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Educating Instructional Mentors: A Qualitative Case Study of Instructional Coaches

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

In a rural Title I school district in Georgia, teachers are mandated to implement research-based best practices in their delivery of instructional standards so that K-12 students can master 21st century competencies and meet mandated academic targets. District administrators indicated many teachers lack skills to implement best practices. To address this concern, instructional coaches were hired to support teachers with implementation of instructional practices and address teacher accountability; however, coaches received no training to outline their roles and responsibilities. The purpose of this bounded qualitative single case study was to examine the role of instructional coaches and how they support teachers to improve instruction, and to identify supports needed to assist instructional coaches. Knowles's andragogy theory guided this study. The research questions were used to explore instructional coaches' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities, guidance to support K-12 educators, and professional development (PD) to improve coaching skills. A purposeful sample of 12 K-12 instructional coaches volunteered and participated in open-ended interviews, observations, and document reviews. Data were analyzed thematically using open and axial coding. Coaches perceived their roles as developing good relationships with teachers and garnering administrator support to sustain a consistent instructional coaching model. They also requested PD that featured direct/indirect collaboration with coaching experts. Results of the study were used to develop a 5-day PD session to address coaches' instructional needs. This endeavor may contribute to positive social change when instructional coaches understand their roles in creating systemic transformation in the instructional practices of teachers to benefit K-12 learners' achievement.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to instructional coaches who continue to search for supports to assist them with maintaining skills. I hope this research supports your work, provides an understanding of your role and responsibilities, and is used as a resource to inform your practices.

Acknowledgments

Special acknowledgements to my family for their consistent support and encouragement throughout my doctoral experience. I would not have been able to get through this great milestone without your encouraging words, support with babysitting my daughters when I had to study, and listening ears when I just needed to vent. Thank you. I also must thank Dr. Robelia for her guidance, support, and encouragement. There have been days I thought I could not complete this project and she never stopped believing in me. Thank you! Finally, thank you JESUS! There is a song that says, "What God has for me, it is for me." I am a testimony of this. I will continue to fulfill the plan God has for my life.

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Section 1: The Problem

In the United States, political and business leaders are calling for schools to educate students with 21st century skills because of the growing number of jobs that require complex communication and competencies in non-routine problem solving (Hanushek et al, 2014; Ma & Williams, 2013; Schacter et al., 2006). According to a 2012 National Research Council report (National Education Association, 2010), 21st century competencies include a blend of knowledge and skills such as knowing why, when, and how to apply knowledge to solve problems and answer questions, which can be transferred to other situations (Yuxin & Williams, 2013). A 21st century education requires a highly effective teacher and the use of technology to prepare students for college and career readiness (Mead, 2013).

School policies change according to legislative mandates requiring students to be college and career ready. Due to recent legislative changes, the demand for students to be academically successful has increased (Ingersoll, 2007). School administrators recognize that there is a positive correlation between teacher effectiveness and mandated levels of student achievement (Driscoll, 2008; Moller et al., 2013). To address school policies and mandated levels of student achievement, administrators offer professional development (PD) to improve teacher effectiveness.

Professional development increases teachers' knowledge base, skill set, and perspectives, and promotes a culture for ongoing professional growth (Sheridan et al., 2009). Data have shown that one-time workshops for PD have minimal influence on teaching practice unless paired with classroom coaching (Becker et al., 2013). Situated

(applied in house), sustained PD focused on classroom subject matter is essential for the promotion of teachers' skills and behavioral changes, as well as the improvement of classroom instructional practices and student achievement (Goebel et al., 2009; Sheridan et al., 2009). As a result, school districts are adding building level instructional coaches to influence teachers' knowledge.

Coaching is considered to be another form of job-embedded, one-one one or small-group PD to support teachers with their instructional practices and address teacher accountability (Chien, 2013; Driscoll, 2008). Coaches provide ongoing guidance and support to improve teachers' learning and application of a specific practice or general teaching skills (Becker et al., 2013; Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Sheridan et al., 2009). Therefore, coaches must maintain and expand their knowledge of scholarship in teaching and pedagogy. Instructional coaches must also be familiar with best practices to transfer this information to adult learners. Thus, the role of instructional coaches requires an understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the job, and it is critical for the school or district leadership to provide opportunities for coaches to receive PD related to their role.

Definition of the Problem

The gap in practice for a rural Title I school district in Georgia is the district-wide dearth of understanding of the role of professional coaches and the lack of PD provided for coaches. According the deputy superintendent of schools, the understanding of the role of the instructional coach varies amongst district and school leaders, as well as the instructional coaches. The deputy superintendent stated, "We are working towards

providing PD for instructional coaches and district and school leadership since implementation of instructional coaches is fairly new to the district," (personal communication, August 19, 2016). In the school district under study, teachers are expected to implement research-based best practices in their delivery of instruction so that students can master 21st century competencies and meet mandated achievement targets. The district under study is focused on providing academic excellence for all students. However, according to the district strategic planning documents, many teachers lack skills to implement best-practices (2015). Therefore, to support teachers with implementation of research-based teaching strategies and best practices, instructional coaches have been hired to assist teachers in all the district's schools. The district's deputy superintendent introduced the initiative of implementing instructional coaches in all schools and developed the job description of the role for the district. However, according to the deputy superintendent, instructional coaches were not provided PD specific to their role and responsibilities (personal communication, August 19, 2016).

According to Knight (2016), instructional coaches can assist teachers who lack specific skills by assisting teachers with instructional resources, collaboratively planning, assisting teachers with identifying how and when to implement effective instructional practices, modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms (co-teaching), observing teachers' usage of interventions, and providing effective feedback to teachers. To support teachers and address any areas of challenge for them, instructional coaches need professional learning opportunities to assist them in understanding (a) researched-based best instructional practices, (b) how to model instructional practices, (c) how to

provide feedback from observations, and (d) possible interventions to address students' needs (deputy superintendent, personal communication, October 9, 2016).

The rural Title I school district is struggling to define the role of coaches, to determine the effectiveness of coaches, and to provide appropriate PD to support the coaches (deputy superintendent, personal communication, August 16, 2013). Instructional coaches were first employed in 2011 at one of the three high schools in the district. According to the 2011 school improvement plan of a high school in district, the coaches acted as school-level professional learning resources to assist in improving the instructional practices of educators. Coaches were required to have a valid Georgia teaching certification, have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience, and possess leadership experience at the school or system level. According to the job description for instructional coaches in the district under study, instructional coaches must be able to: demonstrate knowledge of Georgia Standards of Excellence, Georgia Performance Standards and research-based instructional strategies; have the ability to model and assist teachers in implementing instructional strategies in the designated content area; demonstrate knowledge of available instructional interventions and the ability to supervise and evaluate their effective implementation; and have the ability to collect, analyze, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data.

According to the district's instructional coach job description (2014), duties and responsibilities include, but are not restricted to:

- Supporting instructional programs and services provided to all Title I schools.

- Supporting Georgia Performance Standards implementation and aiding in the training of the appropriate and effective use of research-based instructional strategies.
- Supporting teachers in building background knowledge to help students meet the Georgia Performance Standards.
- Supporting teachers in increasing the use of instructional technology as an essential instructional tool.
- Providing support and structure for codification, implementation, and sharing of best practices across and within schools through the school-level professional learning communities.
- Developing and assisting in the implementation of professional learning opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness in the delivery of the Georgia Performance Standards.
- Facilitating effective instructional progress monitoring and data collection utilizing results to impact academic achievement.
- Communicating effectively the district's purpose to align teaching practices to learning.
- Focusing on relationships among school(s), customers, and stakeholders.

During the 2014-2015 school year, all the schools within the district employed one full-time instructional coach per school. According to the district's strategic plan (2015), the goal is for instructional coaches to help with meeting district goals by modeling classroom management, content delivery skills, technology integration in

lessons, and by coaches providing PD to teachers. To provide quality PD for teachers as part of their role, the instructional coaches need continuous PD themselves.

PD for instructional coaches is needed to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the instructional coach's skills. According to Knight (2016), instructional coaches are at risk of being ineffective, wasting time and financial resources, and misleading teachers if the coaches do not receive PD. PD for instructional coaches should focus on (a) improving coaching practices, communication, relationship building, and leadership; and (b) deepening knowledge regarding the practices or methods they teach (Knight, 2016).

Coaches receive little preparation for their roles, which are often unclear to both coaches and administrators. The deputy superintendent (personal communication, August 16, 2013) stated that instructional coaches were a relatively new position in the district. Instructional coaches have no classroom responsibilities which a new role that district and building leaders are not accustomed to supervising. The district superintendent further explained that leadership is continuously working towards understanding the role and responsibilities of the instructional coach. "This job is not a state funded position, so there is no set job description. We have yet to develop a common language. We are so different in our thinking. We offer PD based on our perception of what we think an instructional coaches' job is" (Deputy Superintendent, personal communication, August 19, 2016). The deputy superintendent concluded by stating that the instructional coach position is yet to be solidly endorsed by the Georgia Department of Education.

Many researchers have addressed the importance of PD for teachers (Allen et al., 2011; Becker et al., 2013; Hershfeldt et al., 2012; Jones & Dexter, 2014; Knight, 2007; Rush & Young, 2011; Slaughter van Tryon & Schwartz, 2012; Sheridan et al., 2009; Tuli & Tynjälä, 2015; Wei et al., 2009; Yager, 2013), and the implementation of coaching models (Becker et al., 2013, Cappella et al., 2012; Hemmeter & Fox, 2009; Knight, 2007; Reinke et al., 2008). However, there are fewer resources focused on the role and PD of the instructional coach (Gallucci et al., 2010). The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the instructional coach, gain an understanding of the perceptions of instructional coaches about their effectiveness, and identify what support coaches need to improve the instructional practices of teachers. The lack of understanding of the role of professional coaches and the lack of PD provided to the coaches represents a gap in practice, given that this added resource in schools was implemented to address the needs of the teachers and the 21st century learner.

Rationale

Instruction that improves the outcome of learning for all students is the stated aim for reforming educational operations for many school districts (Learning Forward, 2015). Across the United States, schools are researching and implementing strategies to strengthen student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2015). The amplified use of instructional coaches is a reform resulting from the requirements for PD in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB requires districts to incorporate professional learning programs that include activities, such as coaching, for teachers at schools that are unsuccessful with achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 2 or more consecutive

years. The rural Title I school district in Georgia recently hired instructional coaches in all the elementary, middle, and high schools, as mandated by the district's school improvement plan.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The strategic plan (2015) of the district under study called for the district to implement instructional coaching for teachers in the core academic courses (mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies). The expectation is for the instructional coaches to provide an array of PD to teachers and bring research-based practices into classrooms by working with school leadership and teachers. Instructional coaches in the district under study find themselves inventing roles as they address concerns raised by the principal or assistant principal about challenging teachers, parents, or curriculum. Administrators frequently use coaches in capacities other than what is outlined in their job description as critical needs arise. Some of the non-instructional tasks coaches complete include, but are not limited to, clerical assignments, substitute teaching, administrative tasks, and tutoring students. To work towards addressing the expectations of administration, instructional coaches address these issues holistically as they work to solve school problems. Schools need to evaluate the role of the instructional coach and administrators' understanding of how to utilize an instructional coach in the building. According to the deputy superintendent (personal communication, June 13, 2016), an instrument to measure the effectiveness of the instructional coaching program is needed in the district to gain more insight about the effect the program has on teacher pedagogy and student achievement.

Additionally, according to the deputy superintendent, coaches have not been educated in how to mentor teachers (personal communication, August 16, 2013). According to Gallucci et al. (2010), there is an assumption that people who transition into the role of an instructional coach are experts who are prepared to support the professional learning of others. Many districts utilize "distinguished" teachers as instructional coaches (Center on Education Policy, 2015). Districts with the most successful instructional coaching programs recognize that if an instructional coach is good at teaching K-12 learners, they may not necessarily be skilled at coaching, mentoring, or understanding adult learners (New Teacher Center, 2016). The switch from teaching children to coaching adults is substantial (New Teacher Center, 2016).

Despite the instructional coach's willingness to tackle school problems, coaches may lack the professional preparation needed to assist schools in improving instruction. I used a descriptive qualitative analysis in this study to pinpoint "what is going on" (Merriam, 2009) and to identify the important features, as well as, the methodical explanation of interrelationships among them. Descriptive analysis provided valuable insight for the understanding of the role of an instructional coach and addressed the importance of PD of instructional coaches.

Evidence of the Problem from the Literature

Implementing an instructional coach program in a school or district has numerous precedents (Sailors & Shanklin, 2010). For instance, districts trying to raise literacy levels to meet state and federal standards began to hire coaches. Now schools, districts,

and states employ reading, literacy, science, and math coaches to support classroom teachers in implementing new practices (Sailors & Shanklin, 2010).

Despite the prevalence of instructional coaches, no standard model of an instructional coach exists. Some districts use instructional coaches to train teachers to implement specific programs (Becker et al., 2013; Hemmeter & Fox, 2009,), while others use instructional coaches to help teachers address students with behavioral problems (Cappella et al., 2012). Other programs are specific for schools that did not reach AYP (Center on Education Policy, 2015). However, there is not a strong research base regarding the role of the instructional coach. As a result, Sailors and Shanklin (2010) stated that coaches have invented their own roles and have relied on limited research to shape their practice.

As districts implement coaching programs, they need to create effective PD programs for the coaches. Skills required by instructional coaches are communication, leadership to professionally develop teachers, relationship building, and change management for individuals placed in ambiguous, contextually dependent roles (Gallucci et al., 2010). Coaches must be skilled in coaching teachers, and teachers must be willing and motivated to receive PD from instructional coaches (Gallucci et al., 2010). Coaching is also influenced by reform initiatives and educational policy (Gallucci et al., 2010). With adequate PD, coaches will be able to improve classroom instructional practices, and, in turn, increase student achievement.

Definitions

College & career ready: For students to truly graduate ready for college and careers, they need to complete a rigorous, robust, and well-rounded curriculum that exposes them to a wide range of academic and technical knowledge and skills to ensure all doors are left open for them when they leave high school (Achieve, 2013).

Co-teaching: An educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active fashion, jointly teaching students who are academically and behaviorally diverse (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015).

Dialogue: Discussion between peers that allows the other to explicitly articulate, appreciate and extend their understanding of practice (Simoncini et al., 2014).

Discussion: Takes place in professional learning through a collaborative, dialogue-driven environment (McAleer & Bangert, 2011).

Globally competitive: Global competence refers to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community (National Education Association, 2010).

Instructional coach: An individual who provides job-embedded, individualized, and sustained PD to teachers (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009).

Instructional practices: Applications that fuel effective and efficient classroom interaction to drive students on their journey of discovery in a learning experience (Harrison, 2010).

Professional Development: The process of individual and collective examination and improvement of practice designed to empower educators ‘‘to make complex decisions; to identify and solve problems; and to connect theory, practice, and student outcomes’’ (American Federation of Teachers, 2002, p. 4).

Professional learning community (PLC): A group of individuals that cross-examine their practices through reflection during on-going collaborations (D’Ardenne et al., 2013).

Research-based best practices: Those strategies, interventions, programs, or curricula that are supported by rigorous substantiation of effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Significance

My research is significant because students may learn more from better-educated teachers, who in turn learn from better-educated coaches. According to Steinberg and Sartain (2015), the quality of a student’s teacher is the most important factor related to student achievement. However, the research conducted by Gallucci et al. (2010) shows that instructional coaches are also learners, and that there is little evidence about their professional learning processes prior to them accepting the role of instructional coach. Coaches require ongoing professional development to improve their skills and remain familiar with the curriculum currently used by teachers.

In this study, I examined the role of the instructional coach, teachers’ instructional practices, and supports needed to assist the instructional coaches in their role. With the appropriate PD, instructional coaches can support the district by creating systemic

changes in the instructional practices of teachers, which in turn improves the education of students within the district.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are instructional coaches' perceptions of instructional coaching in a rural Title I school district in Georgia?
2. How do instructional coaches support teachers in improving instructional practices and interventions to address students' needs?
3. How do instructional coaches describe their professional development to maintain and improve their skills as an instructional coach?

Review of the Literature

It is the mission of the district under study to provide educational excellence for all students. Through a relevant and rigorous education, students within the district will have the opportunity to use 21st century skills to perform, create, and think critically in efforts to communicate their knowledge (District Website, 2014). The progressively interconnected and interdependent global society has a mandate for American students to be educated with a pledge to cooperation, an appreciation for humanity, and an embrace of tolerance by developing habits of the mind (National Education Association, 2010). According to the National Education Association (2010), "to achieve global competence, America's public education system must develop goals that provide equal education opportunity for all students to realize their full potential" (p. 2). In turn, students will receive the education they need and deserve.

U.S. business leaders and policymakers are concerned teachers are not skilled enough to prepare students to be globally competitive (Manzo, 2007). Teacher professional development is critical to the quality of the student experience (Sheridan et al., 2009). In efforts to improve the instructional practices of teachers, the position of instructional coach was introduced as a new role in professional development of teachers (Makibbin & Sprague, 1993).

An instructional coach is an individual who provides job-embedded, individualized, and continual professional development to teachers (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Instructional coaches work closely with teachers and administrators, and their primary role is to ensure teachers implement research-based instructional practices supportive of student learning. To ensure teachers implement instructional best practices, instructional coaches must be knowledgeable about best practices and trends in education. Professional development opportunities are essential to equip instructional coaches with the tools they need to influence the instructional practices of teachers. Though research about the role and practical experience of instructional coaching is rich, there is minimal peer-reviewed research that "defines the parameters of the role, describes and contextualizes the work of instructional coaching, or explains how individuals learn to be coaches and are supported to refine their practice over time" (Gallucci et al., 2010, p. 920). Therefore, in this study I closely examined the role and work of instructional coaches, as well as the supports needed to assist with teachers' instructional practices.

In the following literature review for this study, I focus on the purpose of the study and research questions. The review centers on the definition and role of the instructional coach, instructional coach cycle, need for professional development of instructional coaches, and examples of exemplary coaching models the district under study could explore. In the review, I have also included a discussion of the theory behind adult learning to provide an understanding of the importance of instructional coaches' delivery of professional development.

Conceptual Framework

Educators of adults share an important belief that the heart of educational practice is facilitating learning (Glowa et al, 2016). Regardless of the learning population or the work setting, those who facilitate learning for adults must understand of how adults learn to structure learning activities that address the needs of the adult learner (Merriam, 2011). According to Merriam (2011), there is no simple explanation for how adults learn because adult learning is viewed as a complex phenomenon. The theory behind adult learning evolves continually, and adult learning has increasingly come to be viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon, rather than merely a cognitive process (Merriam, 2011).

My aim, in this study, was to examine the perceptions of instructional coaches regarding their role and the supports instructional coaches feel they need, through PD, to address the needs of adult learners to increase student achievement. There is not a single theory that is best to address the needs of adult learning (Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011). There is a plethora of literature that provides a multitude of adult learning models, theories, assumptions, and explanations associated with how adults

learn. However, I grounded the framework for this study in Malcolm Knowles' andragogy theory. Though there are several theories related to adult learning, Knowles' andragogy theory is one of the better-known. According to Knowles et al. (1973), most theories about how adults learn are based on how children learn, which in turn is based on research of how animals learn. Knowles believes that adult human beings are more complex than animals (Knowles, 2005).

Andragogy is defined as the art and science of assisting adults learn (Kearsley, 2010). Knowles' andragogy theory is underwritten by assumptions regarding: (a) changes in self-concept, (b) the role of experience, (c) readiness to learn, (d) orientation to learning, and (e) motivation to learn. Changes in self-concept means that as people grow and mature, their self-concept transforms from one of complete dependency to increasing self-directedness in learning. The role of experience refers to an individual's maturity as he or she accumulates an expanding reservoir of experiences that aid in learning and provide a broad base to connect new learning. As individuals mature, their readiness to learn increases with the developmental tasks required for their evolving social or life roles. Orientation to learning refers to adults moving towards a problem-centered orientation to learning and immediately applying new learning. As an individual matures, the motivation to learn is based on internal, not external, factors (Knowles, 1973; Knowles, 1984; Knowles, 2005; Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011).

Additionally, Knowles developed four principles to use when designing, implementing, and evaluating an adult learner program. I used the principles of

andragogy as the main constructs for this study. The principles were created from the belief that a program should be designed using resources and materials that are learner-centered and allow the learner to be self-directed. Researchers have noted that Knowles's four principles should be applied to adult learning. Knowles contended:

- Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation stage of their instruction.
- Adults use positive and negative experiences as the foundation of their learning.
- Adult interest is higher when learning is relevant to their job or personal experiences.
- Adults enjoy problem-centered learning more than content centered (Conlan et al, 2003; Knowles, 1973; Knowles, 1984; Knowles, 2005; Knowles' 4 Principles of Andragogy section, para. 1).

Research has shown that adults learn differently from children (Finn, 2011). While Mcgrath (2009) has noted that there are some similarities in learning between adults and children (such as communication, language, and interaction), several other researchers have debated the numerous differences in the way adults and children learn. Adult learners have a need to understand why they are acquiring new knowledge before they agree to take part in a learning session. As McGarth has noted, "If adults are aware why they are learning new skills, there will be a 'readiness' to learn and they will be more willing to participate in discussions in the classroom or learning context" (p. 100). Connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge need to be made for the adult

learner to comprehend the value of the connection between new knowledge and real life situations (McDonough, 2013).

