity for literacy instruction in classroom teachers. In response, the district implemented instructional coaching and provided professional development for instructional specialists on a coaching model (Learning Forward, 2013). One of the coaching methods that was implemented included a partnership approach to instructional coaching (Knight, 2007). Coaches "respect the individual strengths of their colleagues and operate from an asset-based approach to change rather than a deficit approach"

(Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 97). A job description was developed, and many reading specialists were reassigned to the positions. New coaches were interviewed by a panel of administrators and hired based on the requirements developed by the district. In this district, job responsibilities for a coach included improving student achievement by developing teachers' capacity, supporting teachers by helping them understand best practices, and encouraging a collaborative culture in the schools (School District A, 2014). Coaches who supported teachers in the area of literacy were knowledgeable about the literacy models, the current reading and writing curriculum, and strategies to build comprehension and metacognition skills (L'Allier et al., 2010). Coaches offered in-class, consistent training and provided teachers with direct support to improve instructional practices.

Although professional development was provided to coaches (Learning Forward, 2013), district-wide professional development for teachers regarding the benefits of the coaching model was not available for the 2014-15 academic year (Learner Support, personal communication, January 23, 2015). Teachers were informed about the coaching model through meetings with individual coaches. A qualitative study examining teacher expectations of the literacy coaching model had not been conducted in the district, and such a study may provide valuable insights to design professional development sessions to address preparation for teachers to improve their understanding of the coaching model (Learner Support, personal communication, January 23, 2015). As teachers and coaches learn to collaborate and implement the coaching model, the school culture will be

positively impacted resulting in improved instructional practices that may lead to increases in student achievement.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Coaches present job-embedded professional development by modeling lessons, co-teaching, and providing teachers with opportunities to be self-reflective about their practices (Knight, 2007). Killion and Harrison (2006) "identified 10 roles of school-based coaches. . . resource provider, data coach, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter, learning facilitator, mentor, school leader, catalyst for change, and learner" (p. 28). The International Literacy Association (ILA) (2010) defined the role of literacy coaches as "professionals [who] provide coaching and other professional development support that enables teachers to think reflectively about improving student learning and implementing various instructional programs and practices" (p. 1).

Teachers should have an understanding of the coaching process (Killion & Harrison, 2006; Morel, 2014). Knight (2007) suggested several methods to introduce the coaching model that included personal meetings, professional development sessions, and collegial conversations. The development of professional development for small- and large-group presentations will help teachers understand their roles in the coaching process and build a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches (Learner Support, personal communication, January 23, 2015).

Confusion can arise when teachers and coaches have inconsistent views of the roles of literacy coaches. The purpose of instructional coaching is often not understood by teachers, and coaches can sometimes find it difficult to establish trust (Jones &

Vreeman, 2008). Teachers should "move from fearing what coaching might do to them to discovering the possibilities and power coaching offers for them" (Jones & Vreeman, 2012, p. 28). Key areas of concern occur when teachers do not fully understand the benefits of working with a coach or may not have adequate preparation on how coaches can help to improve their professional practices (Knight, 2007; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010). An examination of teachers' perceptions of their interactions with literacy coaches and expectations provided the groundwork to address teachers' needs for preparation.

Definitions

Andragogy: Andragogy is "a core set of adult learning principles. . .1) the learner's need to know, 2) self-concept of the learner, 3) prior experience of the learner, (4) readiness to learn, 5) orientation to learning, and 6) motivation to learn" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, p. 4).

Capacity Building: Capacity building is a term used to develop competencies that lead to the implementation of new instructional strategies (Mangin, 2014). Literacy coaches can be employed to facilitate learning to build capacity in teachers (Mangin, 2014).

Coaching for Self-Reflection: This is a type of coaching in which reciprocal relationships are formed to transform or reform instructional practices (Peterson, Taylor, Burnham, & Schock, 2009).

Learning Facilitator: A learning facilitator will "design collaborative, job-embedded standards-based professional learning" (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 67).

Literacy Coach: "These professionals . . . provide coaching and other professional development support that enables teachers to think reflectively about improving student learning and implementing various instructional programs and practices" (ILA, 2010).

Partnership Approach: Knight (2007) described the partnership "mindset" as "a deep belief that we are no more important than those with whom we work . . .this approach is built around the core principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity" (p. 24).

Professional Development: Professional development is defined as a systematic effort to use instructional sessions to improve the abilities of staff to raise student achievement (National Staff Development Council [NSDC], n.d.).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this project is the formative impact the study may have on the coaching model. Professional development sessions for teachers will help them understand their roles in the coaching process and the purpose of the coaching model. For a coaching model to be successful, it is essential that teachers implement the instructional methods facilitated by the coach, and that the outcome of the application of the instructional strategies produce positive changes in teachers' instructional practice (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011). Teachers need to transform their practice from working in seclusion in their classrooms to a model where collaboration with colleagues and coaches is valued (Atteberry, Bryk, Walker, & Biancarosa, 2008). Coaching can offer teachers opportunities to reach their goals and collaborate on strategies to help their students attain their objectives (Jones & Vreeman, 2008).

In this study, teachers' perceptions based on their interactions with literacy coaches provided insights into their needs and expectations of the coaching model. An outcome of the study was the design of professional development sessions for teachers to support the coaching model. The sessions will be offered districtwide and provide a foundation for literacy coaches to present school sessions to teachers sharing the purpose and goals of the coaching model. Professional development can ensure that teachers understand the coaching process, and the coaching model can effect positive social change in the school culture where it is implemented. As teachers and coaches work together to learn innovative instructional strategies, students should reap the benefits of these collaborative partnerships and be well prepared to be successful in a global society.

Guiding/Research Questions

After conducting a review of the literature and finding limited studies investigating teachers' perceptions and expectations of a literacy coaching model, the following three research questions were formulated to address the purpose of the study. Each question focuses on teachers' needs and expectations of the coaching model in the area of literacy and could contribute to a plan that will address teachers' professional development requirements to use the coaching model successfully.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do elementary school teachers describe their experiences with literacy coaches, through the lens of adult learning theory?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do elementary school teachers explain their professional development needs in order to optimize their experiences with literacy coaches?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do elementary school teachers describe their professional growth during their interactions with literacy coaches in the coaching model?

Review of the Literature

Theories Related to the Project

The framework for this study was based on Knowles et al.'s (1998) core principles of adult learning: "1) learner's need to know . . ., 2) self-concept of the learner . . ., 3) prior experience of the learner . . ., 4) readiness to learn . . , 5) orientation to learning . . ., [and] 6) motivation to learn" (p. 4). The term *andragogy* is defined as "a set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 2). For literacy coaches to be effective, they should understand effective instructional strategies for adult learners (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, n.d.), and teachers, as adult learners, should be aware of the reason or purpose for the instruction (Lieb, 1991). Coaches can act as facilitators of learning when working with a group of teachers and embrace the concept that teachers need time to learn new instructional practices and support to implement new learning in their classrooms (Zemke & Zemke, 1984).

The framework for adult learning was connected to the development of professional development for teachers and can help answer the question as to why traditional approaches are not always effective. Several researchers supported the view that traditional professional development for teachers did not usually transfer to classroom practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Joyce & Showers, 2002;

Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Russo, 2004). Additional assistance provided by instructional coaches can help build capacity in teachers to integrate new learning into classroom practices (Killion & Harrison, 2006; Knight, 2007). Joyce and Showers (2002) showed that professional instructional sessions and student academic success are connected when staff receive support to apply newly learned knowledge directly to their classroom practices. Joyce and Showers (2002) found that providing staff development to teachers resulted in low outcomes of learned practices being applied in classrooms. In order for instruction to be applied, there needs to be time to change and implement new learning (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Joyce and Showers (2002) shared that "peer coaching" offered a higher transfer rate than "study of theory" or presentations (p. 78).

Neufeld and Roper (2003) observed that the culture of schools did not lend itself to teacher collaboration and the coaching model. Teachers taught in isolation, and there was little collaboration. School cultures change, and the value of collaboration is recognized as a critical component leading to student achievement (Knight, 2007). Neufeld and Roper (2003) found that teachers began to understand the benefits of collaborating with coaches and other teachers. Hunt and Handsfield (2013) shared that coaches needed training on developing the types of committed, collaborative partnerships that will lead to positive academic changes being made in classrooms. These transformations in teachers' instructional practices will result in positive improvement to students' academic achievement.

Many of the traditional methods for providing professional development were not effective because they invited experts to present to staff but did not offer the in-class

support necessary for teachers to apply new learning (Russo, 2004). Because the effects of traditional professional development appeared to be ineffective (Knight, 2007), a transition to a different type of professional development was needed. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) found that it was important for teachers to understand concepts and confidently apply new instructional practices in the classroom. One approach to accomplishing this goal was instructional coaching. Knight (2007) described the coaching relationship as one in which "both parties work in partnership to identify what intervention will be implemented, they plan instruction, they observe each other, and they share ideas back and forth in collaboration" (p. 15). In order for this approach to be successful, coaches should have an understanding of adult learning theory (L'Allier et al., 2010). Teachers' insights and experiences provided a window into the needs of the adult learner and helped literacy coaches develop an understanding of how to create collaborative teacher-coach relationships.

The search for the literature review was conducted keeping the purpose of the study and the research questions in mind. The review revolved around literacy coaching and the issues surrounding this topic. One of the search strategies included looking at current research in the area of providing teachers adequate preparation in using the coaching process to improve instructional practices and professional growth. Further searches addressed theories regarding adult learning and how these theories related to teachers and the coaching process. The history of coaching was examined, along with the different roles for literacy coaches. Studies were reviewed that covered the components of effective coaching models and the barriers to implementing a coaching model from

teachers' perspectives. Research was examined that looked at using literacy coaching as an effective means for delivering professional development to teachers. Finally, the different studies involving teachers' perspectives of coaching programs were explored.

Adult Learning Theory and Coaching Implications

Adult learners differ from younger learners in their need to be independent learners (Knowles et al., 1998). The andragogical model is based on the idea that adult learners must understand why they are studying a new approach before they will commit to learning something new (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 64). This concept is important for literacy coaches to understand so they can support teachers as they identify their professional goals (Brookfield, 1986). Knowles et al. (1998) shared the second assumption that adults must make their own decisions regarding their professional learning and goals. Adults will often put up a barrier "and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 65). Knight (2016) stated that coaches can be excellent teachers, but they should also "understand the complexities of working with adults." (p. 28). These ideas imply that teachers and coaches should develop collaborative relationships. Collaboration occurs when colleagues act as a team to design effective instructional practices and self-reflect on the implementation process (Knight, 2007; Knight et al., 2015). Teachers should recognize that shared instructional practices can be differentiated to meet the needs of their students (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). Successful coaching is also specific to the needs of individual teachers and offers educators opportunities to make choices about their learning (Trach, 2014).

The concepts of adult learning theories as applied to professional development for teachers indicate that effective training includes teamwork, relevancy, and in-class practice that should evoke change or improvement in a teacher's instructional methods (Doran, 2014). Knowles et al. (1984) described components of an environment favorable for creating a culture of learning, including the importance of valuing one another, working as a team, and developing positive relationships. As coaches learn about their different roles, an understanding of how to build this type of culture will be valuable in their approach to working with teachers. For success in an adult learning situation, it is essential that teachers participate in the planning process (Knowles et al., 1984). Both the teacher as an adult learner and the coach as a facilitator can collaborate to learn and share effective instructional practices (Goddu, 2012).

Roles of Literacy Coaches

Killion and Harrison (2006) identified several roles for school-based coaches. Some of these roles included coaches finding research-based materials, analyzing both formative and summative assessments, aligning lessons to standards, supporting relevant instructional practices, providing in-classroom support, facilitating school change, and showing a willingness to learn (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Although instructional coaches have multiple responsibilities, Lynch and Ferguson (2010) reported that the principal objectives for many coaches "were planning and modeling with teachers" (p. 209). Data analysis was another important task stated by some of the coaches in their study. Smith (2012) shared his research indicating that supporting new and experienced staff and facilitating the reading and writing programs were two key roles of literacy

coaches. Coburn and Woulfin (2012) found that reading coaches helped teachers modify and implement instructional practices in their classrooms.

Knowledge of the "coaching continuum" was also important to successful coaching experiences (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 53). Skiffington et al. (2011) shared components of an effective coaching cycle: "pre-observation planning conference . . ., observation and analysis . . ., reflective conference" (pp. 14-15). Studies indicated that coaches and administrators needed to share common goals to support the coaching program (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura & Wang, 2014; Skiffington et al., 2011). However, teachers also need additional training on the goals and objectives of a literacy coaching model to successfully implement the approach (Morel, 2014).

Elements of Effective Programs for Coaching

Joyce and Showers (2002) shared several key components for effective programs. The first element was the examination of new concepts using collegial conversations, professional development sessions, and in-class support to ensure teachers clearly understood the research supporting a new concept, idea, or instructional practice. The second component was demonstration or modeling. This element offered teachers opportunities to see instructional practices in action. The third skill was practice. Practice might involve working with small groups of students rather than a large class or rehearsing an instructional practice with another teacher. The last element mentioned by Joyce and Showers (2002) was *peer coaching* (p. 74). This element involved teachers working as a team to discuss and find solutions to different concerns as they applied new instructional practices in their classrooms. Dole (2004) reported that "teaching

demonstrations and modeling" were key responsibilities of reading coaches (p. 466). Killion and Harrison (2006) shared the importance of the coach and teacher designing the lesson together before the coach presented the practice in the teacher's classroom. Thomas, Bell, Spelman, and Briody (2015) found that "coaching conversations" were essential to help teachers implement or change instructional practices (p. 5).