The art of teaching adults requires the instructor to understand the concepts of the adult learning theory and principles, and to understand how to incorporate those concepts into their instructional practices. Instructors respond more effectively to the needs of the adult learners when they understand andragogy (Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011). As a result, instructors facilitate learning while assisting adult learners with setting and accomplishing goals and selecting the courses needed to achieve the set goals. Because adult learners have the essential need to recognize why, it is important for instructors to include the experiences of the adult learner to assist the learner with applying the knowledge into their practices (Kearsley, 2010).

Andragogy theory was appropriate for this study because of its focus on the art of teaching adults, which is the main role of an instructional coach. The theory is anchored in the characteristics of adult learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). To examine the instructional coach program for the district under study, it was important for me to use andragogy theory to note the adult learners' (instructional coach) experiences with addressing the needs of other adult learners (teachers). The andragogy theory provides a practical instructional guide for addressing the needs of the adult learner. When the principles of andragogy theory are applied as the foundation for developing programs and curricula for adults, educators can be more effective in their practice and more responsive to the needs of the adult learner (Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011). Andragogy theory informed my development the research questions by highlighting the

instructional coaches' perception of the barriers faced and supports needed to address the adult learner.

Review of Broader Problem

As a result of accountability pressures, school districts hire coaches to improve student achievement (Huguet et al. 2014; Wilder, 2014). The underlying interest in coaching results from the belief that coaches improve teacher efficacy, which in turn can improves student achievement (Polly & Mraz, 2013). *Teacher self-efficacy* refers to what a teacher believes he or she can or cannot do. As Yoo (2016) has noted, "Research has shown that a teacher's judgment of how much he or she can do affects student learning due to its impact on instructional choice and persistence" Yoo (p. 85). According to Vygotsky (1978), one of the ways in which learning may occur is through the interactions with someone who is more knowledgeable. School district leaders believe instructional coaches are a more knowledgeable resource (Wilder, 2014; Huguet et al. 2014).

The definition of an instructional coach varies widely amongst researchers. Yopp et al. (2011) broadly defined an instructional coach as a "person who works collaboratively with a teacher to improve that teacher's practice and content knowledge, with the ultimate goal of affecting student achievement" (p. 50). Makibbin and Sprague (1993) defined the instructional coach as "an educator who acts as a resource at the school level to assist the principal and the faculty with efforts to improve instructional practices, for the purpose of improving student learning" (p. 8). Knight et al. (2012) stated that instructional coaching is a job-embedded, hands-on, ongoing strategy to address school reform, improve student achievement, and build capacity in teacher

expertise of instructional practices. According to Instructional Coaching Innovations (2016), instructional coaches are on-the-job change agents who provide PD and differentiated coaching to improve teachers' instructional effectiveness by teaching and modeling implementation of research-based instructional strategies. Although the definition of instructional coach varies, each definition includes improving instructional practices.

Instructional coaching is a school based effort used to increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Yopp et al., 2011). Literature about instructional coaching dates back to the works of Joyce and Showers in the 1990s. It was not called instructional coaching at the time, rather peer coaching. Research conducted by Showers and Joyce in 1996, found that teachers who experienced coaching by content experts or knowledgeable peers showed gains in collaboration with other teachers in common grade and subject areas, as well as an increase implementing instructional practices to address the needs of students. Wilder (2014) stated "…collaboration with an instructional coach leads to a change in the attitude, beliefs, and practices of teachers and therefore improves student learning" (p. 160). Effective collaboration can result in the improvement of student performance.

Research has empirically connected the activities of instructional coaches to gains in student outcomes and an increase of teachers' embracing instructional practices (Yopp et al., 2011). A study by Bean, Swan, and Knaub in 2003, found that teachers' instructional practices changed positively when they had the opportunity to work with an instructional coach. Noted improvements were: (a) teachers asking more higher-level

thinking questions; (b) teachers implementing differentiated instruction; (c) teachers adapting instructional materials to meet the individual needs of the learner; and (d) teachers encouraging students to be actively engaged in the lesson. The improvements support that teachers must share responsibility for the outcome (Yopp et al., 2011).

Role of the Coach. Polly et al. (2013), found that instructional coaches have the ability to stimulate changes in the instructional practices of teachers if they have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, knowledge of instructional practices, mastery of coaching techniques, and an understanding of the adult learner. A coach helps teachers increase their content knowledge, build on their strengths, and improve instructional practices (Polly et al., 2013). An instructional coach takes on several roles. Roles are inclusive of mentor, data coach, content expert, and professional learning facilitator (Chien, 2013; Polly et al., 2013; Collegial Coaching Toolkit, 2007). Therefore, instructional coaches need to receive essential PD to support understanding of the varied roles they play in teachers' instructional practice (Stock & Duncan, 2010).

Mentor. The mentoring process can benefit both the mentee and mentor. Stock and Duncan (2010) stated, "Principals and instructional facilitators alike recognize the need for mentoring, even for those individuals with experience" (p. 37). Mentors serve the needs of new teachers or those teachers who are new to the school (Chien, 2013). Schools usually provide mentors to assist less experienced persons. Mentoring is defined as "the process of providing help, advice, and guidance to people with less experience for the purpose of helping them with their personal and career development" (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 59). If schools provided collaborative differentiated professional

learning to build relationships between mentors and mentees, teachers' increased confidence, and efficacy using best-practices would support student success (Molitor et al., 2014, p. 5).

Butler and Cuenca (2012) found there are three major conceptions of the mentor teacher. The mentor teacher is an instructional coach, socializing agent, and emotional support system. Mentors usually base their conceptualization of mentoring on their experiences with their students or student teachers. Butler and Cuenca (2012) noted, "Mentors as instructional coaches observe and evaluate instructional practice and provide constructive feedback aimed at improving the methods and techniques of preservice teachers," (p. 299). The role of the instructional coach is often viewed as a mentor teacher, one who assists teachers with refining practices. Instructional coaches mentor, rather than prescribe and supervise instructional practices. Mentoring and supervising employees is different. Supervisors have power over an employee and mentors do not. No power imbalance exists between a mentor and mentee (Stock & Duncan, 2010). Mentors develop the abilities of teachers and are readily available to assist with teachers' instructional growth. Instructional coaches do not impose their teaching methodologies on teachers, rather they develop the instructional strengths of teachers and improve any instructional weaknesses based on the character, personality, and ability of the teacher.

Stock and Duncan (2010) conducted a descriptive study in the western United States to find out who mentors the mentor (instructional coaches). The researchers found that 56% of the instructional coaches in the study indicated they did not have a mentor, 90% believed beginning instructional coaches should have a mentor, and 58% believed

experienced coaches should have a mentor. The results of my data analysis indicated to me that barriers to implementation of mentoring programs include the lack of time and state guidance. Instructional coach respondents emphasized that a mentor would be important to assist with gaining an understanding of how to use data. Educators in the age of accountability feel the need to produce documentable results to represent student achievement.

Mentoring also benefits the mentor and the mentee. The benefits of mentoring include increasing the knowledge of both the mentor and mentee. Mentoring potentially provides leadership development to mentors. In turn, "instructional coaches develop teacher leaders" (Molitor et al., 2014 p. 53). Development of teacher leaders supports the success of the school and student learners.

Data coach. Coaching is a strategy several school districts are using to assist with building teacher capacity, as well as respond to data associated with student learning. The primary role of an instructional coach is to address pedagogy and content specific curriculum; however, data analysis is another facet of the coach's role (Huguet et al., 2014). The data coaches' role includes: (a) assisting teachers in recognizing relevant student data, (b) understanding data, (c) applying information about data to classroom practices, (d) facilitating constructive dialogue amongst teachers, and (e) identifying instructional practices that are appropriate responses to the data (Huguet et al., 2014).

With an increased demand for teachers to inform instruction by using data, coaches are viewed as a potential lifeline to building capacity in teachers' skills in interpreting and crafting instructional responses to data (Huguet et al., 2014). According

to Killion (2015), "coaches and professional learning communities influence how coaches respond to data and how they use data to change delivery of instruction" (p.58). As a data coach, the coach assists teachers with disaggregating data, setting goals, pace curriculum, progress monitor students (Huguet et al., 2014; Polly, 2013).

Having a class or school that is data driven is a district expectation for school leadership. Assessment results indicate student understanding of the concept(s) taught; therefore, teachers gain more insight about what needs to be taught (Polly, 2013). Ideally, when both formal and informal assessments are given to students, the results inform instructional decisions of teachers (Polly, 2013). However, all teachers are not equipped to analyze data to inform their instructional decisions (Huguet et al., 2014). Researchers Polly (2013) and Huguet et al. (2014) suggest that teachers appreciate data, but struggle with how to use the data to improve instruction. However, Adams (2015) explained how collecting and analyzing data is a source of school improvement (Adams et al., 2015).

Professional development facilitator. Traditional professional development of teachers usually takes place outside the classroom and teachers are required to transfer the knowledge gained during PD to the classroom setting. However, instructional coaching usually takes place within the classroom setting (Chin-Wen, 2013). When a coach takes on the role of a PD facilitator, the coach supports teacher's learning beyond an isolated workshop. The knowledge gained from PD should be transferred into the classroom practices of teachers (Polly et al., 2013).

There is a history of ineffectiveness and incoherence for the PD for teachers (Pianta et al., 2008). Changes in the classroom, can directly influence student learning in the classroom (Rush & Young, 2011). Thomas Guskey (2002) developed a model for teacher change. The model shows that teacher change begins with PD. Guskey's model supports the belief that quality, job-embedded PD leads to modifications in teachers' instructional practices; teachers' beliefs and attitudes change when they see the changes in the outcomes of student learning. Rush and Young (2011), stated Guskey's model suggests that those conducting PD must: "recognize that change is a gradual and difficult process; ensure that teachers receive regular feedback on student learning progress; and provide continued follow-up, support, and pressure" (p. 14). Coaches can provide support to teachers by offering PD experiences about specific content processes (Polly et al., 2013).

Administrators understanding of the coach's role. Many coaches are hired by principals who use their own criteria for hiring. The principal's criteria may not parallel the pedagogical content knowledge needed to fulfill the role of an instructional coach. Huguet et al. (2014) stated, "administrators play an important role in shaping the work of a coach through their mediation of political dynamics in a school" (p. 2). Principal leadership is a vital element of school context that effects the practice of the instructional coach. Research suggests that increased effectiveness of implementation of instructional coaches exists when the principal is actively supportive of the coach. For example, a study conducted by Matsumura et al. (2009), found that teachers would likely participate

in a new literacy program and support the coach when they saw that the principal supported the instructional coach's expertise in the content area.

Dialogue between the instructional coach and administrator needs to be ongoing about the role and responsibilities of the coach (Mayer, 2013). PD for administrators and instructional coaches is essential in effectively implementing a new instructional coaching program in a building. Providing PD will provide educators an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills specific to their position and job performance (National Education Association, n.d.).

Professional Development

Several professions ensure their practitioners receive counsel or real-life applications specific to the job from a coach or colleague (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2016). Hall (2005) emphasized that most professionals understand the necessity of continuously upgrading skills to remain abreast of current trends. Some professions consider coaching to be an essential component of mastering the prerequisites for certain skills (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2016). For example, doctors receive coaching through internships and residencies when they are new to the specialty; junior associates are mentored by senior partners in the legal profession; and now the educational field uses instructional coaching as a strategy to shape teachers' instructional practices, increase student achievement, and improve school reform (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2016).

One of the most neglected areas of management is staff development (Lipman, 2013). Weakness in workplace skills exists in any company (Frost, 2016). Lipman,

(2013) identified three reasons PD is often ignored by leadership: (a) the focus is on the present; (b) data from bureaucratic exercises are completed, but nothing is done to effect change from the data; and (c) there is not time to deliver PD. Providing a PD program allows an organization to strengthen the skills all employees need to improve in their practices and provides a key opportunity to increase the knowledge base of employees (Frost, 2016).

Participation in professional training sessions allows the employee to hone their skills, remain abreast of new learning theories and modern methods (Al-Mzary et al., 2015). Employees who have training are more equipped to perform their job. Professional learning also builds the employees' confidence and may help them to generate new ideas (Frost, 2016).

Rush and Young (2011) stated that PD is essential. Kelly (2012) emphasized how professional learning causes systemic changes in any organization. Both the company and the employee benefit when employees receive PD, which makes the investment worthwhile (Frost, 2016). The advantages of providing PD include, understanding of expectations, enhancing the job performance of employees, and employee empowerment (Al-Mzary, 2015).

The National Education Association (n.d.) stated that PD should be a requirement for all educators throughout their career. Since students are held to a high standard and the academic achievement of students lies heavily upon the support and education they receive, National Education Association asserts that all individuals who work with students should be held to a higher standard (n.d.). Kowal and Steiner (2007) stated,

"Districts with longstanding coaching programs have found that coaches require PD of their own to improve their knowledge and skills and to keep up with the needs of their teachers and schools" (website). Providing PD to instructional coaches will assist with an understanding of not only their role, but the instructional coach model the district under study selects, coaching cycle, and an increased knowledge of the skills needed to be effective.

Exemplary Instructional Coach Partnership Models

Research supports implementation of several instructional coach models (Becker et al., 2013; Cappella et al., 2012, Hemmeter & Fox, 2009; Knight, 2002, Reinke et al., 2008). There is no standard definition of an instructional coach or model of an instructional coach program (Kowal & Steiner, website, 2007). Exemplary coaching models exist; however, a school system should implement the model that has the most practical components connected to coaching activities and meets the needs of the diverse learners. Each of the following models has integral components, based off a focus that assists instructional coaches with understanding their roles, responsibilities, and needs of teachers.

Classroom checkup model. The Classroom Checkup (CCU) coaching model focuses on effective classroom behavioral management (Reinke et al., 2008). The model involves motivational interviewing, goal setting, broad data collection, observation, and personalized feedback (Becker et al., 2013). The CCU coaching model is specifically tailored for teachers who demonstrate low implementation of a program (Becker et al., 2013). The model focuses on changing teacher behavior to decrease disorderly behavior

in the classroom (Reinke et al., 2008). The model has a narrowed focus on behavioral intervention and teachers' consistent use of effective classroom management practices.

My teacher partner coaching model. My Teaching Partner (MTP) coaching model, a web-mediated approach for the in-house PD of early education teachers, focuses on refining teacher-student interactions in the classroom (Becker et al., 2013, Allen et al., 2011). MTP utilizes consultant observation of videotaped teacher-student interactions and guided reflection of these interactions (coach and teacher observe videotaped teacher-student interaction), web-mediated consultations, and web-based video examples of effective practices (Becker et al., 2013; Pianta et al., 2008). The MTP model involves collaboration between administrators, coaches, teachers, and students (Becker et al., 2013). The MTP model may not be the best general coaching model for school districts that have limited technological resources.

Teaching pyramid coaching model. Coaches who use the Teaching Pyramid organize evidence-based practices to support teachers in the implementation of new instructional approaches, to encourage social-emotional development, and to address and prevent challenging behavioral problems in early education (Hemmeter & Fox, 2009). The Teaching Pyramid coaching model involves live observation, consultation, feedback, and goal setting (Becker et al., 2013). Preschool programs use the model and focus on behavior intervention (Hemmeter & Fox, 2009), which limits use as a general model for school districts.

Bridge coaching model. The program, Bridging Mental Health and Education in Urban Schools, BRIDGE, is a consultation and coaching intervention (Cappella et al.,

2012). The Bridge coaching model was designed to increase effectiveness of classroom collaborations and advance the functioning of children with behavioral challenges by focusing on proximal interactions, behavior and verbal exchanges that communicate warmth and respect, between teachers and children; setting up positive and clear expectations; and engaging learning opportunities (Cappella et al., 2012). The BRIDGE coaching model includes live observation and video review, consultation, feedback, and goal setting (Becker et al., 2013). The BRIDGE model is an appropriate model for districts that want to target students with behavioral challenges.

Kansas coaching models. Although exemplary frameworks for instructional coaching models exist, strategies will be more successful if tailored to the district. The CCU, MTP, Teaching Pyramid, and BRIDGE coaching models do not address the diverse needs of teachers in the district under study (Becker et al., 2013). Within this study, an adapted version of Kansas Instructional Coaching Project Partnership Learning model, will be the observational protocol instrument used to examine the role of the instructional coach and his or her influence on a teacher's instructional practices and student academic achievement (Knight, 2002).

The Kansas partnership model is grounded in the works of Paulo Freire (1970), Richard J. Bernstein (1983), Riane Eisler (1988), Peter Senge (1990), Peter Block (1993), Michael Fullan (1993), and William Isaacs (1999) who write about human interaction, knowledge development and knowledge transfer. The coaching model is inclusive of six principles: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, and praxis (Knight, 2002). Kansas Partnership model includes practical strategies to collaborate with teachers, more

insight about the responsibilities of an instructional coach, principles the instructional coach should employ, and resources to support the instructional coach. The focus is on how the instructional coach and teacher relationship should be a partnership (Greenhill, 2010).

Instructional coach effectiveness. One element of the effectiveness of instructional coaching programs is the instructional coach cycle (Knight, 2015). Instructional coaching has been studied by Kansas Coaching Project and Instructional Coaching Group researchers since 1996. The result of the research conducted by Kansas Coaching Project through studies and interviews is an instructional coaching cycle. The following are the six steps researchers followed:

1. Instructional Coaches implement the coaching process.
2. Instructional coaches video record their coaching interactions and their teachers' implementation of the teaching practices.
3. Instructional coaches monitor progress towards their goals.
4. Researchers interview coaches and teacher to monitor progress as they move through the coaching cycle.
5. Researchers meet with coaches two or three times a year (at the end of each cycle) to discuss how the coaching process can be refined or improved.
6. Refinements are made, and the revised coaching model and research process is repeated (Knight, 2015, p. 12).

Following these steps continuously assisted the researchers with developing a "powerful way to conduct instructional coaching" (p. 12). In turn, effective mentoring of coaches through the cycle leads to better performance.

An instructional coaching cycle is only one component of an instructional coach's effectiveness. Other elements effective coaches need include PD, knowledge research-based teaching practices, effective leadership, and the support of a school system that fosters meaningful professional learning. Knight et al. (2015) says, "Instructional coaches who use a proven coaching cycle can partner with teachers to set and reach improvement goals that have an unmistakable, positive effect on students' lives." (p. 18). However, there is not a single recipe for effective coaching (Gibson, 2011).

Effective coaching is structured and requires feedback, reflection, communication about what the teacher expects from the coach (Gibson, 2011). According to Huguet et al. (2014), "studies suggest that successful coaches are sensitive to approach their work in ways that are perceived as non-threatening to individual teachers" (p. 5). Approaches to coaching vary, just as teachers vary. The constant in coaching is the responsibility the teacher has to become a consumer of coaching (Yopp, 2011).

Conclusion

Instructional coaching is spreading rapidly throughout the United States in elementary, middle, and high schools (Chien, 2013). Chien (2013) noted, "Coaching develops trust, instills collective responsibility, imparts an innovative orientation, and provides an example of professionalism around instructional practice" (p. 1). Many

coaches enjoy their new role. According to Bean et al. (2012), "coaches are eager to get as much information as they can about how to perform their role effectively" (p. 1). However, given the newness of the role, the way coaches are viewed varies amongst teachers, administrators, and school board members.

As coaches enjoy their role, they discover that teachers are eager to receive assistance. Skiffington et al. (2011), state that instructional coaching "has soaring highs as teachers gain new insights and see children benefit from their new teaching strategies" (p. 12). According to Adams et al (2015), "The power of instructional coaching comes through teachers' active involvement in choosing the focus for coaching and their engagement in interpreting data collected during the coaching observation" (p. 25).

Instructional coaches are viewed as key levers for improvement. Coaching leads to quantifiable changes in teachers' practices and learning improvements for students (Skiffington et al., 2011). Atteberry and Bryk (2011) asserted that instructional coaching is a complex practice to implement well. Dr. Atul Gawande, an acclaimed research scientist and surgeon, penned in a 2011 New Yorker article, "Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance" (p. 11). On the contrary, coaching that is done poorly has been known to be wasteful, ineffective, and at times destructive. Therefore, it is important for the instructional coach to receive training to be successful with assisting teachers (Stock and Duncan, 2010).

Implications

Several school reform studies provide evidence that policy initiatives rarely influence classroom practices unless there is substantial follow up on an individual level

(Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). According to Tuli and Tynjälä (2015), "continuous PD of teachers is of growing interest globally, as it is considered vital to cope effectively with ongoing changes and to improve the quality of education," (p. 15). PD of teachers is a key component to assist with improving schools.

The core of instructional coaching involves the teacher and coach. A coach works one-on-one with teachers or with small groups to model, train, provide guidance, support, and any other resources needed to address instructional practices of teachers. According to Casey (2011), "the most successful schools and districts have a widely shared vision of good teaching (p. 29). The vision serves as "a roadmap for collaborative and personalized PD" (Casey, 2011, p. 29). When coaches model lessons, best practices become visible and the common vision of effective teaching is evident throughout the school.