Another essential element of effective literacy coaching was the ability to help teachers reflect on their practices (Dole, 2004). Teachers should be able to "improve their practice in a reflective, supportive setting . . .where coaches serve as liaisons between research and practice" (Russo, 2004, p. 4). When coaches work together with teachers, they can help teachers develop the knowledge and skills needed to improve professional practice (Smith, 2012). Heineke (2013) suggested that coaches should increase their knowledge of coaching conversations to facilitate growth in teachers' instructional practices. Literacy coaches can also provide feedback to teachers and help them become self-reflective through coaching discussions (Peterson et al., 2009).

Knight's (2007) approach to coaching was through the development of a partnership between the coach and teacher. Knight focused on the term *reciprocity* and explained that coaches who believed in this approach engaged teachers as equals whose professional knowledge is just as essential as the coach. This positive method of coaching led to increased trust and stronger bonds between teachers and coaches (Knight, 2007).

Barriers to Teacher Participation

Smith (2012) reported in his study that some teachers put up barriers to change and do not work with a coach. Because coaches usually do not have evaluative authority,

Smith (2012) shared that teacher resistance can pose a problem when implementing a coaching program. Teacher resistance has been described as a barrier in many studies (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura & Wang, 2014; Smith, 2012). Cheliotes and Reilly (2012) shared the importance of having collegial discussions with teachers to help them draw their own conclusions about the importance of change. Sailors et al. (2014) reported that the coaching model seemed to have a positive influence on "teachers' beliefs and perceptions about teaching" (p. 223). Jones and Vreeman (2008) shared that teachers needed to develop the courage to show their thinking so they could "see and assess . . . instructional practices" (p. 46).

Literacy Coaching as an Effective Means of Professional Development

Carlisle and Berebitsky (2010) conducted a comparative analysis of teachers who received professional development with a literacy coach and teachers who received professional development without the support of a literacy coach. The results of the study indicated that teachers who received professional development support with a literacy coach improved student achievement more effectively than teachers who did not receive support. Support from coaches helped teachers differentiate instruction for all students using improved instructional methods. Neufeld and Roper (2003) offered suggestions for changing professional development and shared that coaching had a strong foundation based on teamwork, relevant work based on standards, and improved teacher capacity and practice. Professional development can include a variety of models from workshops to instructional coaching. Traditional professional development is changing from a model that includes a workshop presentation without in-class support (Russo, 2004) to a model

with “a collaborative and coherent philosophy to instructional practice that offered ongoing learning opportunities within teachers’ work context” (Poekert, 2012, p. 115). Understanding the purpose for the intended professional development must come before the planning and evaluation process of implementing new training programs (Hirsh, 2011).

Before in-class coaching can occur, it is imperative that the literacy coach build positive and trusting relationships with teachers (Ferguson, 2014; Killion & Harrison, 2006; Knight, 2007). Hindman and Wasik (2012) followed teachers’ interactions with coaches over a 2-year period and found that the second year of coaching provided additional opportunities for teachers to improve their classroom practices. The benefits of long-term coaching are supported by the evidence provided in this study. One approach to building these long-term, collaborative relationships is through the development of learning communities.

Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, and Bickel (2010) reported that in schools with high teacher turnover rates, it would be helpful to build learning communities so colleagues could work with coaches to help teachers learn about the program (p. 57). Stover et al. (2011) reported that building these collaborative teams helped to empower teachers by providing forums for them to share their ideas and concerns. Walsh (2012) found that co-teaching had a positive effect on increased school achievement. Pomerantz and Pierce (2013) shared a study of a low-performing urban school that partnered with a university to offer a 2-day workshop on reading comprehension along with literacy coaching. The model included co-teaching and had positive effects on student

achievement. Vernon-Feagans et al. (2012) also found that teachers working with a literacy specialist were able to increase achievement for struggling readers.

Teacher Perspectives

There were many articles and studies providing recommendations for coaches to conduct effective professional coaching with teachers (Ferguson, 2014; Hindman & Wasik, 2012; NRTAC, 2010). However, there were fewer studies covering the subject of educator training and expectations, so teachers can understand the literacy coaching process and objectives (Jones & Vreeman, 2008; Morel, 2014; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). There was "virtually nothing about what it is that, from a teachers' perspective, coaches specifically do that is helpful . . .nor do we know what specifically teachers decide to change because of their coach" (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010, p. 143). The researchers concluded that the teachers in their study "valued the help they got from their coach and made changes because of their coach" (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010, p. 158). Mangin (2014) found that teachers' perceptions changed when they were provided with additional information regarding the benefits of working with instructional coaches. Additional research should be conducted regarding teachers' perspectives on the role of literacy coaches to affect teacher change.

Implications

The significance of this study is the possible formative impact it may have on the development of the coaching model by providing an understanding of the expectations of teachers concerning literacy coaching. An outcome of this study was the development of professional development sessions to prepare teachers to work effectively with literacy

coaches and use coaches in their classrooms to improve instructional practices. Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) conducted a study with 35 teachers over a 3-year period. They found that coaches “supported, encouraged, facilitated, demonstrated, were accessible, and helped with a wide range of tasks” (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010, p. 157). Other studies support the link between coaching and increased student achievement (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010; Biancarosa et al., 2010). Coaching programs help teachers grow professionally and implement new practices (Bean et al., 2010; Morel, 2014; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). It is critical that teachers understand the coaching process and develop positive teacher-coach relationships within the partnership structure of the coaching model (Jones & Vreeman, 2008; Knight, 2007; Morel, 2014). It is also essential that teachers understand how the coaching model can support classroom instruction (Knight, 2007). The results of this study offered insights into teachers' expectations of the coaching approach and provided guidance in the future direction of the coaching model through an analysis of the themes and trends identified in the data.

Dole (2004) described the evolving role of the reading specialist into a reading coach. The reading specialist cannot possibly help all the students in a school, but if they transition into the role of a reading coach, they can build capacity in teachers (Dole, 2004). Student achievement can improve through this process (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011). The positive effects of reading specialists are multiplied when they share successful reading strategies with teachers rather than focusing their efforts with groups of students (Dole, 2004). The insight from Dole (2004) supports the purpose of this

study: to build capacity in the area of literacy by preparing teachers to work effectively with literacy coaches to collaboratively improve instructional practices. It also supports the transition from using reading specialists with small groups of students to utilizing literacy coaches to team with teachers to improve instructional practices.

The results of this study identified key topics for future professional development. Topics included sessions to facilitate teachers' understanding of the goals of the coaching model to help them develop collaborative relationships with coaches based on the outcomes of the study. The results served as a guide in the design of professional development sessions for teachers within the district. The district may use the sessions to inform teachers about the benefits of the coaching model.

Positive Social Change

One objective of the coaching model was to help teachers identify and achieve their goals (Knight, 2007). When teachers are part of the design process to develop professional development sessions based on their professional needs, they may begin to take ownership of the coaching model and will be more likely to welcome coaches into their classrooms. The collaborative relationships that are formed could strengthen the professional capacity of both teachers and coaches, and these reciprocal partnerships may lead to increases in student achievement over time. Equipping students with the tools they need to be successful will help continue the positive social change that starts with teachers and coaches working together to help students. The concept of positive social change as a direct effect of the research is expanded in future chapters as conclusions were drawn from the data about the outcome of the study.

Summary

Since literacy coaching was an innovative model in the district for the academic year 2014-15, it was essential to have teachers share their expectations for the coaching model and identify their perceptions. The teachers provided valuable feedback on the type of professional development teachers might need to work effectively with a literacy coach in their classrooms to improve instructional practices. Although the district used instructional coaches to support teachers in all content areas, this study narrowed the topic to teachers who had experience collaborating with coaches for literacy support. In order to limit the breadth and strengthen the validity of data, the study concentrated on the shared experiences of teachers in the area of literacy coaching. In the academic year 2014-15, there had been a focus on developing a new literacy framework across the district, and many coaches were providing literacy support in the components of the approach. In addition, literacy skills were integrated into every content area; therefore, teachers were able to reflect on their shared experiences with literacy coaches across the curriculum.

Although extensive preparation had been provided for instructional coaches, related professional development was not available for teachers to increase their awareness and understanding of the coaching process. A limited number of studies had evaluated the professional learning needs of teachers who had the opportunity to work with literacy coaches (Jones & Vreeman, 2008; Morel, 2014). Teachers who shared their interactions with literacy coaches provided guidance in the preparation teachers may need to collaborate with coaches and improve instructional practices.

In upcoming sections, I included an explanation of the methodology as well as a review of the research design. The design choice was justified, and a description for selecting participants provided. Data collection and analysis procedures were explored, and an explanation of the measures taken to protect participants' rights summarized. I shared the results of the study and included a description of the professional development project proposed based on an analysis of data.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

A qualitative design was chosen for this study over a quantitative design because the study was not intended to "explain the relationship among variables" (Creswell, 2012, p. 26). Instead, the study addressed the perceptions of participants as they related to the research questions using an analysis of themes and trends rather than a numerical analysis. The qualitative research design was a multiple case study. A case study design was chosen because case studies are used to explore participants in particular areas over a defined time frame (Laureate Education, 2013b). The method for the study included conducting individual interviews describing the expectations and perspectives of four teachers as they shared their needs as adult learners through their interactions with literacy coaches. An open-ended questionnaire allowed teachers to communicate descriptive insights regarding their professional learning expectations. An examination of these components assisted in designing professional development sessions to address the requirements for teachers to optimize time spent with literacy coaches. The shared experiences of the teachers were based on their experiences during the first year of full implementation of the coaching model.

The qualitative case study design was chosen because the research questions required descriptions from the different participants to describe their shared experiences (Yin, 2013). For this study, individual experiences were examined rather than reviewing a collection of quantitative data. An exploratory case study is conducted as a preview to further studies, so this type of study would not have satisfied the purpose of this project

(Yin, 2013). Another type of case study is the explanatory study that provides a description of the method that caused a phenomenon to come into existence (Yin, 2013). Again, this type of case study would not have answered the research questions in this study.

A descriptive case study's "purpose is to describe a phenomenon (the 'case') in its real-world context" (Yin, 2013, p. 238). The case in this study centered around four teachers sharing perceptions of their experiences and expectations about professional development needs when implementing a literacy coaching model. Interviews provided occasions for participants to answer open-ended questions and provide detailed accounts of "people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" (Patton, 2003, p. 2). Teachers were given multiple opportunities to express feelings about the shared phenomenon and their interactions with literacy coaches through semistructured interviews (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006). In semistructured interviews, researchers develop questions to ask but give themselves the freedom to ask additional questions to clarify information. This method allows for an in-depth study without the limiting structure of a quantitative survey. The interview format offered teachers opportunities to reflect on their shared experiences. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire was created to allow participants to share their stories in more detail (Laureate Education, 2013a).

To ensure construct validity, two resources provided guidance from the teachers' perspectives regarding professional learning using instructional coaches (Jones & Vreeman, 2008; Morel, 2014). These resources offered recommendations to teachers to

enhance their experiences with instructional coaches. The proposed study added to the literature in this area while also offering suggestions for the design of professional development sessions for teachers to understand how to optimize the teacher-coach partnership. The interpretation of the data was based on adult learning concepts and adult learning principles (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles et al.,1998).

Participants

In a multiple case study, it is suggested that participants be limited to three or four (Laureate Education, 2013b). This study proposed that four participants be selected from a pool of teachers within the district. Although the settings were different, teachers were invited who had experiences working with literacy coaches, so the data collected provided a "literal replication" (Yin, 2013, p. 57). A literal replication is "the selection of two (or more) cases within a multiple-case study because the cases are predicted to produce similar findings" (Yin, 2013, p. 239). Selecting teachers who have had experiences working with literacy coaches provided a forum to share similar experiences for the multiple-case study.

The study included purposeful sampling to choose teachers from various settings to explore their shared experiences (Creswell, 2012). The main phenomenon in this study was the teachers' experiences working with literacy coaches during the past year of implementing the coaching model. In this case, teachers were asked to volunteer for the study based on "homogenous sampling" (Creswell, 2012, p. 208). In this type of sampling, criteria were based on participants belonging to a group who had similar experiences or traits. The pool of participants had experiences working with literacy

coaches during the first year of implementation of the coaching model. The number of participants allowed me to collect ample data from four different individuals to provide supporting information for the themes and patterns that recurred during data analysis (Creswell, 2012).

Approval for the study and permission to work with teachers was obtained from the director for program evaluation, and the pool of participants was provided by the curriculum coordinator. Information about the study and its purpose was e-mailed to 37 teachers. Teachers were informed that participation would be voluntary and were assured of confidentiality of their identities (see Appendix B). Educators who were colleagues of mine were not included to avoid bias by both the participants and me. The first step of the screening process was to identify the pool of teachers who were working with literacy coaches at different sites. The second step was to locate volunteers who shared their experiences with literacy coaches and their perspectives about professional development needs to prepare teachers to work effectively with literacy coaches. Four teachers responded to the invitation and consented to participate in the study. The consent form is included in Appendix E.

The methods used to create an effective researcher-participant relationship included the development of trust with the participants by sharing their stories honestly, respecting their commitment to the project, and scheduling interviews at times that were convenient for participants. Participants were also informed of the constructive purpose of the study to design professional development for teachers optimizing the teacher-coach partnership. Participants were provided opportunities for member checking that allowed

them to evaluate transcripts to ensure that they were correct and related accurate information (Creswell, 2012). Teachers were asked to comment on the content of the transcripts and ensure that information was accurate and precise.

Ethical protection for participants involved measures to exclude identifiable material from the study and focused on the purpose of the research. The assurance of privacy and confidentiality was of utmost importance to me. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. The volunteers were provided with an informed consent form that outlined the purpose of the study and the types of information that were collected. The proposed benefits of the project were shared, along with any possible damaging effects of the study (Laureate Education, 2013b). Participants were treated fairly, and teachers who had an interest in the project and met the selection criteria were considered for inclusion in the study.

Data Collection

According to Creswell (2012), a researcher can design the interview questions in qualitative research instead of using "someone else's instrument as in quantitative research" (p. 205). In this study, data were collected with a set of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to express their perceptions freely (Creswell, 2012). The interview questions provided guidance and direction to answer the research questions (Laureate Education, 2013b). The questions were related to the adult learning principles presented by Knowles et al. (1998) and explored the insights of teachers regarding their perceived needs when working with literacy coaches. The open-ended questions were

developed to align with the principles of adult learning and had been reviewed by a credentialed reviewer.

The primary data collection sources were one-on-one interviews with each teacher and the completion of written questionnaires by each participant. Interviews were conducted to gather teachers' perceptions and observations related to their interactions with literacy coaches and their expectations for professional development in this area (Yin, 2013). Each interview lasted no longer than 30-40 minutes, and the interviews took place after school in the participants' classrooms. Questionnaires were sent to the participants prior to the interview and collected after each teacher meeting.

One core principle of adult learning is that adults must understand the purpose of the learning before they will commit to studying the subject, and adult learners should be able to work together with the facilitator to design their own learning plans (Knowles et al., 1998). Based on this principle, I designed the following interview probes:

- Describe how you learned about the goals and mission of the coaching model,
- Can you suggest an introduction to the coaching model that might have helped you understand your role in the coaching process?

The second principle of adult learning involves respecting the independence of the adult learner, which includes the learner's self-regulating content (Knowles et al., 1998). Teachers needed to take ownership of their learning. The following probes were used to explore this principle:

- Describe how your professional growth has been influenced by your interactions with a literacy coach.

- What are your expectations of the literacy coaching program?
- Can you share some examples of how you have taken ownership of new instructional practices that the coach may have introduced?

The third principle covers the importance of connecting to what the adult learner already knows (Knowles et al., 1998). Teachers were more likely to connect and understand new concepts that were linked to their background knowledge (Knowles et al., 1998). An examination of this premise included the following probes:

- Based on your experiences, describe how the literacy coach connected new learning about instructional practice with your past schema about the subject.
- Describe the preparation you might recommend to help teachers understand the partnership approach of collaborating with a literacy coach to build on prior knowledge.

The fourth principle addresses the learner's willingness to learn and apply a new concept or idea (Knowles et al., 1998). Two important concepts are found within this principle: "direction" and "support" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 144). "Direction refers to the learner's need for assistance from other persons in the learning process . . . support refers to the affective encouragement the learner needs from others" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 145). To explore this concept, the following probes were used:

- Based on your experiences, describe how the literacy coach offered direction to help you improve instructional practices and share some specific examples.
- Describe how the literacy coach supported and encouraged you to improve instructional practices if this was experienced during your interactions.

The fifth principle covers the importance of applying relevant learning to the workplace (Knowles et al., 1998). Learning is optimized when it is embedded as part of the instructional process in the classroom. Brookfield (1986) shared that guiding learning for teachers must be based on teamwork and the development of a cooperative initiative. An examination of this concept included the following probes:

- If collaboration was experienced, describe how the literacy coach collaborated with you to expand knowledge of a particular skill or practice.
- Describe how or if job-embedded professional development affected your role as a teacher this year.

The sixth principle includes the adult learners' reasons to learn something new or improve their practices (Knowles et al., 1998). Adult learners appear to be more inspired to learn when the learning is relevant to their profession or assists them in finding a solution to a dilemma. To explore this idea, the following probes were used:

- Describe ways the literacy coach motivated you to learn about and implement new educational practices this year (if this occurred during your experiences).
- Describe if working with a coach resulted in implementing more instructional practices with fidelity this year than in a prior year without a coach?

The final probes were used to elicit comments on how to prepare teachers to optimize the literacy coaching model on their campuses:

- Describe educational objectives that could be included in professional development sessions to help teachers understand the goals of the coaching model and optimize time spent with a literacy coach.

- Please feel free to share any other comments you feel are pertinent to the study.

Before the semistructured interviews, I developed an interview protocol (see Appendix C) to assure that questions were posed in a similar manner to each participant (Lodico et al., 2006). This type of interview also allowed me the freedom to ask further questions about a participant's response. If needed, I could ask teachers for clarification to gather more information on a specific subject. Probes provided opportunities for participants to explain unclear answers.

Another source of data was an open-ended questionnaire provided to teachers prior to the interview (See Appendix C). The open-ended questionnaire allowed participants time to answer questions with more thought and describe their experiences in detail (McLeod, 2014). The open-ended questionnaire allowed "the respondents to put down exactly what they like in their own words" (McLeod, 2014, p. 1) and gave participants the capability to reflect and share further information. The questionnaire offered teachers opportunities to share their ideas in writing regarding their needs for professional development in order to work effectively with literacy coaches. These responses provided additional information to support and confirm data collected in interviews.

Interviews were completed during October, 2015. Teachers were provided with questionnaires (see Appendix D), which were collected before the interviews. Each interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and stored in a Microsoft Word document.

The responses to the questionnaires were also transcribed and filed in a similar document. These documents were stored on my password-protected computer.

According to Yin (2013), it was important to maintain two case-study databases. The first contained the information collected and the second included the notes of the researcher. The case study database was "a separate and orderly compilation of all the data from a case study" (Yin, 2013, p. 123). The case study database containing the interview transcripts increased the reliability of the case study. Field notes were kept in a separate file and were "organized, categorized, completed, and available for later access" (Yin, 2013, p. 125). In this case, each interview transcript was filed as a separate document and maintained in a folder titled interview transcripts. Questionnaire responses were compiled and stored with the interview transcripts. The researcher's notes and analysis were also stored in a separate folder. Using this categorical system, data were retrieved easily for individual member checks. A peer reviewer who was an adjunct professor at a local university was involved with evaluating the conclusions drawn from the data analysis.

I acknowledge that, as an instructional coach, biases towards a positive reflection on literacy coaches are present. However, in this qualitative study, I "bracketed" my "personal experiences, biases, and perceptions" before beginning the research so the participants were not "influenced" by my experiences (Laureate Education, 2013a, p. 12). This process was critical in order to allow collection of data objectively from participants. In order to conduct a study objectively, member checks were provided to participants for review to ensure accuracy. In addition, a peer reviewer met with me periodically to ask

relevant questions and critique conclusions that were drawn from the data (Lodico et al., 2006).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed after interviews were conducted in October, 2015. The plan for analysis relied on the framework that led to the case study as the basis for evaluation. In this case, the theoretical concepts were the principles of adult learning outlined earlier that guided the design of professional development sessions for teachers (Knowles et al., 1998). This strategy involved analyzing the data to determine different categories based on the principles of adult learning. All of the cases were used to determine if there were any similarities or differences in the data being analyzed (Yin, 2013).

Coding categories were developed as data were analyzed. Data were read and reread searching for key elements that emerged. As patterns were discovered, the words and phrases were recorded, establishing the development of grouping classifications (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Coding categories included words or phrases referencing the adult learning principles (Knowles et al., 1998). As data were analyzed, patterns and themes emerged that related to each other as the information was evaluated from multiple case studies (Yin, 2013). After developing initial classifications, I processed the data based on these categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The transcripts were analyzed paragraph by paragraph using these specialized categories as I interpreted the data. These codes were abbreviated, and data were sorted into informational categories as I evaluated each unit of data.

Triangulation occurred through the collection of data from multiple participants and assembling data from both interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that a researcher refrain from using the word triangulation and explain the process. In this case, four participants provided individual points of view about the topic being examined through several data sources (interviews and questionnaires), member checks were used to ensure accuracy, and a credentialed peer reviewer examined and validated conclusions.

In the case of a discrepancy, the categories were reviewed to take into consideration the disconfirming information. Data that did not match a theme or category were re-examined to discover a pattern that would adequately characterize the data (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007). Data were reread and studied in order to determine how discrepant information fit with the other data already categorized.

To ensure accuracy and credibility of the findings, member checking was used (Creswell, 2012). In member checks, I returned the findings to the participants in order to verify the accuracy of the report. A credentialed peer reviewer was also asked to conduct an outside review to critique conclusions and evaluate recommendations. Prior to analysis of the data, transcripts were returned to participants for member checks to ensure accuracy of the information provided. Each participant was given an opportunity to review the transcript for errors or misconceptions.

Description of the Participants

The participants chosen for the study included four teachers with various classroom teaching assignments and years of experience.

Table 1

Participants

Teacher (Pseudonyms)	Grade Level	Years of experience
Sue	Kindergarten	15+ years
Linda	Third Grade	6 years
Cindy	Third Grade	10+ years
Mary	Fourth Grade	7 years

The themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of the data aligned with the principles of adult learning theory by Knowles et al. (1998). Many teachers had similar insights as they shared their experiences with literacy coaches and their professional development needs as adult learners. The following information is a synthesis of their perceptions as they aligned with the six principles of the adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 1998).

Data Analysis Results

Findings

RQ1: How do elementary school teachers describe their experiences with literacy coaches, through the lens of adult learning theory?

Third principle of adult learning theory: Importance of connecting to what the adult learner already knows (Knowles et al., 1998)**.** The teachers shared that literacy

coaches were helpful connecting their schema about literacy with the new literacy model that was introduced. Sue noted that the coach met with teachers to answer questions about how to form effective reading groups using the new literacy model. Mary agreed that the literacy coach was instrumental in helping her to plan lessons and form reading groups. With guided reading as one component of the new model, Linda shared that the literacy coach connected what she already knew about guided reading to the requirements of the new model. For example, Linda shared that she gained a new understanding after observing the coach model lessons and receiving feedback. Cindy continued that theme by reporting that she made connections between an anchor chart she used to engage her students and a new graphic organizer the coach was modeling to extend students' learning. These observations supported the importance of a literacy coach connecting and building upon what a teacher already knows. During professional development sessions, it will be essential to share with teachers that literacy coaches start with what teachers already know and build upon their strengths (Knight, 2007).

Fourth principle of adult learning theory: Learners' willingness to learn and apply a new concept or idea (Knowles et al., 1998). Ideas included within this principle were learners' need for "direction" and "support" (p. 144). The teachers shared that literacy coaches offered direction through modeling and offering feedback as they observed the teachers' instructional practices. Another example of a literacy coach providing direction for teachers included Sue's comments that literacy coaches helped with team planning by providing support for the pacing of small group lessons. Sue and Mary both noted that literacy coaches modeled literacy assessments and provided support

with data analysis. Another approach used by literacy coaches to support teachers was the video recording of instructional practices. One teacher noted that this practice was "beneficial" to her professional growth because she was able to see her instructional practices in action.

Mary pointed out that literacy coaches supported teachers by sharing with them what they did great. The coaches provided encouragement by looking "at what our students' needs really were" and developing plans to "effectively spiral in more mini-lessons." Literacy coaches observed what was working in classrooms, communicated what was going well, and then offered some reflective questions about how instructional practices could be improved. Cindy reported that the instructional coach encouraged her not to be "discouraged" if students did not understand a concept one way. She described the literacy coach as a resource who had many different approaches and methods to share. When planning professional development for teachers regarding the coaching model, connections between teachers' openness to new ideas and the support and direction literacy coaches can offer to teachers should be stressed (Jones & Vreeman, 2008; Zemke & Zemke, 1984).

Fifth principle of adult learning theory: Importance of applying relevant information in the workplace to problem solve (Knowles et al., 1998). An essential aspect of applying relevant information is the concept of collaboration. Brookfield (1986) reported on the importance of teamwork and cooperation when asking teachers to apply new instructional practices. For example, Mary noted that collaboration was most evident during planning. She shared that literacy coaches' ideas and experience were "really

valuable as well as their knowledge of the resources," along with where the resources can be found. Evidence of collaboration came in the form of co-teaching for Linda. She shared that the literacy coach would model a lesson for her and then work with her to co-teach a similar lesson. This process helped her to improve her instructional practices. Cindy shared that literacy coaches worked alongside her and offered opportunities to reflect on her instructional practices. They looked at "did it work. . ., how can we change it, and how can we revisit it." The role literacy coaches play in developing collaborative relationships that can extend teachers' professional growth and knowledge will be another topic covered in professional development sessions for teachers (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Killion, Harrison, Bryan, & Clifton, 2012; Walpole & McKenna, 2013; Poekert, 2012).

Sixth principle of adult learning theory: Why adult learners' were motivated to learn something new and/or improve instructional practice (Knowles et al., 1998). An area that emerged as one where teachers were motivated to apply new practices was the topic of interventions. For instance, Sue shared that the coach and her "think very much alike," and she reported that the coach often sent her research-based articles covering strategies that can be used for interventions. Cindy felt that it was important the literacy coach was there to act as a guide when implementing activities for particular interventions. In relation to understanding why it was important to learn a new instructional strategy, Linda shared how the literacy coach helped her realize the relevancy behind posting objectives and provided an innovative approach to sharing the objectives meaningfully with students. She reported that posting and sharing objectives with students was something she started doing consistently after observing the literacy

coach model the process and noting the difference in her students' comprehension of specific concepts. Literacy coaches can be an integral part of partnering with teachers to solve problems or concerns they might be experiencing within their classroom, and this topic is another to include when planning professional development sessions (Killion & Harrison, 2006).