Findings of my study may reveal that an instructional coach PD program should be implemented in the district of study. Establishing an instructional coach PD program may be beneficial to the school district as coaches will benefit from a more systemic comprehension of their role and responsibilities. Professional learning for coaches will build the knowledge base of district leaders, which in turn will provide relevant support to instructional coaches.

Implementation of a PD program, built upon an established coaching model, could not only be beneficial to the district under study, but surrounding districts that choose to implement instructional coaching programs. A professional learning program for coaches could identify specific areas of need and assist instructional coaches with

implementing research-based best practices to address teacher needs, with the goal of improving student achievement. The increase in student achievement may increase the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score for schools and ultimately the district. Developing the skills of instructional coaches may also assist the district in meeting its non-negotiable goals of increasing student achievement and more effective teaching. Additionally, providing an understanding of the role of the instructional coach, may assist the district in meeting its non-negotiable goal of more effective teaching.

Summary

Coburn and Woulfin (2012) stated instructional coaching is one of the principal strategies that many policy initiatives use to achieve their goals. Coaches share their knowledge and experience with teachers and convey important information from the district to the teachers on a personal level. Coaches move between classrooms, grade levels and schools to help build shared knowledge, culture, and experience (Anderson et al., 2014). Coaches are viewed as onsite PD to assist teachers with making changes in their instructional practices.

Effective instructional coaches, who understand their role, can influence social change in the educational environment. Coaches with the appropriate professional skills can support the district by creating systemic changes in the instructional practices of teachers. If coaches use the appropriate skills, they can help educators view their teaching from a broader perspective. The current study used the Kansas Coaching Model to evaluate the role of instructional coaches. The results of this study assisted in

developing a PD plan for instructional coaches. The goal of the plan is to assist with improving the instructional strategies of teachers, in turn improving the academic achievement of the students.

The upcoming sections of this paper will describe the methodology used for research. Section two is inclusive of an in-depth description and justification of the research design, participants, data collection and analysis, and limitations of the study. Section three is reflective of the proposed project as an outcome of the findings in the study. It includes project goals, purpose of the project, outcomes of learning for participants, timeline of project, activities, and the implementation and evaluation plan for the project. The rationale for the project is described, as well as literature review to support the project genre. The final section of the paper is section four. Section four provides reflections and conclusions drawn from the study. The focus of Section 4 is on the strengths and limitations of the project, recommendations for alternative approaches, and directions for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Through my research, I examined the perceptions of instructional coaches in their role. I learned about the PD opportunities coaches received to support and address the needs of the adult learner. To improve student performance on state- and district-mandated tests, the study school district employed instructional coaches for teachers. Instructional coaching is a strategy used to build teacher capacity to support and respond to student learning data (Huguet, 2014). In the United States, teachers are consistently advised to use data to lead their instruction. Use of data is not only an expectation, but used as a criterion for teacher evaluations to measure teacher effectiveness. Huguet (2014) stated that though teachers appreciate accessibility to various forms of data, they often struggle with interpreting data, formulating questions, selecting indicators, and developing instructional responses due to lack of skills and knowledge with data implementation.

Although the school district hired instructional coaches to address the professional learning needs of teachers, the deputy superintendent reported that PD is not offered in the district to support the work of the instructional coach (personal communication, August 19, 2016). I conducted a qualitative study to provide insight about the perceptions that instructional coaches have regarding instructional coaching and supports needed to assist them in effectively supporting the instructional practices of teachers and student achievement. Interview and observational protocol documents were used to answer the following questions:

1. What are instructional coaches' perceptions of instructional coaching in a rural Title I school district in Georgia?
2. How do instructional coaches support teachers in improving instructional practices and interventions to address students' needs?
3. How do instructional coaches describe their PD to maintain and improve their skills as an instructional coach?

The qualitative case study methodology offers tools for researchers to examine complex phenomena within specific frameworks. I chose a case study design because case studies focus on how people cope in real-world settings (Yin, 2016). I chose the qualitative research method because perception data were needed to address the research questions and gain a deeper understanding of what instructional coaches understand as needed supports and perceived barriers. In qualitative, interpretive research, researchers collect data and summarize it using non-statistical methods of inquiry and analysis. Analysis is documented using primarily verbal and narrative methods such as observations and interviews (Lodico et al., 2010). Using the frameworks of Knowles' four principles of andragogy as the constructs, I analyzed the data for patterns to describe the perceptions of instructional coaches in their natural setting.

For this study, I used a single case study design. According to Yin (2008), a single case study "is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context…" (p. 18). Merriam (2009) has defined a case study as an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). When a case study is bounded, it means that the case has boundaries, which are usually by place, time, or

physical activity (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Bounding a case indicates what will and will not be studied. I conducted a single case study to gain an understanding of the participating coaches' personal interpretations of their experiences when working with teachers. The design was chosen because the study was about a single case—perceptions of instructional coaches' PD needs. I focused on instructional coaches working at different levels in the district (elementary, middle, high, and district). The 12 participating instructional coaches (three elementary school, three middle school, three high school, and three district-level) represented various levels within the district. A single case study design is more exclusive than a multiple case. Though the participants represented different levels from different sites, the research design method as a whole, was a single case study design focusing on the perspective of instructional coaches from different sites.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

I used a single case study design because my goal was to gain an understanding of the perspectives instructional coaches have about their role and supports needed for effectiveness. Conducting a single case study allowed me to analyze the phenomenon within and across settings. According to Yin (2009), a case study consists of many variables. The research design is inclusive of multiple forms of data used for data collection and analysis procedures (Creswell, 2012). The single case study was the best method to use for this study because it enabled me to focus on one critical case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The function of a single case study is different from other qualitative case studies such as historical organizational case studies and life histories. Merriam (2009)

stated that in a historical case study, researchers investigate a phenomenon over time. A description and analysis of the case is presented by the researcher using a historical perspective. A historical case study was not suitable for this study because in a historical study, the focus is on the past and "no relevant persons are alive to report …what occurred," (Merriam, 2009, p. 47). Additionally, a life history case study was not appropriate for this study because life histories are conducted with one person by way of an extensive interview (Merriam, 2009; Bogdan and Biklen 2007). The result of a life history case study is a first-person narrative of a phenomenon.

I selected the qualitative case study design because I wanted the participants in the study to share their experiences from their perspective. The quantitative research method would thus not have been appropriate because I needed perception data and not a statistical measure to gain deeper understanding of the perceived barriers instructional coaches face that will influence or reinforce their appropriate behaviors (see Creswell, 2012). Additionally, the quantitative method is objective and it does not reflect the subjective nature I needed to address the research questions.

A grounded theory was likewise not the appropriate design for this study. Researchers use grounded theory to explain an educational process, events, interactions, or activities that occur over time (Creswell, 2012). Grounded theory is used when existing theories do not support the problem or participants. Knowles's andragogy theory addresses the problem and participants in the study. Therefore, I did not have to develop a theory grounded in the data.

An ethnographic case study design was also not appropriate for this study. In this type of design, the researcher discovers shared patterns of a culture or subculture as a group interacts over time; the focus is on culture and human society (Merriam, 2009). My aim was not to understand interactions amongst the participants, but rather to find the perceptions the participants had about PD needed to assist them with their job. Further, an ethnography is focused on a shared culture whose members interact over a long period and time and share values, language, and beliefs (Creswell, 2012). While the participants in this study held the same job, they are located at different sites, may not share the same values, and their interactions are limited due to lack of PD. Therefore, the ethnographic case study design would not have been appropriate for this study.

Consequently, I determined that the single case study would be the most effective for this study. The study included interviews and observations. The focus of the study was on the PD of instructional coaches from a single district (case). The participants in this study were instructional coaches from the elementary school, middle school, high school, and district levels. I used an observational approach to understand the participants' personal interpretations of their experiences. The participants described experiences with teachers and their perceived influence on teachers' instructional practices. Additionally, participants' interview responses addressed research questions 1, 2, and 3 by describing their understanding of their role, supports available to them for their professional growth, and their perceived influence on teachers' instructional practices and student achievement. The research methodology was a qualitative study using field notes of observations (Appendix B), instructional coach interviews (Appendix

C), review of documents (e.g. district job description, evaluation forms, etc.), and observations of instructional coaches (Appendix D) in a rural Title I school district in Georgia. All interview questions, as well as the observation protocol, were adapted from the Kansas Coaching Project (Instructional Coaching: Kansas Coaching Project, n.d.). I selected to use materials from the Kansas Coaching Project because of its extensive research on instructional coach PD at the University of Kansas. My goal in the interviews and observations was to identify the supports instructional coaches may need to address the instructional practices of teachers, which ultimately effect student achievement**.**

Participants

The selected population for this research study included school and district-level instructional coaches, employed in a rural Title I school district in Georgia. I selected participants using purposeful sampling of 26 instructional coaches employed in the district under study. Purposeful sampling is useful for selecting participants who have key knowledge about the purpose of the study (Patton, 2015). According to Lodico et al. (2010), purposeful sampling technique is most often used in qualitative research. I was familiar with most of the possible participants because I have worked for the district for 8 years; however, I had not worked directly with any of the participants, nor have I supervised any of the participants.

To gain access to participants, I contacted the district's director of testing, research, and evaluation, and the deputy superintendent. After receiving approval, I emailed the 26 instructional coaches in the district (13 elementary, 5 middle, 4 high

school, and 4 district-level) with information about the purpose of the study. I selected 12 instructional coaches (three from each level) based on the first to respond via email to the initial emailed invitation. Within 1 week of their response to the invitation by email, each participant received an invitation to an informal orientation and an informed consent letter by email that informed them of their rights and outlined the purpose and process of the study. It also addressed precautions that I would take to maintain confidentiality, and outlined that no financial costs would be incurred to and no compensation would be received by research participants.

My role in the district of study is a principal. I have been employed in the district of study for 8 years. Prior to working in the capacity of an administrator, I was an instructional coach for 1 year in the district under study. Of the 26 potential participants, I have only supervised one instructional coach. The instructional coach in the building I supervise did not participate in the study. In efforts to avoid any biases in the study, interview questions and observation protocols were reviewed by the district's director of testing, research, and evaluation, whose role includes reviewing research studies for the district prior to anyone conducting any type of research.

All participants were from schools within the district and district personnel. A researcher-participant relationship has not been established with instructional coaches, except of the instructional coach in my building. Therefore, to build a researcher-participant relationship, I scheduled an informal orientation meeting with all participants prior to conducting interviews. During the orientation I introduced myself, provided a detailed description of the research study, explained participant responsibilities and

expectations, and answered all questions the participants had about the study. The orientation concluded with providing each participant with another copy of the informed consent letter. Participants were asked to sign, scan, and send a copy in an email to me within one week of the orientation. If participants did not have access to a scanner, they were asked to send me an email, within the week, indicating they have signed the consent form. I picked the consent form up from their school, scanned a copy, and emailed them a copy of the consent form for their records.

A researcher-participant relationship was also supported by conducting interviews during convenient times of participants' availability, by sharing and reporting results honestly, and respecting each participant's commitment to the study. In conducting interviews and observations, I strived to maintain ethical standards by being open and avoiding judgment throughout the interview. Each participant was treated with fairness and respect. All participants were assigned a pseudonym for their name in efforts to assure confidentiality of their identity. Research results were written using honest reporting. Honest reporting strives for accurate findings without bias that may support the research questions (Creswell, 2012).

Although I am an administrator in the district, with experience in evaluating instructional practices of teachers, I refrained from providing any evaluative opinions or thoughts throughout the study to any participants by ensuring my facial expressions, body language, or gestures did not reflect approval or disapproval of participants' responses or observations. To reduce the influence of my bias within this research, I used probing questions in efforts to gather more information from participants (Creswell, 2012). I

recorded and transcribed interviews to ensure responses were documented and free from my perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). All observations of the setting and participants were written in field notes. To address the trustworthiness of interview transcripts, I audio recorded the interviews and transcribed participant responses.

Data Collection

Data were collected after I received IRB approval (01-06-17-0132063). I interviewed 12 participants first, then completed four observations of four of the interviewed participants, and concluded with reviewed documents. These three data sets analyzed together provided me with an in depth understanding of coaches' perceptions. To achieve confidentiality, data collection instruments did not contain any information that could potentially identify participants. Instead, codes were established to identify each data collection instrument and each participant was given a pseudonym for his/her name. Additionally, all documents were stored in a locked filing cabinet for confidentiality and safety measures.

Interviews. Instructional coaches were interviewed individually about their role, responsibilities, and perception of the PD needed to assist them with addressing teachers' instructional practices. Interviews were conducted individually with 12 participants at a location most convenient for the participants. Participants were interviewed one time for approximately 45 minutes. Interviews were scheduled and took place within the first four weeks after I received written consent from participants to participate in the research. Prior to beginning the interview, I verbally reiterated the details from the consent form by providing a detailed description of the purpose and process of the study. Next, I

informed the participant that I was recording the interview to ensure responses were preserved for data analysis and waited for verbal consent to participate. After receiving verbal consent, I began the interview.

I used open-ended interview questions, adapted from Coaching Matters (Killion et al., 2012) and listed in Appendix C to gain a deeper understanding of the instructional coaches' perceptions of their role and PD instructional coaches needed to support them in their position. Open–ended questions allowed the interviewee an opportunity to respond using a range of answers that a survey may not include. Open-ended questions were used in this qualitative research so that the interview participants could voice their own perspectives (Creswell, 2012) rather than just selecting from perspectives selected by me. Probing questions were also used in the interviews to gather more information from the respondent (Creswell, 2012). Probes included: tell me more, explain your response, can you provide more detail, or please provide an example. Probes provided more detail to the response (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The interview concluded with me thanking the participant for his time and participation in the study. Additionally, I informed the participant that transcribed data from the interview will be sent back to him to check for accuracy and interpretation of data.

Observations. A total of four instructional coaches (out of the 12 interviewed) were selected to be observed after interviews were conducted. These participants were selected by the two participants who had the most experience (years) as an instructional coach and the two participants having the least amount of experience (years). Each

participant was observed for one full work day in their day-to-day activities which included their interactions with teachers and facilitation of PD sessions for teachers, to develop an in-depth understanding of the role of the instructional coach over the course during the school day. Observations were inclusive of the interactions the coaches had with administration and teachers, planning for PD sessions, classroom walkthroughs, as well as any other assigned duties given to the instructional coach from administration. Individual observations of each of the four participants were scheduled for 1 full school day, which is 8 continuous hours in a week. I observed 4 full school days over the course of 4 weeks. Observations provided a written picture of the day-to-day routine activities, duties, and responsibilities of the instructional coach in his or her natural setting.

The observation instrument was developed from the Six Principles of Coaching located in the Kansas Coaching Partnership Learning Field book (Appendix D). Knight (2002) stated the partnership learning model is "a guide for practitioners and change agents, administrators, teachers, and others interested in seeing their schools become places that empower and inspire children to be independent, successful learners" (p. 5). The field book is inclusive of principles the instructional coach should employ.

Reviewed documents. The term document, in qualitative research, can be referred to as a description for memos, videos, photographs, letters, diaries, and various memorabilia used as supplemental information to support the main source of data-participant interviews and observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The official documents were considered public records in the research setting. Though documents were public records, a copy of the documents were secured in a locked filing cabinet for

safety measures. Official documents, inclusive of the instructional coach job written description and the instructional coach evaluation instrument from the school district under study, were examined. All documents were retrieved from the directors of elementary and secondary education for the district. Reviewing the job description document assisted me with relating how the instructional coach's perception of his role aligns to the district's job description of the role.

Fieldnotes. Fieldnotes are not officially part of data collection; however, the extensive notes taken during observations and interviews were helpful in putting the observations and interviews in context. During observations of each participant, I wrote a descriptive and reflective narrative of what happened, my insights, and any themes that emerged during the observation. My descriptions of the observations were called fieldnotes. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined fieldnotes as a "written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (p. 119). Fieldnotes are different from observations. They are a written account of data collected during observations. I used fieldnotes with a personal log to keep track of the development of the study, a visual representation of how the data collected affected the research plan, and an awareness of how the data may influence the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). They also provided a detailed description of non-verbal expressions, participant interactions and communication, and time spent on various activities. I used fieldnotes (Appendix B) was adapted from examples in Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed after all official documents were gathered, the interviews were completed, and the observations were conducted. In the analysis of interview and observation data, I noted connections between the instructional coaches' perceptions and the four principles of andragogy. The four principles of andragogy were used in data analysis because these are the principles that should be applied when planning, executing, or assessing a learning program for adults.

For the interviews, I audio recorded participant interviews on digital media, then transcribed data from audio recordings to text, and stored interviews in a Microsoft Word document to ensure that the responses were documented and free from my perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). All participant names were removed from transcripts and replaced with the phrase indicating their role in the school district and a letter (e.g., Elementary School Instructional Coach C). Additional field notes were used to document ideas about potential themes during interviews. For the observations, I documented four different instructional coaches during a day of work and took notes that included examples of employing the principles of adult learning or andragogy. Data analysis entailed comparing and contrasting participants' interview responses and observed behavior to identify similarities and differences, to search for key elements or themes that emerged (Yin, 2009) and is described next.

Coding Process

The data were perused and coded several different times. Initially, thematic coding was conducted to look for evidence of constructs within the framework of

Knowles' four principles of andragogy. Andragogy refers to adult learners. Knowles' four principles that guide adult learning are:

- the need to be involved in planning
- use of both positive and negative experiences as the foundation of learning
- higher interest levels when the subject matter is of personal or professional interest
- preferences for problem-centered versus content-centered learning (Knowles, 1973, 1984, 2005).

Thematic analysis is "a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis was applied because of my interest in gathering evidence of whether instructional coaches were employing the principles of andragogy when interacting with teachers. Thematic analysis "moves away from reporting the facts to making an interpretation of people and activities" (Creswell, 2012, p. 473). These categories were developed by documenting emergent themes that addressed the research questions.

Subsequent coding efforts were conducted to find evidence of other themes as they emerged. As I analyzed the data searching for evidence of the coaches' role, I discovered a theme of a mismatch between the roles and actual duties of a coach. I reviewed the narrative thoroughly for evidence of roles, and then thoroughly reviewed again for evidence of any mismatch. The review process was repeated until the data were saturated, that is, no further themes emerged.

Data were also examined repeatedly until all data sets were saturated with a specific theme (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 2015). I used a similar coding process across repeated examinations of the data, which involved open, axial, and selective coding sequences. Open codes (in some cases, reduced to sentences and phrases) were organized in a spreadsheet. I conducted axial coding to classify open codes together in conceptually-related categories. I placed all codes into major or minor categories. I cross checked categories for redundancy. As I reviewed individual axial codes and clusters of related axial codes, I attached the codes to the most pertinent research question; some codes were used alone and some were used in complement with other categories. Once key elements and patterns were discovered, further categories were developed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I undertook final coding to connect categories as a last data reduction effort and emergent themes were identified. Selective coding was used throughout data perusal to identify exemplar passages, which I present as results.

The second level of coding I used to reduce data was axial coding. I selected one concept from open coding as the core phenomenon, then I developed categories related to the selected concept. The categories "portrayed the interrelationship of causal conditions, strategies, contextual and intervening conditions, and consequences" (Creswell, 2012, p. 426). The categories were consistent across three sources of data.

My analysis was based on three sources of data (interviews, observations, and reviewed documents). To establish the validity and credibility of these data, and increase the transferability of the results (Bowen, 2009), I repeatedly cross-checked and compared data from these three sources during the process of triangulation. I used triangulation to

find evidence supportive of themes in the study to ensure accuracy from multiple sources (Merriam, 2009). I placed codes from the three sources of data in a spreadsheet as described above; my cross-validation captured varied dimensions of the evidence associated with a specific theme.

Member checking was also implemented to increase trustworthiness and credibility of transcribed data. Member checking is a quality control process used in qualitative research to present final findings to participants so they may check the accuracy of themes and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2012; Harper & Cole, 2012). After data were analyzed, findings were returned to participants to give them the opportunity to critically analyze them and verify the accuracy of the report (Creswell, 2012). I asked participants to provide written or verbal agreement with findings and document any errors or misconceptions found. Only one instructional coach provided feedback (she indicated verbally that her transcript contained the same content she recalled saying during the interview) and no adjustments were made to the final report.

After collecting and analyzing data, the next step was to present the data in a written format. To present the findings, a narrative discussion was developed as per Bogdan and Biklen (2007).

The narrative discussion is in the data analysis results (see below). The data analysis results section is organized into four parts with headings capitalized in the following description for ease of recognition. First, it reviews the process of data collection by explaining the Instructional Coach Interview Protocol, Documents Review Protocol, and Observations Protocol. Second, it presents the research questions. Third, it

presents the findings from the problem and research questions. The third part is subdivided into instructional coach demographics; results for research question 1; results for research question 2; results for research question 3; and evidence of quality. Fourth, the summary is presented, which includes project deliverable as an outcome of the results.