RQ 2: How do elementary school teachers explain their professional development needs in order to optimize their experiences with literacy coaches?

First principle of adult learning theory: Learners must understand the purpose of the learning before committing to studying the content (Knowles et al., 1998). This principle is tied to providing learning opportunities for teachers to discover the purposes behind the coaching model. When teachers were asked to explain how they first learned about the coaching model, their answers ranged from learning about it through experience to being introduced to coaches during the first week of school with brief explanations of their supporting roles. Sue shared that her first experience with literacy coaches occurred during the process of planning with her team, and she had not received formal training or education about the roles of a literacy coach. Mary reported that she learned about the program as a process over time. She shared that instructional coaches were introduced during the first week of school and were there to support the teachers by "helping with the planning process and anything that we needed." Cindy stated that instructional coaches explained their mission and goals and the content areas for which they were responsible. The theme that emerged from evaluating this data reflected the need for consistent professional development.

The participants also shared components they would like to see included in professional development addressing the coaching model. They felt they needed additional explanations on the different roles of the literacy coaches and their primary purpose when working with teachers. Mary shared that some type of visual might be helpful to teachers when learning about the coaching model. The graphic could contain the multiple responsibilities of a coach and reflect what teachers can expect from their coach in the classroom. Linda stated that it was important for teachers to know that coaches were not evaluative; they were there to see how they can support "you to be a better teacher." It will be vital to take some of the teachers' recommendations into consideration when planning professional development sessions to help teachers develop their awareness of the goals and mission of the coaching model.

Second principle of the adult learning theory: Addressing the learner's "self-concept" and respecting the independence of the adult learner to choose topics for learning (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 4). When adult learners were in charge of their learning, they were more likely to apply new practices (Knowles et al., 1998). In past years, teachers were responsible for choosing some of the professional development they attended. With the coaching model in place, teachers were asked to explain how their professional growth was influenced by their interactions with literacy coaches. Linda shared how she had changed as a teacher with the support of both the math and literacy coaches. "I have them to thank. They changed me as a teacher, and I am an even better teacher." She explained that the coaches helped to improve her instructional practices and grow as a teacher leader for her campus. The educators also reported that it was important

to be independent as a teacher, but it was also helpful to have knowledgeable coaches available for problem-solving and collaboration. Linda shared that she continued to use instructional practices modeled by the literacy coach, and she was able to pass the new practices on to other teachers.

Teachers shared that it was essential that teachers were able to choose the topics for professional growth. They felt it was important for coaches to differentiate learning based on specific areas of need for individual teachers. Another interesting theme that emerged was that teachers thought it would be helpful for them to have information on the strengths of individual coaches, and the ways specific coaches at a campus could support them. This information would help them make knowledgeable decisions about topics for support to improve their instructional practices. Sue thought that "more time was spent with teachers who needed the most help," but coaches should also be available for teachers who would like to learn more about new instructional practices.

Teachers felt that they should be able to direct their learning by choosing areas where they needed support. For example, Sue recommended modeling by a literacy coach or observing a "master teacher with a literacy coach by your side" as effective modes of learning support for teachers. Linda shared that she expected to be able to request a model lesson by a literacy coach for a component of the new literacy model. Her expectations included a modeled lesson, an observation, and a critique as effective elements of instruction. Linda also believed that coaches could provide direction to teachers for evaluations by providing models of effective practice. She made the comparison to an athletic coach and shared that literacy coaches "were there to encourage

you, push you to do your best, and show you different strategies." Cindy thought that literacy coaches could also support teachers by pulling students in small groups to model effective interventions or instructional practices. She also shared that, once the coaching role was understood, teachers needed to be willing to open their doors and ask for coaching support. When planning professional development, it will be helpful to have teachers reflect on their professional goals and develop a plan of action to achieve these goals with the support of an instructional coach (Knight, 2007).

When teachers were asked what educational objectives could be included in professional development sessions to help teachers understand the goals of the coaching model and optimize time spent with a literacy coach, they shared many ideas. Mary thought a clearer description of the coaching model was needed, along with an explanation of how coaches can help teachers with the planning process. She shared that it would be helpful to have clarification of the different roles coaches played on each campus. Also, additional information was needed describing the responsibilities of the coaches. Sue thought it would be beneficial to have quality videos of the different ways coaches can help teachers in the classroom. She requested a clearer description of the "practical things that can help me be a better teacher." Sue related that although literacy coaches wanted to go into classrooms on a regular basis (five days a week), this was sometimes not possible because of meeting schedules. Linda shared that it was important for teachers to understand that "the coach's role is to empower and support . . .teachers." The coach can be viewed as a "safe person," and a teacher can go to them and say, "I don't get this." Cindy shared that an important role of the coach is to deepen teachers'

understanding of the state standards and help teachers increase their knowledge of how to teach the standards with depth and rigor. Mary shared that it was important to understand "what experiences qualify the coach as an expert so that teachers feel more comfortable knowing that this person is a great resource to them." A clear vision of the expectations for the coaching model would also be a topic for inclusion when planning professional development sessions (Knight, 2007).

RQ 3: How do elementary school teachers describe their professional growth during their interactions with literacy coaches in the coaching model?

Second principle of adult learning theory: Importance of adult learners being "self-directing" and designing their own learning (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 4). Teachers were asked to share examples of how they have taken ownership of new instructional practices the coach had introduced. The teachers shared how they had actively implemented the new literacy model based on support from the literacy coaches. Mary shared that literacy coaches "looked at how we were implementing it [the new literacy model] across the board and made sure we were doing that with fidelity." Linda shared that guided reading was an area in which she took ownership last year based on lessons modeled by her literacy coach. She said, "I took a lot of courses [in guided reading], but it wasn't practiced." With the literacy coach, "I learned how to engage them [the students]." Cindy also shared how a literacy coach worked with her to create rubrics "so parents and students are both aware of . . . the expectations."

Fourth principle of adult learning theory: Readiness to learn and connect the learning to their life (Knowles et al., 1998). In other words, teachers should connect

learning and directly apply it to their professional lives. Teachers were asked if working with a coach resulted in implementing more instructional practices with fidelity this year than in a prior year without a coach. Sue offered that the resources the literacy coach provided made a difference when working with struggling students. When she had questions, her coach was able to help her find resources. Mary shared that having literacy coaches as part of the process helps as a reminder of what the literacy model looks like and "keeps us on track." She felt that literacy coaches were excellent resources for planning. Linda shared that literacy coaches helped her to have "confidence" in herself as a teacher. "Because of my experience, I didn't think I needed it [support], but I ended that year a stronger, better teacher than I was before." Cindy shared that literacy coaches helped her reflect on her instructional practices and "held her more accountable." When planning professional development sessions, it will be essential to connect the relevancy of the learning to teachers' professional practices and growth (Knowles et al., 1998).

Fifth principle of adult learning theory: Importance of applying new learning to solve problems (Knowles et al., 1998). Mary shared how literacy coaches helped her team dig deep into data and then pulled intervention lessons to address the needs of the students. She also shared that literacy coaches assisted teachers with the Response to Intervention (RtI) process by offering recommendations for helping struggling students and monitoring their progress.

Summary of the Data

In general, teachers felt that literacy coaches had a positive impact on their professional growth. For example, educators described how literacy coaches helped plan

curriculum and guide lesson pacing. Literacy coaches were also instrumental in supporting teachers by connecting new learning to the teachers' background knowledge and providing models for new instructional practices. Teachers shared that collaborating for planning, observing modeled lessons, and receiving critical feedback helped them to learn and apply new instructional practices in their classrooms. The feedback provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on their classroom instruction and discuss areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Teachers reported that coaches provided support by helping them dig deep into their data to evaluate standards where they excelled and those where they might need some additional assistance. Literacy coaches also worked alongside teachers to identify students in need of intervention or enrichment based on the outcome of the data analysis. They felt that the experience and ideas coaches bring to the table were valuable and relevant to figure out solutions for concerns encountered in their classrooms.

Motivation was another area where teachers thought literacy coaches made a positive difference. Educators communicated that literacy coaches were encouraging as they applied new practices. One teacher mentioned that she felt her leadership ability grew after working with a coach. In addition, after observing a literacy coach modeling a new instructional strategy and reflecting on the positive outcome for her students, a teacher was motivated to continue the practice in her classroom.

When the teachers were asked directly about their professional development needs regarding the coaching model, they responded with some specific areas they would like covered. Educators felt that literacy coaches needed to differentiate for teachers

based on specific needs. Teachers also shared that they would like to choose the areas or topics to work on with the literacy coach. A clarification of the roles of a coach would also help teachers understand the specific ways coaches can support them as they pursue their professional goals. One teacher shared that a visual or graphic depicting the different roles of a coach would be helpful to their understanding of the coaching model. In addition, teachers felt that knowing the qualifications and areas of expertise for their coaches would prove beneficial.

Some teachers shared that they first learned about the coaching model through experience. Others indicated that they were introduced to the coaches and their roles during the beginning of the year activities. One teacher felt that coaches were there specifically to help with planning effective lessons. Generally, the data indicated that a consistent method was needed to help teachers gain an awareness and understanding of the coaching model.

Outcome of the Study

Based on a review of the data, an outcome of the study was the creation of a series of six half-day professional development sessions to meet teachers' needs based on the data. These sessions will help teachers become aware of and engage in the coaching model. Each session is aligned with one of the principles of the adult learning theory by Knowles et al. (1998). The major objectives for the independent sessions will be to provide consistent training and a common language regarding the coaching model.

Proposed Sessions

Professional development session 1: Mission, purpose, goals. The objective for this session is related to the first principle of adult learning theory: Adult learners must understand the purpose of the learning before committing to studying the subject (Knowles et al., 1998). In this session, the mission and goals of the coaching model will be reviewed, along with an overview of the roles for literacy coaches (Killion & Harrison, 2006). This session is planned as an introduction to coaching and provides teachers with a common language about the structure of the coaching model. During this session, teachers will become familiar with the partnership approach to instructional coaching (Knight, 2007).

Professional development session 2: Achieving professional goals. The next session covers the second principle of adult learning theory: Independence of Adult Learners (autonomy) (Knowles et al., 1998). This session will help teachers gain an understanding that literacy coaches are there to support them in the direction of their choosing. As part of the coaching cycle, the coach will collaborate and work as a partner with them to identify and help them achieve their professional goals and improve instructional practices. During this session, time will be given for teachers to develop professional goals and design an action plan to achieve those goals.

Professional development session 3: Connecting to prior knowledge. This session discusses the third principle of adult learning as it relates to the coaching model: Connecting to a teacher's prior knowledge (Knowles et al., 1998). In this session, teachers will realize that they have many strengths, and coaches are there to help them build on

those strengths while increasing their skills in areas where they wish to grow. During this session, teachers will reflect on their professional strengths and identify areas in which they would like to excel as teacher leaders. Educators will be able to share this information with their instructional coaches.

Professional development session 4: Opening the door to new learning. This session will connect with the fourth principle of adult learning theory: The importance of being open to learning new instructional practices (Knowles et al., 1998). Educators will learn how to collaborate with a coach to improve classroom practices and understand that these interactions can positively affect their professional growth. Teachers should be aware that when they open the door to a coach, they open the door to new possibilities. During this session, opportunities for teachers to request a collaborative meeting with their campus coaches on a content area of their choosing will be provided.

Professional development session 5: Problem solving through collaboration. This session relates to the fifth principle of adult learning theory, which covers the learner's "orientation" to learning and is focused on problem solving (Knowles et al., 1998**,** p. 4). It is vital that teachers know literacy coaches are there to collaborate, seek resources, problem solve, and learn right alongside them. Teachers will realize that literacy coaches are there to listen and offer suggestions or interventions to address students' academic concerns. Teachers will have an opportunity to review the needs of their students and develop plans to invite a coach to collaborate with them on specific instructional practices based on students' areas of concern.

Professional development session 6: Intrinsic value of developing a partnership with a coach, building leadership skills. This session is linked to the sixth principle of adult learning theory covering an adult learners' motivation to learn or the "intrinsic value" a learner receives when they master a new skill (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 4). In this last session, the partnership approach to the coaching model will be reviewed in detail (Knight, 2007). Teachers will be able to share ideas for areas where they could collaborate with an instructional coach to attain their professional goals. When teachers work as partners with coaches, all parties learn and grow together as instructional practices improve with increased student achievement as a positive potential outcome.

Section 3: The Project

As a result of the data analysis conducted in the context of the conceptual framework for the study, the following project for professional development was created. The project includes six professional development sessions for teachers based on the principles of adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 1998). These six principles served as the foundation to structure the sessions based on identified teacher needs. The goal of the series is to help teachers become familiar with the instructional coaching model offered on their campuses. The sessions will be offered to district teachers and will provide a common language for the coaching model.

Rationale

The data analysis indicated a need for increased teacher awareness of the instructional coaching model that would be consistent across the district. The analysis also showed a relationship among the six principles of adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 1998) and the professional learning needs of the teachers. An outcome of the study based on the analysis was the development of a series of six half-day professional development sessions. Each session can be attended independently; however, each session in the series will build on the knowledge learned in the previous sessions. The series will connect the roles of an instructional coach (Killion & Harrison, 2006) with the principles of adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 1998). The sessions will also stress the importance of partnerships to coaching with an emphasis on creating collaborative relationships (Knight, 2007).

Marsh, McCombs, and Martorell (2012) concluded that teachers and coaches should be aware of the varied needs of adult learners. Learners should understand the purpose of the learning, have independence when choosing topics of study, connect to what they already know, be willing to apply a new concept or idea, comprehend the relevancy of what they are learning to solve problems, and be motivated to improve instructional practices (Knowles et al., 1998). In order to help teachers understand the role of the literacy or instructional coach in addressing these needs, six learning sessions were developed to address each of these areas.

Teachers will have ample time to talk, explore, and synthesize new learning with their previous understandings. Teachers will also have opportunities to self-reflect on their professional goals, identify their strengths, and determine areas where they wish to improve. The process of how to contact a coach to request support will be reviewed. Many teachers asked questions about the roles of coaches, how coaches can specifically support them, and what types of support are available to them. The six professional development sessions will help teachers discover the answers to these questions while also clearing up misconceptions they might have about the model.

Review of the Literature

To design professional development sessions with the purpose of informing teachers about the coaching model, the principles of adult learning by Knowles et al. (1998) were closely examined and supported with additional research. Each of the professional development sessions connects with one of the six principles by addressing that particular need of the adult learner. The sessions will introduce teachers to the goals

of the coaching model and the benefits of working with an instructional coach in the field of literacy.

Relevancy of the Learning

The relevancy of the learning connects to the principle "learners need to know" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 4). It is important to address this critical aspect of adult learning when planning for professional development sessions. Adult learners want the learning to be relevant to the job they are performing (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013; Fazel, 2013). Atherton (2013) noted that constructivism involved the learner as "actively involved in a joint enterprise with the teacher creating ('constructing') new meanings" (p. 1). This observation aligns with Knight's (2007) views that collaborating is an essential aspect of instructional coaching. This collaboration offers teachers opportunities to reflect on their teaching and have collegial conversations with instructional coaches (Knight, 2007). Killion (2011) stated that teachers who have opportunities to delve deeply into their own professional practices can "refine their expertise with inquiry, problem solving, innovation, evaluation, and improvement effort" (p. 14). Educators and students will be supported when schools build environments where collaboration is valued, and teachers are encouraged to broaden their own and their fellow educators' capacity to learn (Killion, 2011; Killion & Harrison, 2006).

Meister (2010) noted that teachers are more likely to engage in professional development when it is aligned with their goals to increase student success. This observation connects with Chauvin and Theodore (2013) findings that teachers are "more actively engaged" when learning is based on "teacher feedback" (p. 2). When teachers

practice providing feedback to a coach, they grow in their ability to offer productive feedback to others (Bickel, Bernstein-Danis, & Matsumura, 2015). This type of observation, sharing, and reflection is essential for professional growth.

Gulamhussein (2013) observed that some districts have started using "professional learning communities, groups of teachers teaching the same content who innovate together and support each other through implementation" (p. 37). Teachers who work alone can miss the positive benefits that can be attained from working together with a group of educators (Stacy, 2013). Schools having an impact encourage teachers to develop their professional skills by working together to design learning opportunities presented by their colleagues (Stacy, 2013). Chauvin and Theodore (2013) found that collaborative learning among professionals led to creating "a community of adult learners" (p. 3). Working collaboratively with colleagues to learn and implement new instructional practices makes learning relevant to teachers.

Designing the Path

Effective professional development for adult learners will focus on helping teachers design and create a plan to direct their learning. Bayar (2014) found that it is important for teachers to have a voice in designing learning opportunities to match the goals of both the teachers and school. "Andragogy suggests that adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives and expect others to treat them as being capable of self-direction" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 123). Brookfield (1986) shared that one of the goals of adult learning is to create a culture in which adults can cultivate and direct their learning. Steinke (2012) found that "self-directed learning" helps teachers

take charge of their learning and improve their proficiency (p. 54). Instructional coaches can offer many occasions to work alongside teachers to improve instructional practices or assist them as they look at different areas of concern in their classrooms and problem solve to find possible solutions (Gulamhussein, 2013). Chauvin and Theodore (2013) found that adult learners "know what they need to learn and prefer that the instructor facilitate a self-directed learning experience rather than simply transmit information" (p. 2). When teachers learn based on their own wish to discover the answers to their questions, this type of learning is most valuable and enduring (Beavers, 2009). Killion, Harrison, Bryan, and Clifton (2014) shared that coaches should encourage teachers to have "a voice and choice" in the direction for their learning (p. 3). Fazel (2013) also noted the importance of allowing individuals to choose their learning goals.

Effective coaches will create collaborative cultures and empower teachers to take charge of their learning and build skills as teacher leaders (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2012; Killion et al., 2014). Gallucci, DeVoogt, Yoon, and Boatright (2010) found that educators can have difficulty reviewing their own and others' work, and coaches can help them move beyond these barriers. As teachers begin to observe and provide feedback for their peers, they will be improving their professional growth as teacher-leaders.

Activating Prior Knowledge

Job-embedded professional development for educators connects to the adult learning principle of "prior experiences" and builds on the previous knowledge of adult learners (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 2). An adult's experiences within his or her profession can shape the direction of the adult learning process (Knowles et al., 1998). Previous

experiences can provide a valuable foundation for future learning, and these experiences can also impede learning when they make it difficult for the teacher to change his or her thinking (Knowles et al., 1998). It will be important for the coach and teacher to form a partnership to determine whether previous experiences might inhibit the learning process and to design a plan to overcome these obstacles.

Gibson and Brooks (2012) found that teachers' previous learning, instructional experiences, and personal outlook about learning contributed to their ability to accept and implement new instructional approaches in their classrooms. Teacher emotions should also be taken into consideration when new learning is introduced (Gibson & Brooks, 2012). The knowledge gained from experience can lay the foundation and help facilitate new learning (Beavers, 2009). Chitanana (2012) recommended that professional development be applicable to a person's career and build on a teacher's background knowledge. A cooperative relationship between the coach and the teacher "bridges present learner understandings to new understandings," which can lead to improved classroom instruction (Massey, 2012).

Receptiveness to New Learning

In order to work collaboratively and successfully with adult learners, it is important to be aware of the learner's "readiness to learn" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 2). Knowles et al. (1998) shared that adults are more open to learning when it is closely associated with their job or career choice. Adults learn best when they are valued and are in an atmosphere that is kind and nonjudgmental (Knowles et al., 1984). Pratt (1993) shared the importance of building relationships as part of the adult learning process, and

Knight (2007) confirmed that creating positive relations with teachers is part of the coaching process. Cheliotes and Reilly (2012) shared that it is essential that coaches work with teachers to develop a collaborative culture and construct trusting connections. Spelman and Rohlwing (2013) found that commitment to "long-term partnerships" is essential to building effective relationships to ensure educator improvement (p. 169). Teachers are receptive to new learning when they are offered occasions to practice instructional strategies with ongoing professional development (Bayer, 2014). Literacy coaches can support teachers as they apply new practices in their classrooms (Dean, Dyal, Wright, Carpenter, & Austin, 2012). Instructional coaches can also offer opportunities for teachers to observe new instructional methods in action or practice the new strategies themselves while receiving feedback from a coach (Gulamhussein, 2013). For professional development to be successful and effective, Saphier (2011) found that teachers need support through coaching to implement new instructional practices. Coaches can provide positive feedback to expand instructional practices. Kissel, Mraz, Algozzine, and Stover (2011) suggested that "debriefing" allows the literacy coach and teacher time to work together to improve instruction (p. 291).

Taylor and Hamdy (2013) suggested that adult learning is similar to "a learning continuum, which stretches throughout life, with different emphases, problems and strategies at different times" (p. e1561). When working with adult learners, the coach must be cognizant of where the teacher is on his or her learning journey. This awareness will allow the coach to meet learners where they are on the continuum.

Problem Solving

When adult learning focuses on solving a problem that is relevant to learners' lives (personal or professional), they take ownership of their learning. Learning centered on finding a solution to a problem is favored over focusing on particular fields of study (Knowles et al., 1998). Knowles et al. (1998) found that adults "learn best when new information is presented in real-life context" (p. 146). Knight (2007) noted that job-embedded professional development helps teachers learn and apply new knowledge. Chitanana (2012) studied online learning environments and concluded that professional learning should occur in the context of learners' authentic work settings. Sandlin, Wright, and Clark (2011) found that learners' backgrounds influenced their learning styles. In the context of adult learning, educators are oriented to learn to increase the achievement of students in their classrooms (Killion, 2011). Bayer (2014) found that teachers preferred professional development that addressed problems or experiences encountered in their classrooms. When teachers have a voice in designing and leading professional development, they can become skilled in their content area (Stacy, 2013).

Stanley (2011) shared that teachers should be given opportunities to practice new learning in their classrooms by providing job-embedded support through peer observation and feedback. As teachers reflect and discuss their practices, new knowledge can be applied that focuses on improving student achievement. "The knowledge that teachers can offer regarding context and practice cannot be underestimated" (Stanley, 2011, p. 77). It is essential that teachers observe, share, and reflect on their practices as they address how to solve problems they encounter in their classrooms. Reinke, Stormont,

Herman, and Newcomer (2014) found that teachers who were provided with "performance feedback had higher levels of implementation over time in comparison with teachers who received less feedback" (p. 150). This finding supports the importance of providing support for adult learners by offering specific feedback and time for self-reflection.

Inspiration for Learning: Personal Growth

When planning for adult learners, it is essential to look at another critical adult learning principle: "motivation to learn" (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 4). As part of the social process, learners can be motivated by "positive models" and as part of a desire to "be a part of a dyad, group, institution, or community" (Huitt, 2011, p. 2). When teachers engage in critical discussions, these interactions allow teachers to share and reflect on their instructional practices and teaching strategies (Stacy, 2013). Teachers can create a system in which they can collaborate and problem solve with one another (Stacy, 2013). These networks can be effective as they offer teachers opportunities to discover how collaborating can be supportive for promoting personal and professional growth (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Professional development activities that are job embedded and directly related to classroom experiences can provide effective professional learning for educators (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Desimone, 2011). Nurturing a collaborative culture that invites "teachers, who share similar experiences, to brainstorm and problem solve not only creates solutions, but it also builds a community atmosphere of trust and appreciation" (Beavers, 2009, p. 27). Killion (2011)

noted that “collaboration leads to building collective responsibility among educators so every student, not just some, succeeds” (p. 14).

Another observation by Huitt (2011) included that motivation is fueled by the need to develop a plan to find solutions to concerns. Knowles et al. (1998) pointed out that people are motivated by setting and accomplishing their own goals. Killion and Harrison (2006) found that, when teachers set significant goals, impressive outcomes were achieved. Gulamhussein (2013) noted that the use of instructional coaches has been valuable in improving educators' instructional practices leading to an increase in student success.

Working with Adult Learners

Marsh et al. (2012) concluded that coaches and teachers must be aware of the needs of adult learners, and coaches should learn how to interact with adult learners to improve instructional practices. It is also essential that coaches understand the main features of effective professional development as identified through an empirical research analysis by Desimone (2011). These features included “content focused . . ., active learning . . ., coherence . . ., duration . . ., [and] collective participation” (p. 69). The ideas can also be linked to the principles of adult learning. Content focused is connected to the adult learning principle of making learning relevant to the learner (Desimone, 2011; Knowles et al., 1998). This learning is focused on subject matter that is important to the teacher. Active learning is related to the adult learner's need to be an active participant in designing and participating in the professional development plan (Stacy, 2013; Desimone, 2011). Teachers need to be part of the plan when decisions are made about

professional training. Coherence is important to ensure that the learning is consistent and grounded in the values of the individual and the school (Desimone, 2011). Duration of the learning is critical to build on the prior knowledge of the learner and offer time for the adult learner to synthesize new learning with past experiences (Desimone, 2011; Knowles et al., 1998). Collective participation builds on the adult learner's desire to be part of a learning community where personal growth can be enhanced through collaborative work with colleagues (Desimone, 2011; Knowles et al., 1998). These features of professional learning align with a study conducted by Gibson and Brooks (2012). Gibson and Brooks (2012) found that successful professional development "needs to be based on teachers' needs; involve active learning, collaboration and modeling; be supported by a culture of learning in schools; and considerate of teacher resistance to change" (p. 1). Professional learning must include strategies to help teachers openly discuss and share their knowledge, classroom experiences, and instructional practices with one another (Beavers, 2009; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Stanley, 2011). It is through these dialogues and critical discussions that professional learning can take place. Similarly, Koellner, Jacobs, and Borko (2011) found that effective professional development in mathematics included establishing a "professional learning community" that encouraged teachers to collaborate and modify the learning to match the objectives of both the learner and the educational institution (p. 116).

Reinke et al. (2014) studied the effectiveness of an instructional coaching model to support teachers implementing classroom management skills. The researchers "found a significant interaction between the total amount of coaching time a teacher received and

his or her implementation of proactive strategies over time" (p. 162). If the learning is not relevant to the problem or situation teachers encounter in their classrooms, they can withdraw from implementing new instructional practices (Reinke et al., 2014). To meet the needs of adult learners, learning should be relevant and centered on the professional needs of teachers (Darling-Hammond, & McLaughlin, 2011). When teachers are active participants in the learning process, they can play a part in helping their peers learn which will lead to their own professional growth and an increase in effective instructional practices (Bickel, Bernstein-Danis, & Matsumura, 2015).