The evidence I presented, is separated by research question (i.e., results for research auestion 1; results for research question 2; and results for research question 3, respectively). Under each research question, I provided a table that summarizes the emergent themes for that question to give an overview for the reader. An overview of evidence follows where I show instructional coaches are, or are not, employing the conceptual framework of andragogy. After evidence of the conceptual framework, I review evidence for other themes (i.e., other than andragogy) that emerged during analyses. I integrated evidence from all three data sources (interviews, observations, and reviewed documents).

Data Analysis Results

The research methodology I used was a qualitative study using recorded and transcribed instructional coach interviews; document reviews (i.e., evaluation forms, district job description); and direct observations of instructional coaches in a rural Title I school district in Georgia. I adapted the interview questions and observation protocol from the Kansas Coaching Project (Instructional Coaching: Kansas Coaching Project, n.d.).

Instructional Coach Interview Protocol

Participants were selected on a first-come, first-served basis from those who responded via email to the initial emailed invitation. A total of 12 participants were interviewed. I designed the interviews to provide insight into instructional coaches' perceptions of their roles, techniques, and PD needed to assist with improving teachers' instructional practices. I conducted interviews within the first four weeks after I received written consent forms from the 12 participants. I conducted interviews in the location that was most convenient for the coaches. I conducted all elementary, middle, and high school instructional coach interviews at the participants' schools in a private classroom or office. I interviewed district coaches in their work office.

Each participant was interviewed once. Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes. The interview process was guided by the research questions. I used a semi-structured interview protocol throughout the interview process. I selected the semi-structured protocol, because it allowed the coaches to provide an extensive response about information related to the interview questions through a conversational format. I also used semi-structured interview protocol to provide me with a deeper understanding of each participant's perceptions related to their role and responsibilities as an instructional coach (Huss et al., 2015). Throughout the interview, I used probing questions to solicit more detailed responses to questions. Probing questions included such prompts as: explain your response, tell me more, please provide an example, or can you provide more detail. After each interview, I concluded by informing participants that

I would transcribe data from the interview, send it back to them for an accuracy check of transcribed data, and make any changes they requested.

Documents Review Protocol

The document I reviewed was the school district's written job description for instructional coaches. A copy of the written job description document was secured in a locked filing cabinet for safety precautions, but was not provided to participants during interviews to avoid leading them in any way about their work. However, they were informed when I invited them to participate in this research that the correspondence between the job description and their actual roles was of fundamental interest. I am personally very familiar with the written job description of instructional coaching, and as such, I was able to solicit specific comments about the formal job description during interviews related to their daily role and responsibilities. I used the coaches' verbal job descriptions, notes I took about coaches' daily role (collected with permission during interviews), and the written job description to develop a broad understanding of their perceptions of their roles. However, I also took active steps to bracket my own knowledge of the job description by highlighting narrative passages as reminders that it was likely that some instructional coaches had not recently reviewed their job description.

Observations Protocol

After I conducted the interviews, I selected four instructional coaches (out of the 12 who were interviewed) for observation. I based my selections on years of experience (drawn from demographic responses provided during interviews). I conducted my

observations on the two participants who had the greatest number of years as an instructional coach and the two participants who had the least experience in coaching. I observed each participant for one full school day, which is eight continuous hours, at school (i.e., in their natural setting). In total, four day of observations were conducted over the course of four weeks. The natural setting ranged from their school building location, district office, and schools in the district. By observing coaches, I created a written description of the day-to-day routine activities, duties, and responsibilities of instructional coaches in their natural setting. I also had the opportunity to observe and document whether Knowles' andragogy principles were employed.

Research Questions

There were three research questions, which were answered with triangulated evidence from interviews, documents, and observations:

1. What are instructional coaches' perceptions of instructional coaching in a rural Title I school district in Georgia?
2. How do instructional coaches support teachers in improving instructional practices and interventions to address students' needs?
3. How do instructional coaches describe their PD to maintain and improve their skills as an instructional coach?

Findings from the Problem and Research Questions

As per their 2015 Strategic Plan, the school district examined in this study hired instructional coaches in each core academic area (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). The district hired the instructional coaches to provide PD to teachers

that focused on instructional practices and classroom management to improve student achievement.

The problem for which I initiated this research is that the instructional coaches in the district under study are often diverted from coaching duties. The coaches serve in numerous other capacities not listed on their written job description, unrelated to the job of instructional coaching (e.g., asked to serve as a substitute teacher, monitor the lunchroom, or complete paperwork for administrators). Diverting instructional coaches from the main aim of coaching raised the question of whether there was a general lack of understanding of the role of the instructional coach throughout the district.

The deputy superintendent partially confirmed the research problem (personal communication, June 13, 2016) by saying the district needed to evaluate the role of the instructional coach, as well as understand how leadership in schools and the district office can utilize and support their work. The deputy superintendent also stated that coaches throughout the district have not been educated on how to mentor teachers. Coaches are expected to mentor as part of their duties (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Accordingly, my purposes in doing this research were to evaluate instructional coaches' perceptions of their professional roles, identify techniques they use to support teachers' efforts to improve student achievement, and identify the types of PD instructional coaches requested (the latter task concurrent with establishing whether instructional coaches have or have not been educated on how to mentor teachers). By gathering data, I provided information to school and district leadership about the best ways they can utilize and support the work of instructional coaches.

Knowles' (1973, 1984, 2005) theory, the four principles of andragogy to address the needs of the adult learners, was the conceptual framework for the study. The principles of adult learning apply to teachers. Instructional coaches who employ Knowles' principles may be more successful in developing teachers' instructional practices and classroom management skills than instructional coaches who do not employ Knowles' principles.

Instructional Coach Demographics

Interviews were conducted with 12 instructional coaches, four from each of three levels (elementary school; middle and high school, hereafter collectively referred to as secondary school; and school districts). Table 1 shows the professional demographics of the coaches. The four district instructional coaches had an average of 17 years of experience in education and 4-5 years as instructional coaches. The four secondary school instructional coaches (6^{th}-12^{th} grade) had an average of 12 years of experience in education and three years as instructional coaches. The four elementary school instructional coaches had an average of 15 years of experience in education and two years as instructional coaches. Thus, the experience level in instructional coaching increased from the elementary through the secondary school level, and increased from the secondary school level to the district level. A list of the acronyms and corresponding explanations that instructional coaches mentioned during their interviews is presented in Appendix F.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Instructional Coach Participants

Pseudonym	Number of Years in Education	Number of Years as an Instructional Coach	Instructional Coach Level
A	17	5	District
B	10	3	Secondary
C	15	1	Elementary
D	16	3	Secondary
E	18	5	District
F	16	2	Elementary
G	12	2	Secondary
H	11	3	Elementary
I	11	4	Secondary
J	21	5	District
K	11	3	District
L	19	3	Elementary

Results for Research Question 1

Research question 1: What are instructional coaches' perceptions of instructional coaching in a rural Title I school district in Georgia? Table 2 shows a summary of employment of andragogy principles and three additional emergent themes. I found evidence the coaches were only partially applying andragogy principles. I discovered in the data there was consensus among the coaches about the roles of instructional coaches as teacher support. Instructional coaches mentioned primarily relying on technical and interpersonal skills to accomplish the role of an instructional coach. Most instructional coaches responded that the fit between their perception of the role and actual job was often poor.

Table 2
Emergent Themes for Research Question 1: Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Roles

RQ	Themes
RQ1	RQ1: What are instructional coaches' perceptions of instructional coaching in a rural Title I school district in Georgia? Themes associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy Theme 1 for RQ1: Roles of instructional coaches as teacher support Theme 2 for RQ1: Skills of effective instructional coaches Theme 3 for RQ1: Fit with actual role

Evidence of Role Perception Associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy

Through thematic coding for Knowles' four principles of andragogy, I revealed that eight of the 12 instructional coaches I interviewed employed at least two of the four principles of andragogy when performing their job. District Instructional Coach K stated:

> My role is to support district initiatives and to help with evaluation of schools, model lessons for teachers and discuss whether it worked for them … as well as providing ongoing support, data analysis, help with school improvement processes, help with curriculum and instruction, and also support with analysis of assessment data. I also go in and help teachers that [sic] struggle with behavior. Currently I work with creating formative assessments. That's more along the line of curriculum.

In the above quote, Coach K reflected the first principle of andragogy (adults' needs to be involved in planning) noting instructional coach-teacher feedback loops. In other words, Coach K indicated instructional coaches model lessons for teachers, give teachers the opportunity to practice the modeled lesson, and engage is a coach-teacher

discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the process. However, Coach C did include teachers in planning their learning while she conducted a PD session for teachers. Observation indicated that it was a *sit and get* type delivery of the PD session to teachers. Several teachers did not report to the session on time. Most of the teachers did not appear to be cognitively engaged. Instead, they appeared to be merely compliant with the training.

Coach K may have reflected the second principle of andragogy, adults use both positive and negative experiences as the foundation of learning, by referencing the ongoing support (i.e., positive experiences) and mitigating teachers' struggles with student behavior problems (i.e., behavior problems negative experiences). This potential reflection rests on the presumption that being coached is a positive experience. However, evidence I presented with Theme 3 for RQ1 (the fit between role and actual duties) conflicts with the presumption that being coached is necessarily a positive experience for teachers.

Coach K implied the third principle of andragogy, adults show higher interest levels when the subject matter is of personal or professional interest, references to on-going or formative assessments aimed at improving teacher skill sets. Coach K's implication rests on the assumption, rather than clear evidence, that teachers showed higher interest levels in instructional coaching *because* it benefits them professionally, that is, teachers' jobs may depend on coaching. On the other hand, District Instructional Coach A contradicted the idea that teachers showed higher interest levels because the subject matter (i.e., instructional coaching) was of professional interest to them. She

pointed out that many teachers blame someone else for their shortcomings instead of taking personal initiative. She maintained that teachers need to be "more self-reflective and own their own deficits," but also exhibit the willingness to change deficits into stronger skill sets. For Coach A, the big challenge was "getting the teachers to be self-reflective because everything is everybody else's problem, not theirs." Higher interest was also contradicted by observations of Instructional Coach C's Professional Learning session. Observation indicated that several teachers did not report on time. Most of the teachers did not appear to be cognitively engaged.

However, Coach K reflected the fourth principle of andragogy, adults prefer problem-centered learning versus content-centered learning, in references to modeling lessons, helping teachers handle student behavior problems, and helping with instruction and curriculum. Coach K listed problem-centered learning opportunities.

Roles of instructional coaches as teacher support. The emergent theme of instructional coaches' perceptions of their role was to support teachers. Nine of the 12 instructional coaches used the word "support" when discussing their perceptions of their roles. For example, Elementary Coach C described coaching as "a form of support for teachers and administrators, ensuring that teachers implement research-based instructional strategies and helping administrators by ensuring good instruction in their building." District Coach A noted that coaching was a "vitally important instrument in the teaching and learning process to support the system woven within our schools." Other coaches using the word "support" commented about improving teachers' instructional practices, classroom management, and the school's instructional programs.

The four remaining coaches implied the theme of support but did not use the word 'support' specifically. For example, District Coach K said the role of instructional coach was to "work closely with teachers' instructional practices and data to inform instructional decisions." Similarly, District Coach L described instructional coaches as "teacher advocates" who are "responsible for providing resources, best practices, and materials to improve instructional techniques."

As teacher advocates, District Instructional Coach E noted that instructional coaches need to be an expert in "just about everything" instructional, including strategies, content, resources, associated technology, and data tracking. District Instructional Coach K perceived her role as service to the broadest administrative objectives. She also provided the most thorough description of the role of instructional coaches:

> As the instructional coach, I am able to address instructional issues that the administration may not be able to address quickly, directly, precisely, or at all. My role is to support district initiatives and to help with evaluation of schools, model lessons for teachers. [I provide] ongoing support, data analysis, help with school improvement process, help with curriculum and instruction, and also support with analysis of assessment data. I work closely with teachers to assist with their instructional practices, as well as assist by keeping a laser eye on data to inform instructional decisions that affect student achievement. I also go in and help teachers that struggle [to manage student] behavior.

Axial coding further revealed that four instructional coaches perceived their role as an extension of administration. Only one coach, secondary school Instructional Coach

D, described her role as a "direct extension" of the administrative team. Three other coaches perceived their connection to the administration more indirectly. Elementary school Instructional Coach H described her role as a facilitator who functions to bridge administrators and teachers. "If something is not going well in the classroom, I meet with administration and we discuss how I can support teachers who are not meeting our instructional goals."

Skills of effective instructional coaches. Eleven of the 12 instructional coaches implied that half the job requires technical skills and half the job requires interpersonal skills. Technical skills included knowledge of instructional strategies, curriculum, data analysis, and assessment, as well as strong verbal and written skills. Data analysis is also a technical skill. Through open coding of skills, I revealed only three references to data analysis, even though analyzing data is a contemporary part of educational best practices. To acquire data analysis skills, teachers require considerable PD; selective coding revealed only two comments that summed up instructional coaches' views on the merits of data. Secondary school Instructional Coach D emphasized evaluation and accountability, both of which are data based, "because you can get more work done when you can hold teachers accountable." Similarly, secondary school Instructional Coach I felt that disaggregating data was an essential skill "to see if the strategies you are providing to teachers transfer[s] to student achievement."

All instructional coaches said they were expected to have well-developed soft "people skills" for working with others. Personal and interpersonal skills were variably described as personal confidence, soft skills, extreme flexibility, and the ability to build

morale and elicit buy-in. Instructional coaches were also expected to build relationships and be culturally sensitive.

Additionally, instructional coaches indicated they needed to have well-developed personal emotional coping mechanisms to protect them from other individuals with underdeveloped soft skills. Elementary school Instructional Coach L pointed out that it is not always easy to smoothly handle competing goals, such as making a teacher feel supported while guiding them to change their teaching style for the good of their students.

Selective coding revealed some summary comments about 'thick skins.' Elementary school Instructional Coach L pointed out that reacting as if one had a thick skin is "not a skill as much as it is a learned behavior." That is, secondary school Instructional Coach I stated an obvious connection (revealed during axial coding) between needing to understand the role of the coach versus teacher expectations of the coach: "In the secondary level, it is less content and more knowledge of technique. You can have some uncomfortable or difficult conversations."

Fit with actual role. As I demonstrated with the themes of the role of instructional coaches as teacher support and skills of effective instructional coaches, the foundation of instructional coaching is knowledge, interpretation, and implementation of academic performance standards in the interests of improving student achievement. This foundation was not only pertinent to how instructional coaches perceived the role of instructional coaching, as per RQ1, but also their perceptions of the "fit" between the role and their actual duties, which is the subject of this subsection. To this end, I open coded

interview transcripts and observation notes for references to fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities expected coaches (based on this researcher's familiarity with instructional coaches in her current capacity as administrator and personal experience as an instructional coach) as well as references to the fit between perceived roles and actual duties. The next level of my analysis and interpretation, axial coding, involved repeating m review of the open codes to find connections between them.

Through axial coding, I revealed that all but one instructional coach described the fit between their perceptions of instructional coaching as teacher support and their actual duties as poor, indirect, or mismatched. The coaches noted one of the reasons for the poor fit between the coach's role as teacher supporter and actual duties was a great deal of extra work, which implies a disparity between expectations of job duties and actual daily duties. For example, District Coach A said that, "Part of my job description says, "other jobs as needed. Well, I do a lot of the 'other jobs as needed' part." District instructional coach K noted, "Sometimes I feel that my role is not clear. Even when asking for clarification, I do not get it. So I am pulled in various directions that do not specifically align with my job description." Secondary school Instructional Coach B noted, "The daily activities vary. My role is not structured. The functions of the job vary amongst different administrators." Elementary School Instructional Coach sighed when she said, "I think that my daily duties would be somewhat of a parallel to my expected role, but not always. I think the job expectations of an instructional coach are very broad." Only one coach, elementary school Instructional Coach F, said her daily duties

match her expectations of the role of instructional coaches as teacher supporters to improve student achievement.

Eleven of the 12 coaches noted, another reason for the poor fit between their role as teacher supporters and actual duties, was that their daily responsibilities pulled them in different directions. Through selective coding, I identified the following summary statements. Elementary school Instructional Coach L said that some days required engaging in activities that were not strictly instructional coach duties. "I believe the hiccup is just the fact that the instructional coach description is so broad." District Instructional Coach E pointed out a disparity that she said introduces confusion. "The job description expects you to lead teachers as opposed to being the help and support." District Instructional Coach J summed it up as, "There are no rules."

During axial coding, I found more evidence for the poor fit between the coach's role as teacher supporter and actual duties, pertained to the greatest challenges of working as an instructional coach. I found there were two main challenges, time management and communication.

Time management was mentioned by five of the 12 coaches. These five instructional coaches called for more time to focus on serving as teacher supporters and less time devoted to activities unrelated to coaching. Axial coding revealed that five of the 12 instructional coaches believed it would be beneficial to have daily schedules that enabled them to manage their time more effectively during working hours or simply have more time (i.e., fewer duties). During selective coding, several representative comments emerged. Secondary school Instructional Coach B argued that time is a "key factor" that

directly affects day-to-day activities, primarily because "You have to make adjustments. You may start with a schedule but you have to make adjustments based on daily changes." Adjustments were also an issue for elementary school Instructional Coach C, who reported that she did not have "enough time in the day to address all of teachers' needs because my schedule does not allow me to stay focused on instructional coaching." Elementary school Instructional Coach L said, "Just time is a challenge because the job description is so broad," and she called for blocks of time strictly delegated to observation and modeling instructional techniques. "I have to stay scheduled," she added.

Besides time management, the other main challenge I revealed during axial coding, was the involvement of school leadership in the fit between the coach's role as teacher supporter and actual duties. Coaches wanted to improve communication between administration and instructional coaches; and generate greater administrative support for instructional coaches. Six instructional coaches mentioned poor communication from administrators to teachers. Five cited an obvious lack of administrative support for instructional coaches. Both lack of communication with and support from administration corresponded to a supporting subtheme labeled as trickle-down positivism. Trickle-down positivism is the idea that enthusiasm for instructional coaches' efforts starts at the top, with administrators, and their positive attitudes trickles down to the staff.

Again, I identified several summary comments that reflected the instructional coaches' views on administration through selective coding. For example, there was the broad view, that District Instructional Coach J described as "engendering administrative

support to generate acceptance for new initiatives among teachers." There was also the specific view, as in District Instructional Coach K's specific perspective. She needed leadership support to get things done, maintaining that administrators can favorably influence changes by advertising their enthusiasm and backing. District Instructional Coach K provided further evidence of trickle-down positivism.

> Rolling out new initiatives… What would assist would be [clarifying] leadership and expectations of the leadership, whether at the district or in the buildings. Whenever you want to get buy-in, it does not matter how good the initiative [or] strategy is. If the leaders don't have buy-in on the district or building level - if there is no support - it *will fail*. So that is a barrier of the instructional coach: When you need to get something done, you need leadership support.

Elementary school Instructional Coach C called for specific support from administration to make sure the teachers know that "I am here to support teachers. Then teachers would be more receptive to my assistance."

Results for Research Question 2

Research question 2 was: "How do instructional coaches support teachers in improving instructional practices and interventions to address students' needs?" In Table 3, I summarized the themes that emerged from data analysis for evidence of how instructional coaches support teachers. I present evidence that instructional coaches employed the principles of andragogy. Theme 1 reflected instructional coaches' emphasis on building relationships with teachers. Theme 2 emerged from instructional

coaches' specific efforts to improve the instructional capacities of teachers by focusing on the coaching cycle. Theme 3 emerged from instructional coaches' use of coaching models as tools to building teachers' instructional capacities.

Table 3

Emergent Themes for Research Question 2: How Instructional Coaches Support Teachers

RQ	Themes
RQ2	How do instructional coaches support teachers in improving instructional practices and interventions to address students' needs? Themes associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy Theme 1 for RQ2: Support teachers by building relationships Theme 2 for RQ2: Improve instructional capacities with coaching cycle Theme 3 for RQ2: Improve instructional capacities with coaching model

Evidence of Support for Teachers associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy

Through thematic coding for Knowles' four principles of andragogy, I revealed that seven of the 12 instructional coaches employed two of the four principles of andragogy when providing support to teachers. The first andragogy principle, the need for the adult learner to be involved in planning, was employed among coaches who built relationships with teachers (Theme 1 for RQ2,), used the coaching cycle (Theme 2 of RQ2), and used a coaching model (Theme 3 for RQ2). Similarly, the fourth andragogy principle, that adult learners prefer problem-centered versus content-centered learning, was also mentioned by coaches who built relationships with teachers (Theme 1 for RQ2), used the coaching cycle (Theme 2 of RQ2), and used a coaching model (Theme 3 for RQ2). Observational data provided further evidence of employment of this andragogic

principle. Throughout a PD session on assessment creation, Instructional Coach A mentioned that she and the teachers (she was training) discussed the length of each reading passage, the number of questions associated with each reading passage, the stamina of students, and the reading comprehension level, which reflected the andragogy principle of adult preferences for problem-centered learning.

Although I sought evidence of the second andragogy principle, the tendency of adult learners to use both positive and negative experiences as the foundation of learning, I did not find the evidence I sought. I did not find any evidence of application of the third andragogy principle either, that adults show higher interest levels in subject matter is higher among adult learners when the subject matter is of personal or professional interest to them.

Support teachers by building relationships. According to instructional coaches, the primary way they supported teachers to improve instructional practices was by gaining teachers' trust and enlisting their cooperation by implementing the instructional guidance that coaches provide. Coaches indicated gaining teachers' trust and enlisting teachers' cooperation was a considerable challenge. Open and axial coding revealed that seven of the 12 instructional coaches discussed various challenges associated with gaining teachers' trust and eight discussed enlisting teacher cooperation. Elementary school Instructional Coach C said her challenge was getting teachers to understand "that I am here to support them…not work them out of a job." Secondary school Instructional Coach D echoed these sentiments when she cited "teachers that [sic] are difficult to manage" without going into further detail. Secondary school Instructional

Coach G pointed out that the opposition was particularly likely to come from seasoned teachers. "A lot of times they feel like they are already pros at what they are doing and they aren't always receptive of new ideas from someone else." Secondary school Instructional Coach B put it more mildly when she mentioned "teachers' reluctance to embrace change."

Elementary school Instructional Coach F described the initial problem differently, as teachers' unwillingness to take personal initiative:

> The teachers are too dependent upon me. They want direction. I would like for them to be more independent. I think I need to be less friendly. That is a barrier that I need to put up. I was a teacher here and friends with many of the teachers. So sometimes they view me as their friend. The role of the instructional coach is not an administrator. You are still their peer. So you can't really make them do things.

Echoing elementary school Instructional Coach F's call for more personal initiative, District Instructional Coach A pointed out that the big challenge for her was "getting the teachers to be self-reflective because everything is everybody else's problem, not theirs." Alone among the instructional coaches, she proposed a possible solution by advocating for videotaped teaching sessions so that teachers can reflect on their performance. No other participant mentioned this possible solution or any other possible solutions directly applicable in the classroom.

However, secondary school Instructional Coach I emerged during axial coding as another lone voice who proposed a possible solution. She said poor retention was a

problem to solve because an ever-changing roster of teachers compromised continuity across time. She reasoned that schools need to improve their new teacher mentoring programs to improve retention and thus create more continuity in the efforts of instructional coaches.

> I think teacher turnover creates the biggest challenges because, every year, half the people I worked with are gone and we don't get to continue that growth. Really, I think a better new teacher mentoring program [is needed] so that we don't have so much turnover and also so that less time [is devoted], say, the first quarter of the year, teaching teachers how to teach the district's way.

Building relationships between teachers and instructional coaches depends on gaining their trust. Unless a coach establishes a reasonably trusting relationship with a teacher, the two cannot move forward to work on the specific support that the teacher needs and thus operate more effectively in concert. Through my selective coding, I revealed various dimensions to trusting relationships (shown by the following direct comments from interviews). District Instructional Coach E contended that the first step is to build trust between an instructional coach and a teacher because "the greatest challenge is getting teachers to actually implement what you've shown or shared with them." District Instructional Coach A called it "having a relationship where you can have them open to you to have that dialogue." In contrast, observations provided evidence that some relationships between a coach and a teacher had been built. For example, as the final task on Instructional Coach F's day of observation, she met one-on-one with a teacher, listened to the teacher's concerns, and provided feedback. Direct

observation of the exchange made it apparent that the coach is respected and had taken the time to build rapport with teachers.

Instructional coaches must gain teachers' trust, which requires considerable interpersonal skills, before turning teachers' recalcitrance about implementing coach guidance into active cooperation. When I combined the processes of open and axial coding, I showed that instructional coaches said that building relationships with teachers contributed the most to building the instructional capacity of teachers. When I used axial coding to examine the main theme of building relationships, I revealed a large number of subthemes. All the subthemes correspondingly drew on the soft skills related to personal and interpersonal competency. Although the participants had much to say on the subthemes, through selective coding I identified a comment by elementary school Instructional Coach F that summarizes "the culture of collaboration."

> There needs to be a Professional Learning Community in place. There needs to be the culture of collaboration and building relationships so that teachers feel comfortable with sharing. There is power in numbers and more ideas. Teachers do not need to be an island. Our peers are our resources. Remembering Schmoker's book, you know, just being able to collaborate so you can meet the needs of all students. We all have strengths and weaknesses. We can learn from each other.

Axial coding showed that effective instructional coaches primarily support teachers by building relationships with teachers *until* the latter have enough trust in instructional coaches to find them credible. Specifically, eight coaches said instructional

coaches need to establish credibility. District Instructional Coach J said that coach-teacher relationships "can grow only when the person who talks the talk can also – demonstrably - walk the walk."

> First of all, the content knowledge base of the coach and the teacher, the ability to build relationships or establish rapport, and then trust. The teacher needs to feel comfortable with me to know that I will not go back and tell all of her business and make her feel less than human. And then being able to model what you expect them to do…. not just talking to them, but being able to model it.

Through my observations of District Instructional Coach A, I provided evidence that she can "walk the walk." She demonstrated how to create formative assessments for the district for each grade level. Coach A devoted a great deal of time to developing assessments because she wanted to ensure that the assessments aligned with state standards.

When coaches are perceived as credible, teachers become receptive to the instructional support that coaches offer. Through selective coding, I identified a summary statement by elementary school Instructional Coach C, who argued persuasively for developing trust between instructional coaches and teachers when she said: "Working with you is not a "Gotcha!" moment. Teachers need to be able to trust you, confide in you, know that you will offer to help them be better, that you are there to support, encourage, and model the expectation for instructional delivery." Secondary school Instructional Coach G said, "You have to first build a relationship with teachers.

They will understand that you are on their side to help them, not police them." District Instructional Coach E said this creates "momentum."

Through axial coding, I revealed that instructional coaches had different views about building relationships with teachers. Seven instructional coaches said that coach-teacher relationships each need to be tailored to fit. Elementary school Instructional Coach L maintained that building the instructional capacity of teachers is two-fold but the result is worth it:

> Number one is authentic PD. What I mean by that is one size does not fit all. Number two is reflection. Teachers … we have to reflect on our practices. As we build teacher capacity, [we] build self-efficacy. When you build self-efficacy [i.e., how you feel about yourself and teaching] teachers feel more confident about their instruction. The key to building student achievement is helping teachers become masters of their craft and providing multiple options, which is building self-efficacy.

Relationships are admirable goals, but how do coach-teacher relationships specifically improve teachers' instructional capacities? District level Instructional Coach A said that relationships, "make sure students receive high quality instruction." For Instructional Coach E, relationships influence student achievement "because then teachers have a clear understanding of what to teach and the best way to teach it." Instructional Coach C said relationships affect students' achievement "directly and positively because the teacher has the necessary tools of differentiated instruction to meet [individual] learner needs."

Improve instructional capacities with coaching cycle. The coaching cycle is an academic feedback loop focused on improving student performance. My analysis revealed the coaching style theme is related to the purpose of the coaching cycle in supporting teachers to improve their instructional capacities. Instructional coaches are involved in the coaching cycle when they (a) observe the teacher in the classroom (sometimes concurrent with reviewing data on class performance); (b) identify a focus for improvement (sometimes concurrent with conference with administrators); (c) introduce an instructional strategy (usually incorporating the teacher's input); (d) provide commensurate resources, materials, and role modeling the technique; (e) observe the teacher applying the new strategy, and (f) provide constructive feedback.

Through axial coding, I revealed that implementation of a universal coaching cycle was inconsistent. Through selective coding, I identified a good summary comment by District Instructional Coach E, who pointed out that the strength of the coaching cycle is based on teaching experience, which corresponds to expertise: "Everything you demonstrate/model is something that you know works because you used it. To me, that is what makes you a strong coach because you are just doing what you did as a teacher to make you successful." Elementary school Instructional Coach F explained the coaching cycle as part of a good strategy for teaching math.

Eight of the 12 instructional coaches said that they only used some portions of the coaching cycle and axial coding provided a range of examples. For example, axial coding showed that some secondary school instructional coaches curtailed or eliminated observations. District Instructional Coach A tailored steps of the cycle to improve

delivery with a modified feedback loop: "I helped this teacher that [sic] had a difficult time with delivering content. I helped by going through the coaching cycle by modeling, co-teaching, she teaching, debriefing." Elementary school Instructional Coach C recently used one step of the cycle to introduce teachers to some new assessment strategies. "Our teachers were struggling with different ways to assess student learning while they are delivering instruction so I gave them a few easy strategies to help them check for understanding." Secondary school Instructional Coach I, used two steps of the coaching cycle to assist teachers by "encouraging them to try different types of approaches (e.g., stations or integrating technology), and showcasing resources they could bring in to their classroom." Coach I included handouts and sample rubrics of how teachers can have student infographics instead of a traditional poster board.

Through axial coding, I also showed that, at the district level, coaches do more guiding and less modeling. District instructional coaches had less time to invest in modeling than did elementary school and secondary school instructional coaches, mainly because district coaches' have many disparate responsibilities involving several schools. Through selective coding, I provided this summary statement by District Instructional Coach J as she described a coaching session she ran for several teachers.

> I have a group of 3rd grade teachers who are alternatively certified and struggling with implementing the Daily 5 and Café frameworks with fidelity. So, I did some professional learning with them on classroom management and research-based instructional strategies. Then I went back and observed where they were and gave them feedback. Then I did a Part 2 to the professional learning, which was doing

> the Café strategies. I will go back in two weeks to see how they have implemented what I have given them. The cycle continues until they don't need me.

Elementary school Instructional Coach F was the only coach who said she used the coaching cycle. Through selective coding, I also identified a good summary comment by Coach F, which demonstrated the need for instructional coaches to implement the coaching cycle using well-developed technical and interpersonal skills. Elementary school Instructional Coach F:

> I observe them first to collect data. I also look at their student data and assessments. Then I collaborate, problem solve, and discuss with the teachers if they need any help, or if there or any areas of need, or if they want my help. Then we plan. I pull resources for them. I'll come in and model lessons. In some cases we do goal setting and put an action plan in place. We list our next steps. Then we come back and review and debrief. Instead of debrief, reflect is the word I want to use. A specific example: I went in with teachers and we used exemplars as a problem solving tool in math. Some teachers did not understand how to use the problem solving rubric so I went in and taught a lesson and we used a rubric to assess the student work.

District Instructional Coach K was quick to point out ways to soften the journey toward improved instruction and enhanced student performance:

> I have the teachers discuss instructional strategies they believe assist students. I do not want them to think that I know everything, and that their knowledge of

instruction is not needed to inform decisions. That would lead to teacher resistance, which would not be beneficial to students or teachers.

Improve instructional capacities with coaching model. Through axial coding I revealed that instructional coaches were evenly split on their thoughts about coaching models. Six coaches agreed they used the district coaching model to guide their instructional coaching and five disagreed that they used the district coaching model to guide their instructional coaching. Coaching models were applied at the district level. Models were applied in part at the secondary and elementary school levels. I found evidence in the interview data that a coaching model provided support and direction for the coaches in discussions about coaching models, along with a subtheme of trickle-down failure. Specifically, I found evidence of trickle-down failure evident in the regular use of the coaching model amongst district instructional coaches, but infrequent or partial use among secondary school and elementary school instructional coaches.

Moreover, through axial coding I also showed that instructional coaches who agreed that they used a specific model could describe it, but not name it. Instructional coach F said, "I'm trying to think if it has a name…. I don't know if it has a name….But we do use the coaching cycle." District Instructional Coach K uses a model that asks teachers to "reflect on their practices to see how they can improve. When you have a teacher that is un-coachable - which you really don't want to say that word - when they don't recognize they are doing something wrong, you do have to change your approach. These are difficult conversations."

Instructional coaches who said there wasn't any coaching model in place were emphatic. Instructional coach C replied in interview with, "Coaching model? What model? We don't have one or at least nobody told me." Instructional coach G said, "Fly by night! (laughs)… Honestly, I don't think there is a model." Secondary school Instructional Coach I modified the model by focusing on planning, observing, and debriefing, but eliminated co-teaching. "The benefit is teachers don't view me as trying to take over their classroom."

Results for Research Question 3

RQ3 was: "How do instructional coaches' describe their PD to maintain and improve their skills as an instructional coach?" According to the instructional coaches who were interviewed and observed, andragogy principles are only partly employed. Analysis revealed two themes, summarized on Table 4. Theme 1 referred to the PD that instructional coaches requested. Theme 2 referred to PD that instructional coaches said they received. Both themes contained threads of a subtheme of aspiring to greater collaboration.

Table 4

Emergent Themes for Research Question 3: Coach Descriptions of PD

RQ	Themes
RQ3	How do instructional coaches' describe their PD to maintain and improve their skills as an instructional coach?
	Themes associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy
	Theme 1 for RQ3: PD Instructional Coaches Requested
	Theme 2 for RQ3: PD Instructional Coaches Receive

Evidence of PD associated with Knowles' Four Principles of Andragogy

Overall, analysis of interview and observational data revealed that instructional coaches only partly employed Knowles' principles of andragogy when interacting with teachers in PD sessions. Knowles states "the instructor acts as a guide in the learning process and encourages student participation through the connection of their own experiences to the content, thus promoting a learner-centered approach versus a teacher-centered approach" (Leigh et al., 2015, p. 9). An example of the partial employment of principles is as follows. In all four observations, instructional coaches offered pre-planned professional learning sessions to teachers. Teachers did not have a choice about what they would learn in the PD session facilitated by the instructional coach. Coaches contradicted the andragogy principle of involving the adult in preplanning, but employed the andragogy principle of adult preferences for problem-centered learning. On the other hand, teachers were typically mandated to attend sessions but had, in some cases, some choice about which PD training sessions to attend.

The second and third principles of andragogy (the tendency of adult learners to use both positive and negative experiences as the foundation of learning; higher interest levels in subject matter is higher among adult learners when the subject matter is of personal or professional interest to them) were also partially employed in PD training sessions. Teachers can have negative experiences when they attend training sessions that do not apply to instructional coaching. Negative experiences can reduce learner interest in the subject matter. Elementary school Instructional Coach H said, "We don't receive *true* professional development in most of our meetings." Alternatively, teachers had

positive experiences, which included brief training in new technology like Illuminate and Edivate. Secondary school Instructional Coach I mentioned that instructional coaches at her school sometimes received such training and afterwards the coaches discussed how to coach a person embroiled in a select hypothetical scenario.

Theoretically, the fourth principle of andragogy (preferences for problem-centered versus content-centered learning) was addressed by the specific focus of each training session.

PD instructional coaches requested. Open and axial coding of PD data revealed two themes that describe the PD that instructional coaches requested. For one of the two themes, 11 of the 12 instructional coaches requested more direct collaboration in the form of meetings and conferences. For the other of the two themes, eight of the 12 instructional coaches requested more indirect collaboration, in the form of training, to promote their own PD but also find moral support. Through selective coding, I identified a good summary phrase by elementary school Instructional Coach L, who said PD was as important to mitigating "professional isolation" as to improving instructional skill. She went on to elaborate:

> This may be a crazy answer but I believe [we need PD on] instructional coach team building. We do PD where we are exposed to best practices to push out to our teachers. But as an instructional coach in a building, you're somewhat on an island. Teachers view you as administration, but you are not. Every coach has a feeling of isolation.

Axial coding revealed several other instructional coaches who echoed the idea that instructional coaches are "islands" at work. District Instructional Coach A liked the idea of "more collaboration with other coaches to have a sounding board." District Instructional Coach E called for more "training on how to build relationships with difficult people." Secondary school Instructional Coach G said she needed PD for learning "and sometimes the moral support from the larger group of coaches." Secondary school Instructional Coach I said, "the monthly PLC [professional learning community] at the county office is helpful so I get to talk to other instructional coaches in the district."

PD instructional coaches receive. Through evidence I gathered from the interviews and observations, I showed instructional coaches receive training in a broad range of topics. Topics included PD on the coaching cycle, cultural sensitivity, and the dos and do nots for instructional coaches. The most frequent PD addresses Title I, math training, and a district PD on curriculum and instruction.

Through open and axial coding, I revealed some equivocation about what constitutes PD. For example, selective coding identified elementary school Instructional Coach C's reference to a lack of a definition of PD. "The professional development I receive depends on what is considered professional development." Coach C said PD was ill-defined because "It is varied. On the district level, it is once a month for math units but otherwise varied throughout the year. It just depends on the number of conferences you sign up for."

Coaches have numerous conference options to attend. District Instructional Coach E noted that the State of Georgia provides an annual coaching workshop for

coaching, with some content provided by GA DOE, Griffin RESA, and ASCD. Secondary school Instructional Coach I mentioned that instructional coaches at her school sometimes received brief training in new technology (e.g., how to use new software).

In addition, through axial coding of interviews and observations, I revealed little evidence of a set or predictable training schedule that applied evenly across the district. Monthly meetings were most common. However, monthly meetings were by no means typical for all instructional coaches. Instructional coach K said she gets PD 1-2 times a month. Seven coaches said they get PD monthly. Three coaches indicated that they receive PD "not often" (Coach D), "inconsistently" (Coach H), "quarterly" (Coach G), or once (Coach A: "1 time at the start of year by outside consultant"). Nine of the 12 instructional coaches referred to the inconsistency of training. Moreover, not all monthly meetings clearly included PD that was focused on instructional coaching. Elementary school Instructional Coach H pointed out:

> As a coach, I really don't receive a whole lot of professional development. We receive bits and pieces from maybe a Title I Meeting. Even in our instructional coaching meeting, it's other instructional coaches training us. So we really don't learn new information about our role. We have a meeting once a month. But we don't receive true professional development in those meetings. So if I had to guestimate, I would say maybe 2 times a year…. but nothing consistent.

Through further axial coding, I suggested that participants relied on the school system rather than their own initiative for PD. I based my coding on evidence that nine

of the 12 instructional coaches did not refer to any initiative in the personal pursuit of professional excellence. However, elementary school Instructional Coach F, district Instructional Coach J, and district Instructional Coach K were exceptions. Through axial coding< I revealed personal initiative for just these three coaches (i.e., no other instructional coaches made these types of comments). District Instructional Coach J:

> I go to a lot of conferences. I completed the Georgia Coaching Academy before there was an endorsement (2006). That was the only time I received training about my job. Everything else I have learned online or read in a book. When I was a building coach, [training] was once a month. Now that I am a district coach, I don't. I mean, I get content knowledge from webinars and conferences we go to. I just read a lot.

District Instructional Coach K is also a self-proclaimed life-long learner and showed initiative in her own PD. Thus, to her, PD occurs "all the time." She receives a variation of local professional development through the school's RESA, who has "a good reputation [and] happens to be better than other areas." District Instructional Coach K indicated she liked going to technology conferences, because they teach her how technology can be used in the classroom, which engages students and ultimately enhances student learning.

Evidence of Quality

The following passage is based Walden's project study guide and provides a format for presenting evidence that this was a quality study. For the interviews, quality was maintained in several ways. Each interview followed the same format (i.e.,

conducted in similar school settings with the same interview questions). Participants were provided with a copy of the findings from the study to review for accuracy of their data for member checking. All participants approved the findings without asking for deletions or additions. Triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing interview data with evidence from observations and documents to confirm the accuracy of themes that emerged from multiple data sources.

Additionally, I conducted observations of four participants. I observed each participant for one full work day (eight hours). After the interviews, all participants reviewed the notes taken during their observation. All agreed that the transcribed information accurately documented the day. There were no requests to make edits to the observation data. Additionally, after data were analyzed, participants reviewed the findings to check for accuracy and interpretation of the results. All participants approved the findings without noting errors or misconceptions.

Reviewed documents maintained quality and accuracy. The job description document was received from the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education. There were no alterations made to the document; therefore, quality and accuracy were preserved.

Summary

To correspond to the three aims of this study, I summarized results as follows. One, instructional coaches perceived their roles as providing support for teachers as teacher advocates. Administrators often mismatched coaches' support role with their daily duties; coaches requested more time to focus on serving as teacher supporters with

concurrently less time devoted to unrelated activities, requested better communication with administration, and requested more support from leadership. Coaches established credibility with teachers by developing technical and interpersonal skill sets. Coaches mentioned andragogy principles, however the coaches only partially employed the principles of andragogy.

Two instructional coaches used three main techniques to support teachers. Coaches built good relationships with teachers. The coaches supported the coaching cycle with good teacher relationships and provided a consistent coaching model. Coaches stated andragogy principles were only partially employed their support of teachers.

Three, instructional coaches requested two types of PD, direct collaboration (i.e., attending conferences) and indirect collaboration (i.e., more time to interact with other coaches). The coaches made their requests for PD to promote professional learning but also to obtain moral support and mitigate feelings of professional isolation. Coaches receive a variety of PD training, which sometimes do not pertain to instructional coaching. The district's definition of PD for coaches varies within each school. Moreover, the district offers PD for coaches inconsistently. Instructional coaches relied on schools to provide PD. I concluded that coaches did not employ all the principles of andragogy when the presenting professional development sessions.