Project Description

The project series is proposed to be offered through the district's professional development system, and teachers will be able to voluntarily enroll. The series will not be a requirement but will be proposed as a way for teachers to help increase their awareness and exploration of the coaching model. Teachers will learn the process for collaborating with a coach at their campus, and they will be able to identify how an instructional coach may help them develop a plan to reach their professional goals. The timeline proposed will be to present the series as part of summer professional development offerings for 2016. Professional development sessions are offered to teachers during the last week in July and/or the first week in August. The sessions can be divided into six half-day sessions. Teachers may sign up for one session or all six sessions depending on their specific requirements.

There will be one presenter suggested who will either volunteer his or her time or be paid through a professional development fund. Copies of the PowerPoints and

handouts for the participants will be made by the district or at the presenter's campus. The venue for the presentation will be at the campus that is chosen for the summer professional development offerings or in a campus library if the series is offered at specific campuses after the start of school.

One potential barrier may be insufficient enrollment in the series when it is opened to teachers. The proposed plan is to offer the series during the summer months when teachers enroll in professional development. If insufficient numbers enroll, an alternative solution may be to offer the series during the first week for teacher preparation in the fall. Another option is to offer the series to individual campuses as part of their after-school professional development plans. If this is the case, the series may be offered to individual campuses during after-school staff meetings or as a study over a 6-week period.

The role of the presenter will be to actively engage the participants and allow teachers ample time to talk, explore, and synthesize new learning with their past understanding. Information in the PowerPoint series will also be sent to individual coaches to provide them with an awareness of the needs of teachers based on the adult learning principles and to advise them that teachers may be contacting them to request assistance. The role of the teachers will be to internalize their new understanding and reflect on how a coach might help them improve instructional practices and reach their professional goals.

Project Evaluation Plan

Two evaluations will be proposed to determine the effectiveness of the professional development sessions to increase teachers' exploration of the coaching model. The first evaluation will be goal-based for each session to determine if the content objectives were mastered. The evaluation will be provided for participants at the end of each session. This evaluation will ask participants to comment on the usefulness of the information presented, decide whether the particular content objective was mastered, and provide recommendations for future sessions. The presenter can use this information to revise or change the format for future learning based on the needs of the teachers. Since the learning sessions are focused on the mission and goals of the coaching model, this evaluation will serve the purpose of determining whether the program truly helped the participants learn about the coaching model.

A second summative evaluation can be e-mailed to teachers who participated in the professional development sessions at the end of the academic year to determine the outcome of the series. This evaluation will discover if teachers' new understanding of the coaching model helped to increase their collaboration with a coach to improve instructional practices and attain professional goals. This information will be used to determine if the professional development sessions had a positive effect on increasing teachers' implementation of the coaching model.

The key goal of the professional development series is to foster teachers' awareness of the coaching process in order to increase the effectiveness of the coaching model. One possible outcome of the project is an increase in teachers' use of coaches to

improve instructional practice. The two evaluations will provide data to determine if these goals have been realized.

Stakeholders for the professional development project will be the teachers, instructional coaches, and administrative staff. The teachers are key stakeholders as they are the foundation for student learning. Well-trained instructional coaches are also vital to the success of the coaching model, and an understanding of the needs of adult learners will help them successfully interact with teachers. The administrative staff is critically involved in the success of the coaching model, and this project will offer them instructional tools to help build a collaborative culture with teachers and coaches working together to improve instructional practices. The project, along with the evaluations, will be shared with these stakeholders through direct presentations and by making the series available to all stakeholders.

Project Implications

The implementation of the project may result in teachers improving their instructional practices through their interactions with literacy coaches. A thorough understanding of the coaching process will help to create a collaborative culture at schools across the district. This collaborative culture will have positive social implications as teachers and coaches work together to implement research-based instructional strategies. Student achievement may also be positively influenced when teachers work with coaches to improve instructional practices.

When new teachers are hired, it will be essential to local stakeholders to continue the professional development series. As teachers become familiar with the coaching

model and the support that coaches can provide, more partnerships between teachers and coaches will be formed. These partnerships will help the coaching model succeed and ultimately student achievement increase.

Other districts preparing to start a coaching model may decide to plan professional development for teachers to help them understand the model. These types of sessions might help to alleviate resistance and offer teachers positive reasons to open their doors to a literacy or instructional coach. When teachers are given opportunities to reflect on their professional needs, strengths, and goals, they may be more open to the positive support an instructional coach can provide.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The professional development series offers opportunities for teachers to increase their understanding of the coaching process. The sessions will include an introduction to the mission and goals of the coaching model, explanations of roles, and time for teachers to self-reflect about their professional aspirations. Educators will also engage in critical dialogue with their colleagues about shared experiences and spend time identifying the next steps in their educational continuum. The series presents multiple options for teachers to create practical plans to directly contact their instructional coaches. The professional development sessions include a consistent approach to understanding the coaching model and offer guidance to teachers as they build the teacher-coach partnership.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths of the Series

The project is aligned with the adult learning principles of Knowles et al. (1998) as well as the work of Desimone (2011) on the main features for effective professional development. Professional development sessions should focus on a relevant topic, relate to one another for cohesiveness, and be offered in a timely manner. In addition, participants should be actively engaged and work together to create new learning. Gibson and Brooks (2012) showed that successful professional development must take into account the needs of the teachers, involve cooperative learning, and consider some teachers' reluctance to alter current practices. The development process for the six

sessions followed these suggestions and aligned with the principles of adult learning, which is the foundation for each session (Knowles et al., 1998).

The first session was based on the principle of adult learning, which included the idea that adult learners should understand the purpose for learning (Knowles et al., 1998). The data indicated that teachers did not have a consistent method to explore the coaching model. The first professional development session will address this need, and participants will develop an awareness of the mission and goals of the coaching model, along with an understanding of a common language for coaching terms. Chauvin and Theodore (2013) stressed the importance of the relevancy of the learning. Teachers should understand how professional development directly relates to their current work. Educators will also be collaboratively engaged in creating a working definition for each of the different roles of an instructional coach (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Chauvin and Theodore (2013) found that collaborative learning with colleagues helped teachers work as a cooperative group, and Killion (2011) reported that teachers felt supported when they were in an environment where collaboration was valued. The research presented helped to strengthen support for the relevancy of the first session.

The next session was linked to the second principle of adult learning, which emphasizes the independence of the adult learner (Knowles et al., 1998). This session will focus on helping teachers develop a plan to design and direct their educational progress. The importance of teachers having choice and direction for their learning was emphasized by Bayer (2014) and supported by the data analysis for this study. Cheliotes and Reilly (2012) stressed the importance of creating teacher leaders by helping teachers

become confident in their abilities. This session will help teachers reflect on their professional goals. Teachers will explore how an instructional coach could work alongside them to help attain those goals. Teachers will also become familiar with the concept of developing partnerships with coaches (Knight, 2007). It will be important for teachers to view themselves as valuable members of the teacher-coach team. As supported by the research, a key point of this session will be offering teachers opportunities to reflect on their goals and design their own learning.

The next professional development session was connected to the third principle of adult learning (Knowles et al., 1998). This principle emphasizes activating the learner's background knowledge about a subject before continuing with new learning. During data analysis, one trend that emerged was the importance of the literacy coach building on previous experiences when introducing new learning. Gibson and Brooks (2012) focused on the significance of connecting to a learner's previous experiences when presenting new instructional practices. Chitanana (2012) also recommended that new learning be built on a teacher's background knowledge. During this professional development session, teachers will be provided with opportunities to connect with their background knowledge and identify areas of professional strength. They will also be given time to reflect on specific areas of content in which they may wish to grow professionally. One main aspect of this session, as supported by the research and data, is providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on what they already know and where they might need additional support in the future.

The next session of the series was directly related to the fourth principle of adult learning, which emphasizes the importance of adult learners being open to new ideas (Knowles et al., 1998). Some teachers may be reluctant to work with a coach for many reasons, and some of this reluctance may be based on misconceptions of the coaching model. This session will help teachers clear up misconceptions and develop a plan to request a collaborative meeting with their campus coach. One agenda item for this meeting will be the identification of an area where the coach may positively impact the professional growth of the teacher by helping to improve a specific instructional practice. When implementing new instructional practices, Saphier (2011) reported that teachers may need coaching support. A critical focus for the fourth session is the development of a plan to get the coaching process started through collaboration on one specific goal or instructional practice.

The fifth session of the professional development series was associated with another adult learning principle (Knowles et al., 1998), which emphasizes linking learning to a problem-solving model. My analysis indicated that literacy coaches were available to collaborate on a solution to a problem or a concern. The data supported the research conducted by Bayer (2014) indicating that teachers preferred professional development that focused on solving relevant concerns they were experiencing in their classrooms. In this session, teachers will be provided with opportunities to collaboratively discuss approaches a coach may take to address areas of concern.

The final session of the series focused on the inspiration and motivation of the learner to implement new ideas (Knowles et al., 1998). A critical component of this

principle was the central idea that when teachers engage in critical conversations with colleagues, they can share and reflect on effective instructional practices (Stacy, 2013). With the coach as part of the instructional network, teachers can explore how collaboration can positively affect professional growth (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). The ability of coaches to provide job-embedded professional development will also be discussed during this session. When activities were directly related to classroom experiences, professional learning experiences were more effective (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Desimone, 2011). The strength of this session lies in helping teachers explore the possibilities for professional growth with the support of an instructional coach.

Limitations

The limitations of the project are based on time restraints and teacher participation. The current plan is to offer sessions during summer professional development. The six 3-hour sessions (3 days) may be too long for the time allotted. The other limitation is that the series is voluntary for teachers. Teachers will be able to attain professional development credit for attending; however, there are many choices for teachers offered throughout the summer. Teachers choose which sessions to attend based on their specific needs. Even with these limitations, there are alternative approaches for communication of the information from the series.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

There are several different approaches planned to present the professional development series. The success of these alternative methods will depend on the

cooperation of administrative leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers. The first approach involves the presenter offering the series to individual campuses in the district. Each session could be modified to fit into an after-school staff meeting or professional development study. The series of six sessions could be included in monthly sessions during faculty meetings or offered another day of the week as a professional study. Teachers would receive professional development credit for attending. A concern for this approach would be the changes that would have to be made for each session to fit into the time constraints of a campus meeting.

Another approach would be to coach teacher leaders from each campus and have them bring the series back to their schools at a time that is convenient to the campus. This approach would build capacity in teachers and, at the same time, encourage teachers to use the coaching model. A limitation of this approach is that it might be difficult to ensure consistency of the message with different presenters who have varied background knowledge and professional experiences.

A third approach would be to prepare instructional coaches to present the series. This method could be advantageous as individual coaches could tailor the series to meet their campus needs. Also, instructional coaches would be available during the sessions to help teachers determine professional goals, identify areas of strength, and develop plans to address concerns the teachers may be experiencing. One drawback to this approach is the possibility of different messages being presented instead of a cohesive series with a consistent message.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

As part of the doctoral project study, it was important to learn how to listen closely to teachers, understand specific needs, and develop a collaborative plan to address those needs. As the project was developed, it was critical to look at the data to determine teachers' needs, but it was equally important to evaluate research to support the project. The process of analyzing and categorizing qualitative data led me down clear paths to develop the doctoral project. Each session in the series was developed based on teachers' specific needs, current research, and adult learning principles (Knowles et al., 1998).

It was essential to look at the study objectively and take out personal considerations or previous experiences. Assumptions needed to be set aside and particular attention paid to the protocols for interviews and questionnaires. The probes aligned with the research questions so the data collected could effectively provide information to answer those questions. The project was developed based on an analysis of the data and an evaluation of both previous and current research. Additional assessment of the effectiveness of the project will be completed after each session and at the end of the next academic year. This information will be imperative to determining the effectiveness of the professional development series and shaping future offerings of the series.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The doctoral project study can be a step to fill a gap in research to help teachers develop an awareness of how the coaching model can have positive influences on their professional growth. The data indicated a need for a consistent approach to help teachers explore the mission and purpose of the coaching model. An analysis of the data also

showed misconceptions about the roles of a coach and the specific ways that a coach could help teachers progress toward their professional goals. When teachers have a clear conception of what to expect from the coaching model, they will be more likely to open their doors and partner with a coach to improve instructional practices.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

With regard to positive social change, the analysis of the data was used to develop a series of professional development sessions for teachers regarding the implementation of the coaching model. Clearing up misconceptions and empowering teachers to embrace the coaching model will aid in creating collaborative school cultures that may result in improved educational practices for teachers and increased achievement for students. The implementation of the professional development series will provide teachers with an avenue to increase their awareness of the coaching model and give them opportunities to seek additional assistance from coaches. These partnerships between teachers and coaches may help to develop more collaborative environments conducive to improved student learning. In addition, teachers will expand their leadership skills as they work with a coach to plan and attain their professional goals. The study may also provide a preliminary road map for other districts to use when considering initiating a literacy coaching model.

A large part of the effectiveness of the coaching model may lie in the adequate preparation of teachers to work with coaches. When teachers understand how an instructional coach can be an effective contributor to their classroom environment, help them develop a plan to attain professional goals, and offer support to improve

instructional practices, they may be open to using the coaching model. Additional goals for positive social change include providing students with the best learning environment and preparing them to be contributing members of society. The coaching model can play a significant role in reaching these goals by building capacity in teachers and improving their instructional practices. According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (n.d.), "well prepared teachers produce higher student achievement" (p. 3).