Project Deliverable as an Outcome of the Results

In the district under study, the implementation of instructional coaches in each school in the district is in its infancy. Therefore, to support a quality, sustained

instructional coaching program, data from the study supports the creation a universal definition and expectation of instructional coaching throughout the district, the need to identify and follow an instructional coaching model, offer meaningful ongoing support to the instructional coach through PD, and increase the employment of andragogy principles in the coaching effort. The project deliverable is a 5-day PD session held during the summer. This PD session will be provided to all instructional coaches within the district. Administration will be included on the first day of the 5-day PD training. Including administration will ensure all stakeholders share the same knowledge and understanding of the role, responsibilities, and expectations of the instructional coach. PD for administration will provide a deeper understanding of the supports needed to ensure the instructional coach is successful on each level.

Section 3: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the role of the instructional coach and the benefits associated with the implementation of this school-level resource to assist in the PD of teachers, the instructional practices of teachers, and student achievement. The local setting for this research was a rural Title I school district, located in Georgia. The district serves over 20,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The school district made a large investment to employ instructional coaches at each of the 21 schools in the district. However, according to the deputy superintendent (personal communication, August 16, 2013), the district is struggling to define the role of coaches, identify the effectiveness of coaches, and provide appropriate PD to support the coaches. I collected data from interviews with the schools' and districts' instructional coaches, observations, and the district's instructional coach. I analyzed the implementation of instructional coaching and the supports available to assist coaches in their role.

Though several themes emerged during data analysis, one theme was consistently present in each data source: the role and expectations for the instructional coach needs to be clearly defined and outlined. Through the results of my data analysis, I showed that more administrative support, PD, and implementation of a unified coaching model throughout the school district will assist coaches with understanding their role and district expectations, feeling supported, and feeling empowered and equipped to carry out their duties and responsibilities to address the instructional practices of teachers, which in turn will improve student achievement.

Through analysis of the data, I revealed the need for a 5-day PD program. The PD sessions are based on the Kansas Coaching Partnership Learning Model, which includes the six principles of partnership learning. The six principles of the partnership include equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, and praxis (Knight, 2002). Though I designed the project to be inclusive of professional learning sessions that address the six principles of partnership learning, I also infused the PD with strategies to incorporate the andragogy theory, which was the conceptual framework for the study. The elements of the andragogical process should be integrated in an adult learner's curriculum. Knowles et al. (2011) noted eight design elements needed in curriculum development for adults; curriculum developers should: (a) organize the learning, (b) offer a climate with mutual respect, (c) plan collaboratively, (d) offer a common assessment of needs, (e) negotiate learning objectives, (f) develop plans for learning inclusive of learning projects and plans, (g) develop inquiry based learning projects, and (h) evaluate learning through evidence. The elements assist in guiding learning activities that occur before, during, and after the learning experience of an adult. In Section 3, I provide a comprehensive description of the PD program I designed, including goals, a rationale for the program, and current peer-reviewed research that supports the program based on themes that emerged from data analysis.

Description and Goals

The problem I addressed in this study was that instructional coaches were hired in the district under study to provide onsite, ongoing professional learning to teachers within the district with a focus on research based instructional practices. However, the

understanding and expectations of the instructional coach varied amongst district leadership, instructional coaches, and building-level administration. As a result, instructional coaches have learned to invent their roles, create their own definition of their job description, and carry out the responsibilities provided to them by administration. Each instructional coach seemed to have an individualized perception of the districts' expectations. Inventing their roles and accepting additional duties from administration may not fulfill the intended purpose of instructional coaches.

The project I devised is a 5-day PD program. The program was developed to address the major problem of the study (balancing priorities) by responding to data that described the problem. The goal of this study was to provide a 5-day summer PD program to build capacity in a cadre of instructional coaches to address the instructional needs of teachers. Coaches need more skills to work with adult learners. In turn, this will assist classroom teachers with helping K-12 students master mandated achievement targets and 21st century competencies.

Day 1 of the 5 days of training will include administrators as well as the coaches. One of the major themes in the study was that instructional coaches did not feel supported by administrators. The goal for this day will be to provide a universal definition of the instructional coach, identify expectations of the instructional coach, and provide insight about ways to support the work of the instructional coach.

Rationale

The instructional coaches' responses to interview questions and observational data, showed a consensus regarding the spirit of the job they are doing in the rural school

district. After analyzing interview and observation data, I noticed that the coaches' descriptions of their roles did not parallel their performance. Comparing the interview data and written job description, I found a glaring difference in the participants' response about their role and the written job description. I conclude that this may be due to lack of knowledge of the district's description of the role, and the instructional coaches' perceptions of it. Participants indicated a lack of understanding of the district's expectations when their responses were cross-referenced with the district's job description. Instructional coaches noted that the need for administration to understand their role and responsibilities will provide support with getting the *right* work completed. Many commented on completing tasks that were outside of their job description and that take up considerable amounts of time throughout the day.

Though instructional coaches referenced familiarity with some form of implementation of a coaching cycle and model, they were not familiar with the specific name of the coaching model or cycle they should use. Several coaches shared descriptions of similar characteristics they should employ in a coaching cycle based on their personal understanding of their role. However, none reported that a universal model was used to coach teachers within the district.

All the examples listed above explain why instructional coaching can be viewed as a complex balancing act between competing forces such as differences between the perception of the role amongst stakeholders and the written job description; not having the power of an administrator while not being a teacher; having the ability to teach teachers research-based instructional strategies but lacking knowledge of course content;

and having duties given by administration that do not support the role and job description. Therefore, I determined that PD sessions would be beneficial to the school district under study in efforts to build credibility and consistency in the instructional coach program. Results from the data analysis indicated that instructional coaches believe they need more PD to support them in their role, provide ongoing training, and ensure their actions as a coach parallel the expectations of the district's written job description. Through the proposed PD session, I will address the written job description and provide awareness and insight about the role and district expectations. I will also address the technical and interpersonal skills instructional coaches should possess to address the needs of the adult learner. The information in the PD will benefit the instructional coach, administration, and ultimately the district under study.

Review of the Literature

To address the results from data analysis, I conducted a literature search for "influential researchers and research groups in the field" (Randolf, 2009, p. 2). The literature I reviewed was primarily published peer review journals, and other scholarly venues. Saturation for each topic in the review of literature was reached when no relevant articles related to the topic surfaced in the literature search (Randolf, 2009). When current sources were not available, I used literature older than 5 years. To gather scholarly journal articles and books, I searched the following databases: ERIC, SAGE Journals, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and online articles. Terms used in the searches included: *instructional coach, professional development, instructional coach support,*

administrator support, instructional coach skills, instructional coach model, partnership learning model, equality, voice, reflection, dialogue, and *praxis*.

Introduction

Most individuals' personal life experiences confirm that mentoring is one of the best ways to assist any employee with understanding the main function of the occupation or profession. While there are many cases that indicate the relationship between the mentor and protégé is positive, there are other cases in which deficiencies arise in the relationship. Possible reasons include "inadequate/inappropriate guidance, un-acceptable supervisory interventions, unproductive mentoring responses, or poor leader communication" (Ralph & Walker, 2013, p. 21). As a result, there has been a call to improve training for mentors that enhances the development of mentoring relationships.

Researchers have shown that instructional coaches are viewed as instructional mentors to teachers (Chien, 2013; Collegial Coaching Toolkit, 2007: Polly et al., 2013). However, coaches can find themselves enforcing top-down mandates due to the pressure for districts to improve the academic achievement of student learners. Rather than working with teachers in a partnership to implement research-based instructional practices, several find themselves operating in an enforcement role because of pressure from administrators. In such situations, a majority of their day to day tasks are unrelated to the role of an instructional coach (Wall & Palmer, 2015).

The role of the instructional coach needs to be one that empowers teachers rather than a role as a quasi-administrator or an enforcer (Wall & Palmer, 2015). In this review of literature, I will address the support coaches need, as indicated by data analysis. The

district has a goal to create a universal set of expectations for the instructional coach program.

Professional Development

Given the newness of the instructional coach role, instructional coaches are viewed in different ways by administrators, teachers, and members of the school board. Therefore, according to Bean and Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (2012), "coaches are eager to get as much information as they can about how to perform their role effectively" (p. 1). According to Mayer (2013), there is a need for instructional coaches to participate in formal and informal professional learning opportunities. Thomas Guskey (2000) stated, "One constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvements in education almost never take place in the absence of professional development" (p. 4). Celeste (2016) stated, "Professional development is key to meeting today's educational demands" (p. 11). It's not enough to just offer PD, but it must be effective PD to improve teachers' practices and student learning. Giving coaches the correct information will ensure that they are equipped to improve teacher practice.

Offering PD opportunities for instructional coaches provides a hands on experience with an explanation and demonstration of instructional practices prior to working with teachers (Gibson, 2011). According to Vikaraman et al. (2017), "building and investing on human capital aspects like skills, education, health and training are integral needs of sustaining a successful organization and its growth in the long run" (p. 156). In order to create and maintain schools of quality, it is crucial to have quality PD (Rodriguez et al., 2014).

Instructional Coach Competencies/Skills

Researchers have identified a variety of coaching skills instructional coaches must possess (Mayer, 2013). An effective coach possesses a core of competencies (Skiffington, 2011). While content expertise is important as an instructional coach, a coach must have strong foundation in interpersonal skills in efforts to build a trusting relationship with teachers (Ertmer et al., 2003). According to Mayer (2013), "Coaching has proven to be a powerful, sustained professional learning experience for everyone involved. The necessary ingredients are trust, training, and time" (p. 33). An instructional coach must have a deep understanding of the development of children, be knowledgeable of curriculum and instructional practices, as well as understand how to coach adult learners (Chien, 2013; Skiffington, 2011). Other skills include listening, interviewing, analytical, observations, and effective questioning techniques (Chen at el., 2013).

Administrator Support

Administrative support is vital for a coaching program to experience sustainable success (Mayer, 2013; Skiffington et al., 2011; Stevens, 2011). So often, "coaches' responsibilities are shaped by the realities of their school culture" (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014, p. 741). For successful instructional coaching to take place, "The principal must be involved in every step of the process and participate in the in-services" (Stevens, 2011, p. 22). As the instructional leader of the school, the administrator displays commitment and support to the coach by showing visibility in meetings and showing support of the instructional coaches' work. The message must be conveyed to staff members that the

instructional coach is an important resource to the school (Skiffington et al., 2011). Instructional coaches must sustain the confidence of the teachers they work with and it must be stated by administration that the purpose of receiving coaching is due to student achievement (Mayer, 2013).

A strong relationship amongst administrative leadership and the instructional coach must exist (Skiffington et al., 2011). "Administrators and coaches need to have ongoing dialogue concerning their roles and responsibilities and outcomes" (Mayer, 2013, p. 32). According to Lowenhaupt et al (2014), "Without strong leaders, clear expectations and sufficient time, coaches may exert little influence" (p. 742). Administration must share the vision and goals for the instructional coach and foster an environment of ongoing communication (Skiffington et al., 2011).

Instructional Coach Model

Many educators believe coaching is effective. However, implementation of a coaching program requires a research based foundation to effectively address the instructional practices of teachers and improve student achievement (Vanderburg and Stephens, 2010). Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) asserted, educators assume that everyone understands the components needed for effective instructional coaching "with vague notions of observing teachers in classroom and providing them with feedback about their teaching," (p. 155). However, implementation of instructional coaching without a strong theoretical model and a well-defined job description have "caused a good deal of confusion related to the role and focus of coaching," (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009, p. 155). Due to the myriad of tasks associated with instructional coaching, the definition of

coaching varies from school to school. Additionally, there a few well-articulated coaching models based on theory and realistic practices (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009).

Multiple coaching models have emerged since the 1980s. The following models have been developed over the years: executive coaching, collegial coaching, cognitive coaching, team coaching, and reflective coaching. According to Chien (2013), "an instructional coaching model offers support, feedback, and intensive, individualized professional learning which promises to be a better way to improve instruction in schools" (p. 3). The coaching models were used as the vehicle for providing PD to teachers (Lotter et al., 2014).

Though literature exists defining the ideal instructional coaching model and the standards set for the position, Lowenhaupt et al. (2014) noted, "we still know little about the coaching model in practice and how coaches manage their everyday work in the context of complicated and often isolating school cultures" (p. 740). However, Skiffington et al. 2011) stated, if there is no framework for instructional coaching, "it's easy to get off track," (p. 17). Therefore, it is imperative for instructional coaches to follow a coaching model, which allows them to model instructional practices for teachers. According to Casey (2011), "Teachers need to see effective instructional strategies in action before they make them their own" (p. 25). Teachers are more apt to change their instructional practices when they see the coach model instructional techniques (Chien, 2013). Mayer (2013) also found instructional practices of teachers improve is they receive ongoing coaching specific to their classroom instruction.

Partnership Learning Model. The Kansas Partnership Learning model is a seminal model for providing PD to the adult learner through personalized coaching. Districts using the Kansas model will provide support and direction to the instructional coaches in the district under study based on needs identified from observations and interviews. The Kansas Partnership Learning Model focuses on PD for instructional coaches focused on ways to address the needs of the adult learner including developing relationships between coaches and teachers. Implementation of the Kansas model will support a partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher-adult learner.

The Kansas Model outlines how to conduct personalized PD sessions to address the needs of teachers. During the PD sessions, instructional coaches cover standard topics and differentiate instruction for the specific needs of each teacher or school. The coaching model focuses on how the instructional coach and teacher relationship should be a partnership. Functional partnerships can change the instructional practices of teachers and positively affect student achievement. Collaborative methods for professional networks help coaches continue to implement newly acquired skills (Hershfeldt et al., 2012)

Coaches who meet the physical and psychological needs of adult learners provide support for learning. An environment such as this is a vital element for a successful partnership between the instructor and learner (ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Learning, C.O., 1994). Partnership learning is inclusive of both philosophy and practices. Knight (2002) stated, the partnership learning model is “a guide for practitioners and change agents, administrators, teachers, and others interested in seeing their schools become

places that empower and inspire children to be independent, successful learners" (p. 5). As stated in section one, the partnership approach is grounded in the works of several noted authors that write about the interactions of humans, intellectual development, and information transfer. The six principles included in the partnership approach are: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, and praxis (Knight, 2002). Though each principle addresses the partnership learning model, they each address the needs of the adult learner.

Equality. Howard and Logan, (2012) defined equality as the knowledge that all people are equal in importance and value. The central idea of partnership learning is that all humans are created as equal; everyone's vote counts equally. Everyone shares equal responsibilities and rights; however, equality may not be seen in a traditional PD session. According to Knight (2007), traditional PD appears to be the opposite of equality. Normal activities in traditional PD sessions do not always promote equality. Often teachers are not given an opportunity to select the sessions they want to attend. The sessions are implemented by the school or district and all teachers are required to attend regardless of their professional learning needs. During large group PD sessions, the instructional coach is the primary speaker. The coach assumes teachers will implement the strategies in their classrooms. However, many teachers may spend the majority of the session resisting the efforts of the instructional coach.

Coaches are often challenged by teachers' resistance to change (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014). On occasion, there may be teachers that challenge the instructional coach by pointing out how the strategy will not work in his classroom. As a result, the teacher may

be viewed as one resistant to change. Resistant teachers can affect the attitudes of other teachers in the PD session (Knight, 2007). Therefore, a suggestion to address this challenge is the critical feature of coaching-relationship building (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014).

Equality is needed for any partnership. According to Knight (2011), "in true partnerships, one partner does not tell the other what to do; both partners share ideas and make decisions together as equals" (p. 18). When individuals do not feel ranked according to their perception of their status, problems quickly arise. If teachers feel coaches see themselves as superior, the teachers resist help. As a result, instructional coaches must be sensitive with the way they communicate respect as they collaborate with teachers (Knight, 2011).

Equality assists people with exercising freedom and choice, effects personal development, and contributes to the development of cultural values (Howard and Logan, 2012). Embracing the principle of equality can change the outcome of the traditional PD session. If instructional coaches start with the assumption of equality, it changes how ideas are shared. Instead of showing Powerpoint slides, distributing handouts, and repeating information that participants can read, the coach can make suggestions of strategies and listen to learn more about teachers' experiences. According to Block (1993), the intention of partnership is to balance power between ourselves and those around us. The instructional coach must treat teachers as an equal and offer respect throughout the training session. Knight (2002) stated "Equality does not mean that each participant has the same knowledge as the facilitator, but it does mean that each

participant's opinion is important and that every point of view is worth hearing" (p. 9). Within the partnership learning approach, all session participants should feel that the instructional coach views him as an equal. Knight (2002) stated when one believes that people are equal, then we believe that individuals can choose in what they do and do not do.

Choice. Professional learning will influence teachers' instructional practices if the learning process is guided by teacher choice and collaboration (Molitor et al., 2014, p. 54). One of the reasons traditional PD sessions fail may be associated with teachers not having a choice about what they learn. Teachers are often told which sessions to attend, regardless of if the sessions will meet their needs. They also are told which reforms the school or district has adopted, and they are expected to implement the reform. As a result, many teachers become resistant to changes (Knight, 2002).

Results from an elementary science PD study conducted by Bainer and Wright (1998), indicated teachers' thinking about learning and the delivery of instructional strategies changes due to their freedom to make choices about the PD they receive. A teacher from Brainer and Wright's study stated,

> If I could make the choice myself of whether or not I want to give up a Saturday (to attend a workshop) or not I don't mind doing it, but it's when you are dictated to that I mind. I guess that's where I also like a choice (p. 7).

Choice allows knowledge to be shared, which fosters critical thinking and leads to enhanced motivation and acceptance of a task. Providing choice, "invites multiple voices for teacher professional learning" (Molitor et al., 2014, p. 54). Though teachers may not

have a choice about participating in PD sessions, they can still have a choice about how they might adapt their instruction to support the PD sessions.

The defining characteristic of a partnership is when partners choose to work together (Knight, 2002; Knight, 2011). Partners consider each other to be equals. According to Knight (2002), "Partners are people who both have a say, who both guide the direction of whatever endeavor they share, who both have the right to say yes and no, and make choices, as long as they are partners" (p. 10). Knight (2002) stated, taking away the right for teachers to say no, is one of the ways schools take away the professionalism of teachers. The coach-teacher relationship is not a partnership when one person makes the decisions for the other. Block (1993) explained in his book *Stewardship*, that there is no partnership when there is no choice. "Saying no is the fundamental way we have of differentiating ourselves. To take away my right to say no is to claim sovereignty over me …If we cannot say no, then saying yes has no meaning" (as cited in Knight, 2011, p. 20). When choice is taken away, it reduces people to being less than professionals. Professional developers have found by providing teachers with choice, it increases their desire to teach with fidelity (Knight, 2002). Teaching with fidelity means teachers deliver the content of the curriculum and instructional strategies the way they were designed to be implemented.

Voice. The PD presenter must value all opinions. Learning can be significantly limited when only one voice is heard (Knight, 2002). McKay (2010) stated, "Adult education gives stage to the voice of the learner" (p. 26). One of the primary benefits of the partnership approach is individuals learning from each other. Partnership learning

supports everyone having the freedom to express their opinion about the content covered through conversations. Instructional coaches can encourage voice by offering various settings for teachers to speak (small group, whole group, one-on-one) and listening emphatically to how teachers feel. When teachers perceive they are being heard, the learning experience can be meaningful and moving (Knight, 2002; 2011). As a result, this assists with raising student achievement and fostering a better work environment for teachers (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2014).

Reflection. Reflection is an ongoing process. It is a necessary skill for learning. Purcell (2013) defined teacher reflection as "the practice of examining one's teaching in an analytical, critical way, with an eye toward improving and guiding future efforts" (p. 6). Reflection enables teachers to think about how an idea may be adapted, shaped, or recreated to address their style of teaching and meet the needs of students. Knight (2011) stated, "When professionals are told what to do—and when and how to do it, with no room for their own individual thought—there's a good chance they're not learning at all" (p. 21). During PD, teachers should be offered the freedom to consider the ideas presented prior to adopting them.

Reflection promotes transformational learning (Foote, 2015). Hussain (2013) stated, "learning is a transformation and it takes time to occur; it follows a continuous cycle of action and reflection of the learners" (p. 125). Reflective learners are reflective thinkers. A reflective thinker need to be free to reject or choose to support an idea. If they are not provided this opportunity, they are not thinkers. The partnership learning model views a partnership coach as a "thinking partner for teachers and coaching as a

meeting of minds" (Knight, 2011, p. 21). A reflective teacher is a decision maker who makes rational and conscious decisions (Knight, 2002).

Dialogue. When conversation is embraced in PD sessions, ideas begin to develop. The group begins to operate as one mind, working together to discuss a problem. The conversation, in turn, creates a community of equality in communication, which is called dialogue. Good coaching partnerships embrace professional dialogue.

Dialogue is a shared conversation in which no individual dominates. Dialogue helps teachers to explore ideas, share ideas, learn, and create new knowledge (Knight, 2002). "During dialogue, people inquire into each other's positions at least as much as they advocate their own point of view, and they use specific strategies to surface their own and others' assumptions," stated, Knight (2002, p. 16). Within the partnership learning model, this means that the coach and teacher become involved in discussions that are two-way versus one-way (Knight, 2011).

When educators are engaged in professional dialogue, the possibilities of learning are endless. Professional dialogue opens the doors for educators to learn new knowledge, practices, and questions. As an instructional coach, when asking teachers questions, dialogue provides a time for teachers to talk and you to listen as a coach. It also results in the teacher's trust deepening in the relationship with the instructional coach. In turn, both the coach and the teacher have an opportunity to brainstorm and solve problems together (Lia, 2016). At the same time, educators can unlearn some of the embedded ideas, practices, or beliefs they have that do not support research best practices (Simoncini et al., 2014).

In dialogue, everyone wins. No one tries to make his viewpoint prevail over any other. While it is easy to just tell teachers what to do, it is best to provide opportunities for teachers to "think deeply and find answers on their own" (Wall and Palmer, 2015, p. 629). A logical path to assist teachers with thinking deeply is to engage them in dialogue. As an instructional coach, it is important to avoid manipulation during professional dialogue. Instead, involve teachers in conversations about the content presented and participate in the learning experience with teachers, which supports dialogue (Simoncini et al., 2014).

Praxis. Praxis is the "act of applying new ideas to our own lives" (Knight, 2002, p. 18). Partnership Learning provides opportunities for teachers to think about ways to apply new ideas to real life applications. Whenever an individual learns, reflects, and acts, he is engaged in praxis (Knight, 2011). Knight (2002) stated,

> Praxis is enabled when teachers have a real chance to explore, prod, stretch, and recreate whatever they are studying—to roll up their sleeves, consider how they teach, learn a new approach, and then reconsider their teaching practices and reshape the new approach, if necessary, until it can work in their classroom (p. 19).

If teachers apply what they are learning they are more likely to model application of knowledge in their classrooms. Students will be able to explore ideas, frame and solve problems, and acquire and synthesize information. Participants must feel free to make sense of the concepts taught in PD if they are going to use what is taught. If teachers use

the principle of praxis in the classroom, students will benefit as they can apply what they learn to real life situations (Schacter et al., 2006).

Conclusion

There are several challenges to the instructional coaching process. However, "…it also has soaring highs as teachers gain new insights and see children benefit from their new teaching strategies," according to Skiffington et al. (2011, p. 12). There is a shared belief in many urban districts that instructional coaches are key levers for improvement," (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011, p. 356).

According to data analysis results, instructional coaches need more PD, administrative support, and a coaching model to follow to address the needs of the adult learner-teachers within the district. According to Imel (1994), "an ideal adult learning climate has a nonthreatening, nonjudgmental atmosphere in which adults have permission for and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning" (p. 4). One way to address the needs of the adult learner, is to provide professional learning that unites the subject of the lesson to the adult leaners' experiences and needs (Giannoukos et al., 2015).

PD plays a vital role as it relates to motivating the adult learner (Bohonos, 2014). The fundamental work of a coach is his ability to engage teachers in conversations focused on students' responses to instruction (Gibson, 2011).

> Good teaching occurs when educators on teams are involved in a cycle in which they analyze data, determine student and adult learning goals based on that analysis, design joint lessons that use evidence-based strategies, have *access to*

> *coaches for support* [emphasis added] in improving their classroom instruction, and then assess how their learning and teamwork affects student achievement. (Hirsch, 2009. p. 10).

The success or failure of the instructional coach program can weigh heavily on the support from administration. Administrator's support is needed to provide support, training, and direction to assist with guiding the coach in his role (Stevens, 2011). However, for the administrator to support the coach program, a coaching model must be in place for them to follow. The instructional coaches referenced that the district does not follow an identified coaching model. Each coach implements their own version or some form of a version of a researched coaching model. However, there is a need to provide a foundational coaching model for the district to implement with fidelity.

Implementation

The following section will outline the proposed 5-day PD. It outlines the potential resources and supports, potential barriers, proposal for implementation and timetable, my role and responsibilities as the presenter, and the role and responsibility of stakeholders. Additionally, this section outlines evaluation of the project.

The proposed 5-day PD sessions will be scheduled one week in the summer prior to the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. All instructional coaches within the district will participate in the training. This will not be a voluntary training, rather a requirement for all instructional coaches due to the need to ensure all coaches have a universal understanding of their role, district expectations and uniformed implementation of the district's coaching model. Additionally, all school level administrators will

participate in first day of training to ensure a foundational knowledge of the instructional coaches' role, district expectations, and explore ways they can support the instructional coach.

The PD sessions will be scheduled through the district's curriculum and instruction department. The proposed timeline will be to offer the sessions six hours per day over the course of five days, during the summer, in the district's curriculum and instruction room located at the board office. There will be one presenter for the PD sessions. All presentation handouts will be made by the district. The presenter will use the district's computer technology to display the presentation to participants.

A potential barrier that could take place is the participation of all instructional coaches and administrators. Though the training is a requirement, unforeseen circumstances could prevent an instructional coach or administrator from participating. Circumstances such as illness, emergencies, preexisting plans, or the need to hire a new instructional coach or administrator during the training are reasons that could prevent all instructional coaches or administrators from receiving the training at the same time. A suggested plan is to ensure make-up sessions are scheduled throughout the first month of the school year after school and on some weekends.

The role of the presenter is to ensure that all presentation handouts, resources, and materials are prepared prior to the PD. The presenter will also ensure that the presentation is interactive, offer practical researched strategies that address the needs of the adult learner, and model the role of an instructional coach through the presentation.

The role of the instructional coach and administrator is to be present for the presentation, ask questions for clarity, and participate in the training activities.

Project Evaluation

To determine the effectiveness of the PD sessions, two evaluations will be proposed. According to *Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016),* "effective educator evaluation systems promote the improvement of professional practice…" (p. 1). Two types of evaluation systems will be proposed for the project: goals based and formative evaluations.

A goal based evaluation will be used daily to measure if the objective for the day has been met. At the end of each day, participants will complete an evaluation of the PD session by using a goals based assessment tool to evaluate the presentation. The assessment tool will help the presenter to review if the presentation material and resources for the day were practical and promote mastery of the objective and goals for the day. It will also provide insight about ways to enhance the professional learning experience throughout the training. Participants will be asked to provide feedback about their learning experience, focusing on the practicality of the strategies presented and understanding of their role. This will assist the presenter with making any modifications to the PD session for the next day.

The second type of evaluation proposed will be used in a formative manner to assess if the goal of the 5-day PD session was met. This type of evaluation is called a formative evaluation. Formative evaluations are conducted while a program is in progress. The Department of Research and Evaluation (n.d.) stated, "in formative

evaluation, programs or projects are typically assessed during their development or early implementation to provide information about how best to revise and modify for improvement" (para. 1). A formative evaluation is used to monitor the progress of ongoing programs. During the PD sessions, participants will gain a deeper understanding of their role, responsibilities, district expectations, and practical strategies to address the needs of the adult learner. However, evaluation of the participant's execution of the knowledge received needs to take place throughout the year. Therefore, during the monthly instructional coach meetings, a portion of time should be spent on a formative evaluation of the instructional coaches' progress with working with teachers by implementing the coaching model should be evaluated. During this time, participants can provide feedback to the presenter about their execution of the coaching model, ways to enhance the professional learning experience based off their current experience, as well as provide feedback about the resourcefulness of the material presented during the professional learning sessions. This will provide the presenter with ongoing feedback referencing any modifications to the summer professional learning session for the following year, as well as provide the presenter with additional information about topics to offer for PD throughout the year. Additionally, the evaluations will be used to determine the effectiveness of the 2017 summer professional learning sessions.

The goal of the five-day PD sessions is to provide instructional coaches with an understanding of their role, district expectations, district coaching model, and strategies to address the needs of the adult learner. In addition to the goals for instructional coaches, the goal on day one is to provide administrators with a basic knowledge of the

role of an instructional coach and an understanding of the supports he must provide to the instructional coach.

The key stakeholders for the PD sessions are administrators, instructional coaches, teachers, and students. Administrator support plays a vital role in the success of an instructional coach. Administrators who are knowledgeable of the instructional coaches' role and ways he can support, will foster an environment that is conducive to effective coaching in his building. Furthermore, instructional coaches that understand their role, how to address the needs of the adult learner, and how to implement the coaching model will have a positive influence on teachers' instructional practices. As a result, when teachers have an instructional coach that can address their specific instructional needs, students benefit and academic achievement in student learning improves.

Implications Including Social Change

Providing PD specific to the role, responsibilities, and implementation of a coaching model to instructional coaches, may result in a positive effect of social change in the educational environment. When instructional coaches receive professional development and feel supported, they will have the knowledge, skills and competencies to address the needs of teachers in the district. Coaches will then be able to assist teachers with understanding the districts' non-negotiable goals of improving the academic achievement of students and more effective teaching, by implementing research based instructional strategies in all classrooms. In turn, teachers will begin to see through the lens of the school district versus their individual classroom.

Implementing the proposed PD sessions builds capacity in all the instructional coaches in the district. The instructional coach program will be strengthened within the district due to implementation of a universal coaching model. The partnership between the instructional coach and teacher will improve due to the coach gaining an understanding of strategies to address the needs of adult learners, as well as, learn the principles of coaching model. As a result, instructional coaches will assist with improving the instructional strategies of teachers, in turn improving the academic achievement of students across the district.

Not only does the PD affect the school district, it effects surrounding school districts. The school district can operate as a prototype instructional coach program for other school districts to follow. As stated in the review of literature in section one, there is limited research on effective instructional coach models. If a district makes the decision to implement instructional coaches, the district is tasked with selecting a model that best reflects its vision for the coaching program. Since there is no universal model or expectation for instructional coaches globally, the PD sessions can be presented to surrounding districts, as well as throughout the states, to assist with providing a more unified language of the role, fundamental components of a coaching model, and the supports needed to assist the instructional coach with being effective.

Conclusion

The role of the instructional coach in the district under study is a balancing act between the coaches' perception of their role, administration's perception of the coaches' role, and the written job description. While the coach has developed a personal

interpretation of the role, administration utilizes this resource in various capacities that do not support the perception of the coach nor the district's written job description for an instructional coach. Due to lack of understanding of the instructional coaches' role, coaches do not feel supported by administration. However, data results indicate there is no universal language or program within the district to assist stakeholders with understanding the role of the instructional coach, district expectations of the instructional coach, or a selected coaching model for all coaches to implement.

In efforts to address the instructional coach program within the district of study, planning must begin by developing a common vision for the coaching structure (Mayer, 2013). Section three focuses on providing peer-reviewed literature to support the district with implementation of an effective instructional coaching program. Research to support PD of instructional coaches, the need for administration's support and understanding of the role of the instructional coach, and an extensive researched coaching model for implementation were explored in the review of literature.

A 5-day PD during summer 2017 is proposed for instructional coaches. Offering the PD during the summer will provide the instructional coaches with an understanding of their role, district expectations, and an opportunity to learn and model implementation of a unified coaching model. The PD will provide systemic change throughout the district. Chien (2013) found an effective coach must be knowledgeable of curriculum and instructional practices, as well as learn how to coach adult learners. Offering the PD sessions will provide a unified understanding of the instructional coaches' role and implementation of one coaching model to address the needs of the adult learners

throughout the district. According to Mayer (2013), there is a strong likelihood that teachers' practices will change if coaching is ongoing and it relates directly to classroom instructional practices. Resulting in student achievement improving when teachers receive a large amount of coaching support (Bien et al., 2003).

There were several themes that emerged from the data analysis results. However, the project for this study could not address every theme. Therefore, additional researched topics and potential projects of study should be explored to strengthen the instructional coaching program in the district. Section four provides reflections and conclusions of the research from the vantage point of the researcher.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Teachers are more apt to change their instructional practices when they see the instructional coach modeling instructional techniques using a research-based coaching model. According to Chien (2013), "an instructional coaching model offers support, feedback, and intensive, individualized professional learning which promises to be a better way to improve instruction in schools" (p. 3). By following an instructional coaching model, coaches can provide benefits to the instructional practices of teachers, in turn positively effecting student achievement.

Introduction

The proposed project is a 5-day PD series offered to instructional coaches in the district under study. The goal of offering the PD sessions is to provide instructional coaches with a universal coaching model to implement throughout the district to address the needs of adult learners. In the following section, I outline the strengths, limitations, and recommendations for the proposed PD project. Additionally, the section includes my reflections as a scholar, leader, and project developer.

Project Strengths

The problem of the study is that PD to support the work of instructional coaches is not regularly offered to instructional coaches and administrators in the district under study (deputy superintendent, personal communication, August 19, 2016). Implementation of instructional coaching is in its infancy in the district, and PD to address the role and responsibilities of the coaches is limited. Implementing a coaching

program has created a variety of understandings amongst administration and instructional coaches about the expectation of the coach.

A strength of the project is that it addresses the direct needs of instructional coaches in the district and strongly confirms research from the literature review in Section 1. Through data analysis results confirmed the problem of the study, and the project addresses both the problem and results of data. In the study, instructional coaches indicated that they need more support from administration, they do not follow a universal coaching model, and their understanding of their role and expectations differs. As a result, I designed this project to address these perceived areas of concern. Each day of the PD sessions has a combination of focus on the principles of the partnership learning model, and on Knowles's principles of adult learning.

Instructional coaches and administrators will participate in training together throughout the morning of the first day of training. During the morning session, I will define the role of the coach, highlight district expectations, provide examples of the expectations listed in the job description, provide administrators with an overview of their role, and provide examples how administrators can support coaches. The morning session will also include a hands-on experience by allowing the coaches and administrators to role play a scenario that includes administrative support, and one that does not. Administrators will only attend the morning session. The afternoon session will include all instructional coaches throughout the district. The session will begin by providing instructional coaches with examples of various coaching models and the reasons why those models would not address the needs of the district. I will next

introduce the partnership learning model and provide insight about the reasons this model addresses the needs of the district under study. The day will conclude with a focus on one principle from the partnership learning model, equality. I will provide the definition, examples of the practice, and an opportunity to instructional coaches to demonstrate understanding of this principle by role playing through scenarios.

Day 2 will begin with a review from Day 1. After the review, I will introduce the andragogy theory by providing a definition, reviewing assumptions of the theory, and discussing the principles of the andragogy theory. The discussion will include instructional coaches participating in an interactive real-experience activity where they will work collaboratively to recall experiences they have had that support and contradict the principles of the andragogy theory. The afternoon session will focus on two principles of the partnership learning model: choice and voice. Examples of each principle will be discussed, and instructional coaches will have a chance to participate in an interactive activity that models both principles from the partnership learning model and andragogy theory. The day will conclude with a review from the day's topics.

The third day of PD will begin with a review activity for topics from Day 1 and Day 2. Next, the final three principles of the partnership learning model—reflection, dialogue, and praxis—will be introduced, discussed, and modeled. Instructional coaches will participate in varied role-play scenarios inclusive of implementing a combination of principles from the partnership learning model and andragogy theory. The afternoon session will start with a review of the six principles of the partnership learning model and four principles of andragogy theory. The remainder of the afternoon will include the

instructional coaches working collaboratively in groups to create a 1-hour PD session on a specific topic to address the needs of the adult learner inclusive of all principles from the coaching model and andragogy theory.

The fourth day of professional learning will provide participants with additional time during the morning to complete their presentation for PD. Throughout the day, each group will present their PD sessions to the remaining groups. Each group will receive constructive feedback about their presentation.

Day 5 is a data review day. Instructional coaches will have an opportunity to review district and building-specific data. During the day, participants will create an action plan to assist with improving student achievement data by addressing the instructional practices of teachers using everything they have learned from the principles of partnership learning model and andragogy theory. Instructional coaches will present their action plans to the group and receive constructive feedback from other coaches. Specific feedback will include strengths and areas of improvement needed for implementation of the principles of the coaching model and andragogy theory in the action plan. The day will conclude with a review and an evaluation of the 5-day professional learning sessions.

I designed each day of the PD to address the problem of the study and respond to the results of my study data. Providing this PD will provide a foundation for the district's coaching program to build upon to create a universal understanding of the role and expectations of the instructional coach. The PD will strengthen the coaching program, instructional capacity of teachers, and administrative support.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations and Alternative Approaches

One potential limitation is the evaluation of the project after coaches return to their buildings to implement the coaching model. The evaluation requires self-reporting from the participants. Participants have different educational experiences, vary in the number of years in the educational field, and have different instructional skills. Each participant is also from a different school. As a result, culture, climate and needs of each school vary. My 5-day PD session during the summer will provide coaches a foundational understanding about their role and expectations, and the instructional coaching model. However, I do not address the specific needs of each school or instructional coach. An alternative recommendation to address this limitation is to provide ongoing PD for all coaches throughout the year, inclusive of individual PD sessions with each coach to address their needs. An additional alternative recommendation to assist with evaluating coaches is to add a video component to the evaluation of coach's practices. According to Knight (2014), the video provides a clear picture of reality.

Another limitation is that the project is a 5-day PD. Casey (2011) stated coaches and teachers across the United States consistently raise the same questions that in conversations. Questions such as: What would the instructional approach look like in various classroom and how is this teaching strategy used with to address the different needs students from class to class. Teachers have also commented that they want to observe successful student outcomes when the strategies are implemented. They want to see another teacher juggling instructional practices while managing behavior and making

necessary adjustments to the lesson to accommodate the needs of students. The comments and questions are an indication that teachers desire explicit demonstrations prior to implementing new pedagogical strategies. Therefore, an alternative recommendation is to provide coaches ongoing training throughout the year to support them in their role of assisting teachers with instructional practices, and to keep them abreast of educational trends to meet the needs of teachers and effect student achievement. Bean and Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (2012) conducted a study with instructional coaches who received ongoing "on the job" training. The authors helped coaches create a list of ideas they believe all coaches should implement to assist with performing their role effectively. The coaches received ongoing training and reported that all coaches need learn how to do the following:

1. Introduce yourself and your role (Tell AND Show).
2. Work with all teachers.
3. Work first to establish a relationship of trust.
4. Work with your administrator.
5. Recognize—and appreciate—differences in teachers and how they work.
6. Recognize your own beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning.
7. Establish priorities.
8. Let the data lead.
9. Be a learner.
10. Document your work (Bean & Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse, 2012, p. 1-4).

In efforts to address this limitation, I recommend that instructional coaches receive ongoing training throughout the school year to support them in their role. Additionally, I recommend that district coaches receive training from the presenter in effort to assist them with meeting the needs of all building-level coaches, as well as assisting them with building a sustained coaching program in the district. A consistent, universal message will be communicated from the district level to each school building.

Scholarship

Scholarship was developed and embedded in my research. The knowledge I gained from the research deepened my knowledge and understanding of the local problem. Beginning the research, I must admit that I really thought I knew the outcome of the study. As I reviewed literature about the problem, I found that I became more inquisitive. I developed a thirst for more knowledge about the topic. My mind was filled with questions and I became challenged with the direction my research would take. I wanted to learn more, understand why, and find solutions to address the problem.

Initially, I had my own assumptions about the problem. However, it was proven through the data analysis that I was unaware of several factors that prevented the effectiveness of the district's instructional coach program. I learned the significance of conducting research prior to creating solutions to address problems that are based on my own perception. Looking through an objective lens and removing biasness allowed me to clearly see, hear, and understand the perspectives of instructional coaches. This resulted in me providing a proposed solution to the problem, versus putting a bandage on an issue.

If I had not conducted research, I would have developed a PD program that may not have addressed the major need for the instructional coach program.

Project Development and Evaluation

My major learning was that you cannot develop a project without ensuring that it aligns and supports the problem, review of literature, and data analysis. Each of these areas must be clearly outlined and organized on paper, as well as in your mind. Keeping a laser focus on the research problem, review of literature, and data analysis assisted with developing a project that addresses the need of the study. Therefore, a clear understanding for why the project was developed is proven to stakeholders and future researchers.

A program should not be developed without an evaluation component. Through project development, I learned that evaluation of the project must take place to assess if the goal or objective was met for the project. It also provides a deeper understanding of any additional supports needed for future research and project development. In efforts to support the district's instructional coach program, the project was developed to assist with developing a program that can be sustained.

Leadership and Change

This project allowed me to focus on myself as a leader. As I listened intensely throughout the interview process, I found myself walking away hoping that I reflect the positive, supportive leader I want be to all of my faculty members and stakeholders. My mind became consumed with wondering, how my faculty would describe my support of their respective roles in my building if they were involved in a research study.

To influence change, the people within the organization have to know that the leader supports their work. Change cannot occur with the leader alone. It takes the collective efforts of all members of the organization. An organization is only as strong as the leader. If you want to impact change, a leader has to be the change. I learned to: (a) be the one that learns more about the roles and expectations of the people I lead; (b) be the one who puts practices in place to evaluate the needs of stakeholders; (c) be the one who listens and offers advice, direction, and support; (d) be the one that recognizes and models that learning is a lifelong process (*you do not have to know everything, but know where to get resources to assist with improving practices*); and (e) be the one that demonstrates that no one person can tackle the educational system alone, it takes the collective efforts of all stakeholders.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I remember when I began the doctoral program. I immediately stated that I wanted to conduct research on my district's instructional coach program because I was a coach for one year and I received no formal training. Now that I am in administrator, my perception was that other coaches felt like me and this problem was isolated to my school district. However, through scholarly research, I found the problem of this study is not restricted to my school district. It is a problem that is prevalent across the United States. There is no universal expectation for instructional coaches. Therefore roles are created within school districts that choose to fund this resource. As a result of learning this information through research, I found myself digging deeper for literature to help me understand why. Why is a coach considered to be so effective, but lack support in several

states; why is research limited about instructional coaching; why do schools fund jobs and offer little support to individuals once they are hired; and the list goes on. I became extremely inquisitive and research became one of my closest friends. Conducting research began to answer my questions; it challenged my thinking.