Additional research should be conducted on the value of providing teachers with professional development sessions to increase the successful implementation of the coaching model. An evaluation of whether professional development increased teachers' implementation of the coaching model may prove beneficial to determine whether this type of preparation might be effective in the future. As the coaching model gains popularity as a constructive means to build capacity in teachers, a focus may be needed to prepare teachers to work with instructional coaches.

Conclusion

There is a plethora of information to help prepare instructional coaches to work with teachers. On the other hand, based on the results of the study, additional resources are needed to help teachers prepare to work with coaches. This professional development series is just one approach to preparing teachers to fully utilize the coaching model to improve their instructional practices and attain professional goals. As the coaching movement continues to grow, the development of resources should focus on both teachers and instructional coaches.

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Appendix A: The Project

Outlines for Professional Development Sessions

Session 1

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 1: Mission, Purpose, Goals

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Note: This is the first of a six-session series. Each session in the series will be planned for 3 hours (A half-day session from 8:30 to 11:30 or 12:30 to 3:30). The series will be offered weekly over a six-week period.

Slide 2: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will explore the mission and goals of the instructional coaching model.

Language Objective:

Teachers will demonstrate an awareness of developing partnerships with coaches by discussing the concept with colleagues.

Note: 5 minutes to talk about the objectives.

Slide 3: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration

* modeling innovation

* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 20 minutes to discuss the mission and goals of the model. Participants will work in groups to develop a visual of the mission and goals of the coaching model and share why they chose that particular graphic to convey the information.

Slide 4: Maximizing Student Achievement

Coaches can help teachers study student data and student work to target standards in need of support (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013, p. 3).

"Ongoing focus on student learning encourages teachers to re-teach a lesson, differentiate instruction, and employ other strategies that will improve student outcomes" (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013, p. 3).

Note: 5 minutes

Slide 5: Promoting Collaboration

"Teacher empowerment" comes through "collaborative professional development" (Stacy, 2013, p. 41).

Collaboration can lead to "improved school culture" (Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2012, p. 6).

"Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning" (Killion, 2011, p. 14).

Note: 5 minutes

Slide 6: Modeling Innovation

Teachers are able to observe new strategies in the context of their classrooms (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013).

Resulted in "improved teacher knowledge and skills" (Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2012, p. 6).

Expands "pedagogical and content expertise in the school context" (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013, p. 1).

Note: 5 minutes

Slide 7: Promoting a Growth Mindset

Turn and Talk about the meaning of having a growth mindset.

* for our students
* for our colleagues
* for ourselves

Share your insights with the group.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 8: Turn and Talk

Share your current understanding of the coaching model with your group.

Discuss experiences you have had with an instructional coach at your campus.

Note: 15 minutes. Allow adequate time for deep discussion and sharing. Participants may learn additional ways to work with a coach from other teachers' experiences

Slide 9: Carousel Activity

Each of the roles (Killion & Harrison, 2006) of an instructional coach is written on a separate piece of chart paper posted around the room.

First round: Your group will be given 3 minutes at each chart to record your input about each role's responsibilities.

Second round: Each group will be provided with time to read what the other groups wrote and add to it.

Third round: Each group will have the opportunity to read all comments and share.

Note: 30 minutes. Provide each group with time to record their ideas. A second round allows the groups opportunities to add to what is already recorded. A final round allows groups to read all comments. Take a 15 minute break after this activity.

Slide 10: Overview of Roles (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Resource Provider

Data coach

Instructional specialist

Curriculum specialist

Classroom supporter

Learning facilitator

Mentor

School leader

Catalyst for change

Learner (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Note: 20 minutes. The presenter will review the roles based on descriptions from Killion and Harrison (2006) and provide examples of each. Teachers will discuss how the coach could support them in their work with students and share the main points of their discussion with the group. The presenter may take this time to clear up misconceptions about the responsibilities of a coach that may have come to light during the Carousel Walk.

Slide 11: Developing Partnerships

"Partnership Mindset"

"Partnership, at its core, is a deep belief that we are no more important than those with whom we work and that we should do everything we can to respect that equality" (Knight, 2007, p. 24).

Note: 15 minutes. The presenter should discuss what a partnership means according to Knight (2007).

Slide 12: Effective Partnerships

"This approach is built around the core principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, and reciprocity" (Knight, 2007, p. 24).

Which points do you think are essential to an effective partnership and increased collaboration? Explain the reasons for your choices.

Note: 15 minutes. The presenter will review each of the points and provide participants time to discuss in order to increase understanding.

Slide 13: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 14: References

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Session 2

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 2: Achieving Professional Goals

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Slide 2: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration
* modeling innovation
* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 15 minutes. Review the mission and goals of the model. Have participants work in groups to discuss the mission and goals of the coaching model, choose a speaker, and share with group.

Slide 3: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will understand the process of collaborating with an instructional coach to identify short-term and long-term professional goals.

Language Objective:

Teachers will develop professional goals to share with their instructional coaches.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 4: Overview of Roles

Discuss the roles of an instructional coach.

Review the roles of a coach from Killion and Harrison, 2006.

Note: 15 minutes to review the various responsibilities of the coaches.

Slide 5: Specific Roles

Curriculum Specialist and Classroom Supporter (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Discuss with your table groups specific ways that an instructional coach in literacy or another content area could help you improve instructional practices in the classroom and implement a targeted and rigorous curriculum.

Mentor (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Although a mentor is usually associated with a new teacher, discuss how the coach could serve this purpose for you or members of your teams.

Note: 10 minutes to discuss the different responsibilities.

Slide 6: Roles of the teacher

Develop a growth mindset (Job Description, District A, 2014)

Understand that building expertise in teachers leads to increased student achievement (Bayer, 2014)

Open your classroom to job-embedded professional development by utilizing the coaching model.

Collaborate with the coach and other teachers on your team to review student work, analyze data, and make informed curriculum decisions.

Make use of the coach as a resource to identify students' areas of strength or concern and plan for targeted enrichment or interventions.

Note: 30 minutes. Teachers will discuss their roles as a teacher in developing effective partnerships with coaches and add their insights to the roles listed above (Knight, 2007). Participants will create a visual depicting the roles to share with the group.

Slide 7: Developing Partnerships

Knight (2007) discussed the importance of collaboration between the coach and the teacher.

Knight (2007) also shared the importance of creating positive, collaborative relationships "around the core principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, and reciprocity" (p. 24).

As a table group, discuss each of these principles and create a chart depicting how they are essential to a collaborative relationship. Make connections to your experiences.

Note: 20 minutes. Participants will create a chart to share their insights.

Slide 8: Research

Cheliotes and Reilly (2012) discussed the importance of creating teacher leaders by working alongside teachers to build confidence.

In a study by Bayer (2014), the data indicated that it was essential that teachers have a choice in the direction for their learning.

Specifically, discuss your progress towards becoming a teacher leader for your team and on your campus.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 9: Professional Goals

Where do you want to be in five years?

How can an instructional coach help you achieve your goals?

Reflect and write down two to three professional goals you might have for your future.

Discuss your goals as a table group and talk about how a coach could help you achieve these goals.

Share with the group.

Note: 20 minutes

Slide 10: Instructional Practices

Are there instructional areas where you would like to receive assistance?

List these on the bottom half of the paper where you listed your professional goals.

Discuss with your table group how a coach could help you learn a new instructional practice, support you in a component of the new literacy model (or other content area component), or collaborate with you to strengthen a current instructional practice.

Share with the group.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 11: Action Plan

Develop an action plan to meet with one of your coaches and share your professional and/or instructional goals.

Role model a coaching conversation you might have with your coach to share your professional and/or instructional goals.

Note: 20 minutes

Slide 12: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note 10 minutes

Slide 13: References

Bayer, A. (2014). The components of effective professional development activities in terms of teachers' perspectives. *International Online Journal of Education, 6*(2), 319-327. doi:10.15345/iojes.2014.02.006

Cheliotes, L., & Reilly, M. (2012). *Opening the door to coaching conversations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

District A. (2014). Job description: Instructional coach.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Session 3

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 3: Connecting to Prior Knowledge

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Slide 2: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration
* modeling innovation
* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 15 minutes. Review the mission and goals of the model. Have participants work in groups to discuss the mission and goals of the coaching model, choose a speaker, and share with group.

Slide 3: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will understand how coaches build on prior knowledge and teachers' strengths when introducing new instructional practices.

Language Objective:

Teachers will reflect on their professional strengths and identify areas for growth.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 4: Overview of Roles

Discuss the responsibilities of an instructional coach.

Review the ten roles of a coach from Killion and Harrison, 2006.

Note: 15 minutes to discuss the various responsibilities of the coaches.

Slide 5: Specific Roles

Classroom Supporter (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

As a classroom supporter, coaches are available to . . .

Resource Provider (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

An instructional coach can provide resources by . . .

Note: 15 minutes. Discuss the different responsibilities and the teachers' perceptions.

Slide 6: Research

Gibson and Brooks (2012) discussed the significance of connecting to prior knowledge before introducing new concepts.

Chitanana (2012) found it was important to connect new learning to a teacher's background knowledge.

Note: 15 minutes to discuss the implications of the research. Take a 15 minute break after this slide.

Slide 7: Active Learning

Desimone (2011) pointed out the importance of teachers being engaged in "active learning" where teachers are involved in "observing and receiving feedback, analyzing student work, or making presentations" (p. 69).

Discuss how active learning is essential for both adults and our students.

Note: 20 minutes. Teachers divide into groups, discuss, and create a visual presentation that includes a definition of active learning.

Slide 8: Identifying areas of strength

Reflect on your strengths as a teacher and list those on the paper provided.

Think about areas where you feel confident to present to your team or to the faculty at your school.

Are there areas where a coach could help you grow or build your confidence in certain areas?

Note: 15 minutes. Talk, reflect, and write.

Slide 9: Identifying areas for growth

As you think about your areas of strength, reflect on areas in which you would like to grow.

Write these down on the paper across from your professional strengths.

Note: 15 minutes. Talk, reflect, and write.

Slide 10: Action Plan

Develop a plan to talk with your coach about providing opportunities to share your instructional strengths with others.

Develop a plan to share with a coach the areas in which you wish to grow.

Role model a coaching conversation you might have with your coach about these areas.

Note: 20 minutes

Slide 11: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 12: References

Chitanana, L. (2012). A constructivist approach to the design and delivery of an online professional development course: A case of the iearn online course. *International Journal of Instruction [serial online]*. January 2012, 5(1), 23-48. Available from Education Research Complete, Ipswich, MA.

Gibson, S.E., & Brooks, C. (2012). Teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of a locally planned professional development program for implementing new curriculum. *Teacher Development, 16*(1), 1-23. doi:10.1080/13664530.2012.667953

District A. (2014). Job description: Instructional coach.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Session 4

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 4: Opening the Door to New Learning

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Slide 2: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration
* modeling innovation
* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 15 minutes. Review the mission and goals of the model. Have participants work in groups to discuss the mission and goals of the coaching model, choose a speaker, and share with group.

Slide 3: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will understand the process to request job-embedded support from an instructional coach.

Language Objective:

Teachers will reflect on their willingness to open their door to new learning.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 4: Overview of Roles

Discuss the responsibilities of an instructional coach.

Review the roles of a coach from Killion and Harrison, 2006.

Note: 15 minutes to review the various responsibilities of the coaches.

Slide 5: Specific Roles

Learning Facilitator/Instructional Specialist/Resource Provider (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Discuss: How can these roles offer support as you open your door to new learning?

Discuss your experiences with your table group.

Note: 20 minutes

Slide 6: Misconceptions

What are some misconceptions you have about the coaching model?

What are your initial thoughts when a coach visits your classroom?

Did you know coaches can have more of an impact when they work with a teacher? The teacher can then have an impact on every student in the class.

Discuss your experiences co-teaching with an instructional coach in your classroom.

Note: 15 minutes. Discuss and share.

Slide 7: Research

It is critical for teachers to be open to new ideas (Knowles et al., 1998) when working with a coach.

It is essential that teachers and coaches build positive relationships (Pratt, 1993; Knight, 2007).

A collaborative culture and trusting relationships are needed for successful partnerships (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2012).

It is important to practice new instructional practices by engaging in ongoing professional development (Bayer, 2014).

Note: 15 minutes to discuss.

Slide 8: Research

Instructional coaches can offer opportunities for observation while they model a new instructional practice (Gulamhussein, 2013).

Feedback is a key ingredient for successful job-embedded professional development (Saphier, 2011).

Discuss the implications of the relevant research supporting the coaching model to improve instructional practice. Talk specifically about the importance of feedback.

Note: 20 minutes. As a table group, create a visual of what effective feedback involves and share with the group. Include information on how to react to and handle different types of feedback.

Slide 9: Identifying New Learning

Have a discussion about new instructional practices or resources being introduced at your campus.

Can you identify one or two that you are looking forward to learning more about?

What are some areas of the curriculum or standards that are hard to teach?

Note: 15 minutes to discuss.

Slide 10: Action Plan

Write down a few of the new areas you might want to learn about to share with your instructional coach.

Write down some of areas of the curriculum or standards that you felt were hard to teach.

Role model with your peers a coaching discussion to request assistance on these topics.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 11: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 12: References

Bayer, A. (2014). The components of effective professional development activities in terms of teachers' perspectives. *International Online Journal of Education, 6*(2), 319-327. doi:10.15345/iojes.2014.02.006

Cheliotes, L., & Reilly, M. (2012). *Opening the door to coaching conversations*. Thousands Oak, CA: Corwin Press.

District A. (2014). Job description: Instructional coach.

Gulamhussein, A. (2013). The core of professional development. *American School Board Journal*, July/August, 36-37.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousands Oak, CA: Corwin Press.

Knowles, M., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. (1998). *The adult learner* (5th ed.)*: The definitive classic in adult education and human resources development.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Gulf Professional Learning.

Pratt, D. D. (1993). *Andragogy after twenty-five years*. In Sharan Merriam (Ed.), *Adult learning theory: An update.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 15-25.

Saphier, J. (2011). Outcomes: Coaching, teaching standards, and feedback mark the teacher's road to mastery. *JSD – The Learning Forward Journal, 32*(4), 58-62. Retrieved from http://learningforward.org/docs/august-2011/saphier324.pdf

Session 5

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 5: Problem Solving with a Coach through Collaboration

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Slide 2: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration

* modeling innovation

* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 15 minutes. Review the mission and goals of the model. Have participants work in groups to discuss the mission and goals of the coaching model, choose a speaker, and share with group.

Slide 3: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will understand how to problem solve with a coach regarding instructional concerns.

Language Objective:

Teachers will identify areas of concern and discuss how a coach could collaborate with them to solve problems or plan differentiated instruction.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 4: Overview of Roles

Discuss the responsibilities of an instructional coach.

Review the roles of a coach from Killion and Harrison, 2006.

Note: 15 minutes to review the various responsibilities of the coaches.

Slide 5: Specific Roles

Data Coach/Instructional Specialist/Classroom Supporter (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Discuss: How can these roles offer support as you collaborate with coaches to solve instructional concerns?

Discuss your experiences with your table group.

Note: 25 minutes. Teachers will discuss and create with their table group a visual representing their insights. Take a 15 minute break after this slide.

Slide 6: Research

Bayer (2014) found that teachers preferred professional development that focused on solving relevant concerns.

Stacy (2013) shared that professional development is likely to increase skill proficiency when teachers have a voice in designing and leading sessions.

Adult learning is more effective when it is focused on finding solutions to relevant areas of concern (Knowles et al., 1998).

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 7: Research

Chitanana (2012) found that teachers should receive professional development in "real world environments" (p. 43).

Discuss the implications of this research to the coaching process.

How is job-embedded professional development different from attending a sit-down informational session?

Note: 25 minutes. Teachers will create a chart depicting the similarities and differences between the two types of professional development.

Slide 8: Action Plan

Identify and share with your group a few current concerns you are experiencing in your classroom.

Develop and write down an action plan to seek assistance from your instructional coach. Role model a coaching conversation you might have with a coach regarding these concerns.

Note: 40 minutes. After discussion, have teachers form triads. Two teachers will role model conversations while one teacher observes. Change roles until all participants have had an opportunity to participate.

Slide 9: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 10: References

Bayer, A. (2014). The components of effective professional development activities in terms of teachers' perspectives. *International Online Journal of Education, 6*(2), 319-327. doi:10.15345/iojes.2014.02.006

Chitanana, L. (2012). A constructivist approach to the design and delivery of an online professional development course: A case of the iearn online course. *International Journal of Instruction [serial online]*. January 2012, 5(1), 23-48, Available from Education Research Complete, Ipswich, MA.

District A. (2014). Job description: Instructional coach.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Knowles, M., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. (1998). *The adult learner* (5th ed.): *The definitive classic in adult education and human resources development*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Gulf Professional Learning.

Stacy, M. (2013). Teacher-led professional development: Empowering teaches as self-advocates. *The Georgia Social Studies Journal, 3*(1), 40-49. Retrieved from https://coe.uga.edu/assets/files/misc/gssj/Stacy-2013.pdf

Session 6

Slide 1: Instructional Coaching Session 6: Intrinsic Value of Developing a Partnership with your Coach – Building Leadership Skills

Presenter: Karen Morman

Instructional Coach

Slide 2: Mission and Goals

Maximize student achievement and growth for all students through building capacity in teachers.

Support teachers in learning and applying best practices in a variety of educational settings by:

* promoting collaboration
* modeling innovation
* promoting a growth mindset

(Job Description, District A, 2014)

Note: 15 minutes to review mission and goals. Have participants work in groups to discuss the mission and goals of the coaching model, choose a speaker, and share with group.

Slide 3: Objectives

Content Objective:

Teachers will understand how instructional coaches can work with them to build their leadership skills.

Language Objective:

Teachers will discuss how a coach can help build their skills as a school leader.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 4: Overview of Roles

Discuss the responsibilities of an instructional coach.

Review the roles of a coach from Killion and Harrison, 2006.

Note: 15 minutes to review various responsibilities of the coaches.

Slide 5: Specific Roles (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

School Leader/Learner/Catalyst for Change (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Discuss: How do these roles offer support as you continue developing your skills as a school leader?

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 6: Catalyst for Change (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

What does being a "catalyst for change" actually mean?

Is this responsibility limited to instructional coaches?

Turn and talk with your table group. Discuss and identify specific times, if any, when you have supported change on your campus.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 7: School Leader (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

What does being a School Leader mean to you?

What steps are you taking to become a leader on your team and your campus?

Turn and talk with your table group. Discuss and identify specific times, if any, when you have become a leader for your team or on your campus.

Note: 15 minutes. Take a 15 minute break after slide.

Slide 8: Learner (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 28)

Coaches and teachers are always in the role of learner.

Turn and talk about new learning that has occurred for you this year.

Have you asked an instructional coach to help facilitate that learning?

Discuss your experiences collaborating with an instructional coach to support new learning.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 9: Research

Critical discussions help teachers reflect on their instructional practices and teaching strategies (Stacy, 2013).

Professional development that is job-embedded and directly related to classroom experiences is effective in improving instructional skills and practices (Desimone, 2011; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011).

Collaboration builds communities of learning, “trust, and appreciation” (Beavers, 2009, p. 27).

Discuss the research presented regarding the significance of collaborating with our colleagues and coaches.

Note: 20 minutes

Slide 10: Research

Killion and Harrison (2006) found that, when teachers set significant goals, impressive outcomes were achieved.

Killion (2011) noted that “collaboration leads to building collective responsibility among educators so every student, not just some, succeeds” (p. 14).

What do these statements mean in terms of our current instructional practices?

Turn and talk about the implications.

Note: 15 minutes

Slide 11: Action Plan

What are some areas where a coach can help you improve instructional practices?

How can you collaborate with a coach to build your leadership skills and help you achieve your goals?

Create a plan to begin developing a partnership with your instructional coach.

Note: 30 minutes to develop an action plan to share with a coach.

Slide 12: Reflection

On the exit ticket:

Write three things you are excited about.

Write two things you are still wondering about.

Write one way you might apply the information learned today.

Thank you for attending.

Note: 10 minutes

Slide 13: References

Beavers, A. (2009). Teachers as learners: Implications of adult education for professional development. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 6*(7), 25. doi:10.19030/tlc.v6i7.1122

Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. (2011). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(8), 597-604. doi:10.1177/003172171109200622

Desimone, L.M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(6), 81-82. doi:10.1177/003172171109200616

Killion, J. (2011). A bold move forward. *Journal of Staff Development: The Learning Forward Journal, 32*(3), 10-14. Available from Education Research Complete, Ipswich, MA.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Stacy, M. (2013). Teacher-led professional development: Empowering teaches as self-advocates. *The Georgia Social Studies Journal, 3*(1), 40-49. Retrieved from https://coe.uga.edu/assets/files/misc/gssj/Stacy-2013.pdf

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Research

Invitation to Participate in Research

TO: Potential Participant

You are invited to participate in a doctoral study exploring teacher expectations of a literacy coaching model and their insights into their experiences with instructional coaches in the field of literacy during the 2014-15 academic year. The purpose of the study is to explore teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs in order to understand the coaching process.

Data will be collected from four teachers who have had experience working with coaches in the area of literacy during the 2014-15 school year. If you are selected to participate, you will be invited to complete a brief written questionnaire and participate in one 30 to 40-minute individual interview. Your responses will be used to design a project that will include professional development sessions to help teachers understand the coaching model in the area of literacy.

Your identity will be kept confidential by assigning a pseudonym and not using identifiable information in the final report. A detailed consent form will be signed prior to completion of the questionnaire and the interview. You will be able to check the transcripts for accuracy and review the conclusions of the study prior to publication to ensure reliability.

If you would like to be considered as a volunteer for the study, please respond using your private email account within two weeks of receiving this letter. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have questions about the study, you may contact

me via e-mail at karen.morman@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-26-15-0362558 and it expires on August 25, 2016.

Sincerely,

Karen Morman

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Project: Teacher Expectations of a Literacy Coaching Model

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

This doctoral project is studying the expectations of teachers of a literacy coaching model, and their insights into their experiences with literacy coaches in the 2014-15 academic year. The purpose of the study is to discover teachers' needs for professional development to understand the coaching process. Data will be collected from four teachers who have had experience working with instructional coaches in the area of literacy during the 2014-15 school year using one individual interview and a questionnaire per participant. The data will be used to design a project that will include professional development sessions to help teachers understand the coaching cycle and work with coaches in the area of literacy. The identity of interviewees will be kept confidential by assigning pseudonyms and not using identifiable information in the final report. Participants will be able to check the transcripts for accuracy and review the study prior to publication to ensure reliability. The interview will take between 30 and 40 minutes. Please read and sign the consent form before we begin.

Probes:

1) Describe how you learned about the goals and mission for the coaching model.

1a) Can you suggest an introduction to the coaching model that might have helped you understand your role in the coaching process?

2) Describe how your professional growth has been influenced by your interactions with a literacy coach.

2a) What are your expectations of the literacy coaching model?

2b) Can you share some examples of how you have taken ownership of new instructional practices that the coach may have introduced?

3) Based on your experiences, describe how the literacy coach connected new learning about instructional practice with your past schema about the subject.

3a) Describe the preparation you might recommend to help teachers understand the partnership approach of collaborating with a literacy coach to build on prior knowledge.

4) Based on your experiences, describe how the literacy coach offered direction to help you improve instructional practices and share some specific examples.

4a) Describe how the literacy coach supported and encouraged you to improve instructional practices if this was experienced during your interactions.

5) If collaboration was experienced, describe how the literacy coach collaborated with you to expand knowledge of a particular skill or practice.

5a) Describe how job-embedded professional development affected your role as a teacher this year.

6) Describe ways the literacy coach motivated you to learn about and implement new educational practices this year if this occurred during your experiences.

6a) Describe if working with a coach resulted in implementing more instructional practices with fidelity this year than in a prior year without a coach.

7) Describe educational objectives that could be included in professional development sessions to help teachers understand the goals of the coaching model and optimize time spent with a literacy coach.

7a) Please feel free to share any other comments you feel are pertinent to the study.

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your participation is totally voluntary, and you can choose to continue or stop your participation at any time. Remember that your responses will be kept confidential in the final report.

Appendix D: Questionnaire Form

Participant:

Position:

Years of Teaching Experience:

This doctoral project is studying the expectations of teachers of a literacy coaching model, and their insights into their experiences with literacy coaches during the 2014-15 academic year. The purpose of the project is to discover teachers' needs for professional development to understand the coaching process. Data will be collected from four teachers who have had experience working with instructional coaches in the area of literacy during the 2014-15 school year and will include data from an individual interview and a questionnaire. The data will be used to design a project that will include professional development sessions to help teachers understand the coaching cycle and work with coaches in the area of literacy. The identity of interviewees will be kept confidential by assigning pseudonyms and not using identifiable information in the final report. Participants will be able to check the transcripts for accuracy and review the study prior to publication to ensure reliability. Please read and sign the consent form before you complete the questionnaire.

Please answer the following probes by writing your responses:

1. Describe your experiences working with a literacy coach this year.

2. In your opinion, what type of professional development should teachers be offered to optimize their experiences with a literacy coach and the coaching model?

3. How have your instructional practices changed because of your work with a literacy coach?

4. In your opinion, what type of professional development is needed for teachers to feel confident working with a literacy coach?

Thank you again for your participation. The questionnaire will be collected before the interview, and please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. Identifying information will not be used in the final report.

Appendix E: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of teacher expectations of a literacy coaching model. The researcher is inviting teachers who have experience working with literacy coaches during the 2014-15 school year to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Karen Morman, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of their professional needs as they implement the coaching model leading to the design of professional development sessions to help teachers understand the coaching process.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

• Participate in a 30 to 40 minute one-on-one interview.

• Complete a written questionnaire.

• Member Check: Review the interview transcript to ensure accuracy (30 minutes)

Here are some sample questions:

Interview

Describe how you learned about the goals and mission for the coaching model.

Describe how your professional growth has been influenced by your interactions with a literacy coach.

Based on your experiences, describe how the literacy coach connected new learning about instructional practice with your past schema about the subject.

Questionnaire

In your opinion, what type of professional development should teachers be offered to optimize their experiences with a literacy coach and the coaching model?

Describe your experiences working with a literacy coach.

How have your instructional practices changed because of your work with a literacy coach?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at _____ will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sharing professional experiences with an interviewer. Being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The study's potential benefits include exploring teachers' perceptions in order to design professional development sessions that may assist teachers in implementing the coaching model.

Payment

There is no monetary reimbursement for participating.

Privacy

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by providing a pseudonym for transcript records and storing transcripts in a password protected computer file. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via e-mail at karen.morman@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-26-15-0362558 and it expires on August 25, 2016.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement.

By replying to the email with the words 'I Consent' I am agreeing to participate in the study.