As I conducted scholarly research, I noticed that my dialogue with stakeholders began to change in my workplace. I saw the need to prove and support my views or concerns through research and data. After all, my doctoral process taught me to be a scholar.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

I consider myself to be a life-long learner. Throughout the doctoral process, I learned that perception without data is just an opinion. As a practitioner, I cannot allow biasness or perception alone to drive my actions. There is a saying, be quick to listen and slow to speak. I agree with this statement. You need to be quick to listen to concerns and take your time to gather evidence prior to creating a change that effects everyone in the organization.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

I believe project development is my calling. This was the section of the research that felt the most rewarding to me. I feel that I am providing my school district with an action plan to address a problem that has been discussed for years. However, it is not based on my opinion, rather on research and the perception of those individuals that walk in the shoes of an instructional coach daily. The project was developed from theory and research, which I believe is a formula for applicable success. The project creates a

foundation for propelling the district forward in the direction for maintaining and sustaining a quality instructional coaching program to address the district's non-negotiable goals and the instructional needs of teachers.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The project has the potential to create social change in the local district and surrounding school districts. Implementation of an instructional coach PD program that provides guidance and support for the instructional coach in their role will create a systemic transformation in teacher's instructional practices. According to Knight et al. (2012), "better teaching equals better learning" (p.21). The instructional capacity of instructional coaches and teachers will be strengthened. As a result, students' academic achievement will improve across the school district.

The instructional coach program can operate as a prototype for surrounding school districts. Because there is no universal model, the PD project can be used as a foundation to build and maintain a sustainable coaching program. Therefore, continuity of the instructional coach program can be present throughout the district and surrounding districts.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Educating students can be challenging work for teachers. With students entering the class with varied levels of background knowledge for concepts taught, learning modalities, and skills sets, teachers find themselves sometimes puzzled with how to address students' needs. Instructional coaches are one of the many resources implemented in schools to address the instructional practices of teachers so they can

provide and model research based instructional strategies to assist with differentiating instruction to meet the needs of students. However, data analysis results from this research indicates that instructional coaches believe they lack support from administration and PD opportunities focused on their role, expectations, and resources to support their work.

There are several directions this project can move towards for future research. I believe future research could be conducted to evaluate the supports instructional coaches receive from administration and district leadership. This area was a noted concern in the data analysis results; however, a plan to fully address this issue is not in place. Though participation in the first day of the PD will be beneficial to the administrators, a half day of training may not be enough to fully influence change in practices. According to Lavigne et al. (2016), "it is important to consider how principals manage a variety of tasks and access the necessary PD to support their school's diverse needs (p. 2). Therefore, a study to analyze the supports and resources administrators need to influence instructional improvements in their buildings through the instructional coach program could be an area of future research.

Additionally, I believe it would be beneficial in the future to conduct the same research in a suburban and urban school district to evaluate if the results parallel the results from the rural school district of study. Since the settings vary, the instructional coach program could potentially vary. Replicating this study in another setting could very well produce different results and provide insight of potential supports to strengthen

the instructional coach program in the district under study. On the contrary, results could be the same. If so, it provides an additional layer of support to the research.

The importance of the research will assist with creating a foundation for the instructional coach program in the district of study. I learned through this research that while perception varies amongst individuals, through data analysis, common themes will emerge and pinpoint the area(s) of need. Which in turn, provide evidence to support your proposed solution.

Conclusion

The proposed project addresses the identified problem for the school district under study. Due to limited PD, instructional coaches vary in their understanding of their role and responsibilities on each educational level in the district. The complex balancing act between the written job description and the instructional coaches' perception of their role, staggers the effectiveness of the district's instructional coaching program. PD sessions have been developed to address the needs of the instructional coach from the results of the study. PD for coaches consists of a five-day training during the summer. While this helps to create a foundation for building capacity and offer support to instructional coaches, the PD partially addresses the need. Therefore, I recommend that ongoing, meaningful PD be offered to instructional coaches throughout the year. This will assist the district with developing credibility of the program, maintain consistency and have high expectations for the instructional coach.

Though the project addresses the identified need, there were additional themes that emerged from the research. Therefore, future research is suggested to assist

administrators with their understanding of how to support the instructional coach program and sustain an effective coaching program in their schools. Thus creating a universal understanding and support system for the work of an instructional coach throughout the district.

This research has provided me with more of an in depth understanding of the work and value of an instructional coach. Through scholarly research, I learned that data is needed to identify the needs of an organization, as well as, literature to support the need. As a result, program development can be created based upon the need.

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Appendix A: Instructional Coach Professional Development Sessions Outline

Day 1

8:00 - 8:30 am - *Breakfast & Registration*

(***Time Frame: 8:30-8:35am***)

Introduction Slide:

"The purpose of staff development is not just to implement isolated instructional innovations; its central purpose is to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change." ~Michael Fullan (2011)

Slide 1 (Title Slide): Support for the Instructional Mentor & Examination of the Role

Presenter: Nikkita Warfield

Note: Welcome Instructional Coaches and administrators to the 5-day training sessions. Explain that administrators will participate during the morning session of day 1. Go over agenda for the day.

(*Time Frame: 8:35-8:45am*)

Slide 2: *Let's Create Our Norms for our Professional Development Experience*

Note. Norms are the standards you set for acceptable behavior during the training. Examples of norms types of norms: No cell phone usage, do not talk while others are speaking, place questions in a designated area "parking lot" on wall for instructor to answer throughout training, etc. Work with participants to create norms the 5-day training. Write the norms on chart paper and post on the wall.

Slide 3: Objectives for the 5-day Professional Development (PD) Sessions

At the conclusion of this PD session, participants will be able to:

- Define the roles of an instructional coach
- Identify ways administrators can support coaches
- Practice coaching behaviors that influence the partnership learning model
- Model coaching expectations

Slide 4: Essential Questions

- What is the role of the instructional coach?
- How can administrators support the work of a coach?
- Why is it important to identify and implement a coaching model?

(*Time Frame: 8:45-8:55am*)

Note: Read all the essential questions. Do not answer them because they will be answered at the end of the day. The activities and information provided throughout the day will assist participants with answering the essential questions for the day.

Slide 5: What Would You Do?

Note: Ask participants to get into groups of five. Distribute a ball to each group. Provide directions for the game (*I will play music. Throw the ball to a participant in your group. When the music stops, the person that is holding the ball will pull a scenario out of the bag and state what you would do as an instructional coach…..begin the game*)

(*Time Frame: 8:55-9:10 am*)

Slide 6: Who Are You Activity?

Note: Have participants to write on their individual post it note, their definition of an instructional coach. Ask participants to share at their tables their definition. Ask participants to create a graphic depiction of their group definition of an instructional coach. Allow time for each group to share with the whole group.

(*Time Frame: 9:10-9:30 am*)

Slide 7: The Many Roles of the Instructional Coach

- Mentor- offer support to new teachers and those new to a school; assist with career development
- Data Coach-ensures student achievement data is used to drive instructional decisions
- Curriculum Specialist-ensure teachers implement district's adopted curriculum
- Instructional Specialist-ensure instructional practices are aligned to curriculum and addresses the needs of learners
- Resource Provider- provides a variety of resources to teachers to improve their instruction
- Learning Facilitator- Develop, plan and deliver job-embedded professional development that addresses instructional standards
- PD facilitator-Support the learning of teachers beyond an isolated PD session; ensure knowledge gained from PD is transferred into instructional practices

Note: Provide background knowledge about myself by sharing my work and experience as an instructional coach. Provide insight about how and why this professional learning session was developed. Give definition of an instructional coach and discuss the similarities and differences based on the response of groups in the previous activity.

(*Time Frame: 9:30-9:40 am*)

Slide 8: The District's Expectations and Non-negotiables

Note: Distribute a copy of the district job description of an Instructional coach. Review the description of duties, and the expectation for the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the instructional coach.

(*Time Frame: 9:40-9:43 am*)

Slide 9: Time to Reflect

Answer the following questions internally and do not share:

Instructional Coaches: Are you implementing the districts' expectations of an instructional coach with fidelity?

Administrators: Is your coach implementing the districts' expectations of an instructional coach with fidelity under my leadership?

Note: Ask the question: Are you implementing the districts expectations with fidelity? or if an administrator: Is you coach implementing the district's expectations with fidelity under my leadership? Allow participants to reflect within and not share out. As the presenter I already know the answer based on the research study.

(*Time Frame: 9:43-9:53 am*)

*****Break*****

(*Time Frame: 9:53-9:58 am*)

Slide 10: Quick Review

Note: Ask participants to share what they have learned thus far.

(Time Frame: 9:58-10:03 am)

Slide 11: I Need You

Administrative support is essential for an instructional coaching program to sustain success.

Administration must:

- Be involved/visible during PD (shows support for coaches' work)
- Ensure staff understands the role of the coach
- Convey the message that the purpose of the coach is to impact student achievement
- Have a strong relationship with the coach

- Have ongoing communication with the coach

Note: Explain to the coach that the role of the coach requires administrative support in order to be effective. Share research about the effect of lack of administrative support in an instructional coach program.

(Time Frame: 10:03-10:25am)

Slide 12: It works when we have….

- Communication (weekly meetings, streamline feedback
- Confidentiality agreements (conversations concerning teachers)
- Coaching model
- Clear expectations
- Inter-rater reliability (complete walk-throughs together)
- Support the learning of the coach
- Provide leadership guidance

Resource: Aguilar. E. (2014). 10 ways for administrators to support coaches. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/coaching_teachers/2014/10/10_ways_for_administrators_to_.html

Note: Present each bullet point of how administrators can support coaches and engage in dialogue for each bullet

(Time Frame: 10:25-10:45am)

Slide 13: How does this look

Note: Provide each group with one of the bulleted items in the previous slide. Tell each group we will role play. Each group will create 2 (1-3 min.) skits showing how administrative support and lack of administrative support influences the bulleted item

(Time Frame: 10:45-11:10 am)

Slide 14: Let's Share….

Note: Allow each group to share their skits. Engage in (1-2 min) dialogue after each group presents, noting observations.

(Time Frame: 11:10-11:25am)

Slide 15: What Can I Do

Please use a post-it note on the table to respond to the following:

What can I do to support the administration and instructional coach partnership?

What will I plan to do differently this year to support the partnership?

Note: Have participants to write on post-it notes the things they can do to support the administration and instructional coach partnership; What they plan to do differently this year. Share at their table…then one representative from each group share with everyone as we chart all responses on chart paper.

(Time Frame: 11:25-11:30 am)

Slide 16: 3-2-1 Strategy

Share 3 things I learned this morning, 2 things I will do as a result of what I learned moving forward, 1 question I have about the morning session

Note: Review the morning session by having participants summarize using the 3-2-1 strategy.

Lunch

(11:30-12:45pm)

(Time Frame for Slides 14-20: 12:45 - 2:00 pm)

Slide 17: Let's Talk Coaching Models

Note: Ask participants if they are familiar with various coaching models. If so, which ones.

Slide 18: Talk Your Shoulder Buddy

Why do you think following a coaching model is important?

Note: Allow time to discuss

Slide 19: Classroom check-up model

- Focuses on classroom behaviors of teachers and students
- Implements goal setting
- Observations of behaviors
- Focuses on teachers classroom management

Note: Introduce and discuss the model. Ask if this model will work for the full instructional coach program for the district. Why or why not

Slide 20: My Teacher Partner Coaching Model

- Focused on early elementary teachers
- Uses a web-mediated approach for observations of teacher and student interactions

- Consultant observations via video

Note: Introduce and discuss the model. Ask if this model will work for the full instructional coach program for the district. Why or why not

Slide 21: Teaching Pyramid Coaching Model

- Supports social-emotional development
- Targets pre-school
- Focus is behavioral interventions in early education

Note: Introduce and discuss the model. Ask if this model will work for the full instructional coach program for the district. Why or why not

Slide 22: Bridge Coaching Model

- A consultation and coaching intervention model
- Designed to increase the effectiveness of classroom collaborations
- Focuses on behavioral interactions of children
- Focuses on behavioral and verbal interactions between teachers and children

Note: Introduce and discuss the model. Ask if this model will work for the full instructional coach program for the district. Why or why not

Slide 23: Kansas Coaching Model

- Promotes collaboration between the coach and teacher
- Supports a partnership between the coach and teacher
- Provides practical strategies through 6 principles coaches should employ
- Provides resources to support the coach

Note: Introduce and discuss the model (*providing background information on the Kansas State University Instructional Coach program and the works of Jim Knight*) . Ask if this model will work for the full instructional coach program for the district. Why or why not

(*Time Frame: 2:00-2:15 pm)*

*****Break*****

(*Time Frame for slides 21-24: 2:15-2:40pm)*

Slide 24: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 1: Equality

Slide 25: Equality

the knowledge that all people are equal in importance and value

Note: Ask participates how this definition relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 26: Equality

- Equal responsibilities and rights
- Everyone is important

Slide 27: Equality: Effect on PD

- Teacher selection of PD opportunities
- Teacher resistance
- Equality as a partnership

Notes: Discuss-Do you select PD sessions or do teachers? Why? Reasons teacher resist PD when equality does not exist. Why is equality needed for partnership between the coach and teacher?

(*Time Frame: 2:40 – 3:25 pm*)

Slide 28: Let's Mingle Activity

Note: Get in groups of three with individuals that are not at your table. Discuss the following: Discuss an experience you had where you did not implement equality in a PD session. Discuss the effect of implementing equality in one of your PD sessions. How did teachers respond? Moving forward, how could you implement equality in most of your PD sessions? Have coaches to create another group of three (with coaches that were not in their group) and share their group members' responses. Afterwards, have a group discussion about responses. Ask for examples of how equality was implemented in this activity.

(Time Frame: 3:25 –3:35 pm)

Slide 29: I Still Want to Know…..

Question/Answer Time

Note: Allow instructional coaches to ask questions. I will respond, but I will also encourage them to respond to their colleagues.

(*Time Frame: 3:35 – 3:50 pm*)

Slide 30: Today At A Glance

Note: Place a topic from today on each table and have each table create a summary for the topic. Have each group present their summary.

(Time Frame: 3:50 – 4:00 pm.)

Slide 31: Let's Review

Essential Questions

- What is the role of the instructional coach?
- How can administrators support the work of a coach?
- Why is it important to identify and implement a coaching model?

Note: Allow participants to answer the question and support their opinion with information learned during the day. Complete Goals Based Evaluation

References Slide:

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Reinke, W. M., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Merrell, K. (2008). The Classroom Check-up: A classwide teacher consultation model for increasing praise and decreasing disruptive behavior. *School Psychology Reveiws*. 37(3), 315-332.

Day 2

8:00 - 8:30 am – *Let's Talk*

Note: Welcome everyone back and have a discussion about responses from the goals based evaluation. Answer questions and have a quick review from day one.

Introduction Slide:

"Coaching is the universal language of change and learning." ~CNN

Slide 1 (Title Slide): Working With The Adult Learner

Presenter: Nikkita Warfield

Slide 2: Today's objectives

At the conclusion of this PD session, participants will be able to:

- Define the andragogy theory
- Identify the principles and assumptions of the andragogy theory
- Model principles of andragogy theory and partnership learning model

Slide 3: Essential Questions

- What is the andragogy theory?
- How does the andragogy theory relate to the work of an instructional coach?

Note: Read all of the essential questions. Do not answer them because they will be answered at the end of the day. The activities and information provided throughout the day will assist participants with answering the essential questions for the day.

(***Time Frame: 8:30-8:45am***)

Slide 4: What do you believe is the difference between teaching the adult learner and a child?

Note: At the table, allow each group to share their thoughts. Allow time for them to draft their responses on chart paper. Have them to share with the whole group.

(Time Frame: 8:45 – 8:55am)

Slide 5: 10 Characteristics of Adult Learners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1OSh6vN-6E

Note: Click on the link and show the video. Ask Instructional Coaches if they agree or disagree with the suggestions in the video. Why? How does the video compare to the responses they provided in the previous activity?

(Time Frame 8:55-9:05 am)

Slide 6: Andragogy Theory (Malcom Knowles)

the art and science of assisting adults learn (Kearsley, 2010)

Adults…

- learn different from children
- need to understand why they are learning new information
- need to make a connection between new and prior knowledge

Note: Go over the definition and reasons why andragogy theory was developed

(Time Frame: 9:05-9:35 am)

Slide 7 A Closer Look at Andragogy (Adult learner)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLoPiHUZbEw

Note: Show the video about assumptions of adult learning. Discuss the video. Pause after each assumption and engage in dialogue with instructional coaches.

*****Break*** (9:35-9:50 am)**

Time Frame (9:50 – 10:00 am)

Slide 8: Assumptions of Andragogy Theory

Changes in self-concept*-as an individual matures his/her self-concept transforms from a personality of dependency to a self-directed learner*
The role of experience*- as an individual matures he/she accumulates an expanding reservoir of experiences that can be connected to new learning*
Readiness to learn*- as one matures his/her readiness to learn increases with the developmental tasks evolved around his/her social life roles*
Orientation to learning*- as an individual matures his/her orientation to learning moves from subject-centered to problem-centered*
Motivation to learn*- as an individual matures his/her motivation to learn is based off of internal factors*

(Knowles, 1973; Knowles, 1984; Knowles, 2005; Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011).

Note: Review the assumptions with participants.

(Time Frame: 10:00 – 10:45 am)

Slide 9: My Big Take Away!

Note: Have coaches to get in pairs and discuss experiences they have been in where they have experiences success and areas of improvement with each assumption while working with teachers. Have them to develop a solution for addressing any areas of improvement. After 10 minutes, assign each group an assumption and have them to draft their thoughts on chart paper and present their experiences to the whole group.

(Time Frame: 10:45-11:30)

Slide 10: Principles of Andragogy Theory

- Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation stage of their instruction
- Adults use positive and negative experiences as the foundation of their learning.
- Adult interest is higher when learning is relevant to their job or personal experiences
- Adults enjoy problem centered learning more than content centered

(Knowles' 4 Principles of Andragogy section, para. 1).

Slide 11: Tips for addressing the needs of the adult learner

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuHVCQHsp44

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdI0JXSealg

Note: Share videos and engage in discussion

Lunch

(11:30-12:45pm)

(*Time Frame for slides 12-17: 12:45-1:45pm)*

Slide 12: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 2: Choice

Slide 13: Choice

Choice allows knowledge to be shared, which fosters critical thinking, and leads to enhanced motivation and acceptance of a task.

Note: Ask participates how this description relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 14: Choice: Effect on Professional Development

- Professional learning guided by teacher choice and collaboration can positively influence teachers' instructional practices
- Providing PD selections for teachers
- Offering choice addresses teacher resistance

Notes: Discuss-How does providing choice effect PD? Why? Reasons teacher resist PD when choice does not exist. Why is choice needed for partnership between the coach and teacher?

Slide 15: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 3: Voice

Slide 16: Voice

PD should value everyone.

Note: Ask participates how this description relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 17: Voice: Effect on PD

- Learning from each other (learning is expanded when more than one voice is heard)
- Express opinions through conversations(value the opinion of others)_
- Improvement in work environment and student learning

Notes: Discuss-How does providing voice effect PD? Why? Reasons teacher resist PD when voice does not exist. Why is voice needed for partnership between the coach and teacher?

(*Time Frame: 1:45 – 3:00 pm*)

Slide 18: Time to Practice

- Get in groups of three
- Discuss the principles of andragogy theory and partnership learning (equality, choice, and voice)
- Draft an email, create a flyer, or an agenda for teachers about an upcoming PD session you will present that represents your understanding of the importance of andragogy theory and 3 of the partnership learning principles

(*Time Frame: 3:00 – 3:35 pm*)

Slide 19: Let's Share

Note: Provide an opportunity for each group to share their work. Discuss.

(Time Frame: 3:35 –3:45 pm)

Slide 20: I Still Want to Know…..

Question/Answer Time

Note: Allow instructional coaches to ask questions. I will respond, but I will also encourage them to respond to their colleagues.

(Time Frame: 3:45 – 4:00 pm.)

Slide 21: Let's Review

Essential Questions

- What is the andragogy theory?
- How does the andragogy theory relate to the work of an instructional coach?

Note: Allow participants to answer the question and support their opinion with information learned during the day. Complete Goals Based Evaluation

Reference Slide:

ChaosAnswers. (2013). Adult learning. Retrieved from

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Day 3

8:00 - 8:30 am – *Let's Talk*

Note: Welcome everyone back and have a discussion about responses from the goals based evaluation. Answer questions and have a quick review from day one.

Introduction Slide:

"The GREATEST success we'll know is seeing others succeed and grow." ~Anonymous

Slide 1 (Title Slide): Putting Practices Into Actions

Presenter: Nikkita Warfield

Slide 2: Today's objective

At the conclusion of this PD session, participants will be able to:

- Model principles of andragogy theory and partnership learning model

Slide 3: Essential Question

- Why is it vital to implement the andragogy theory and partnership learning model when working with teachers?

Note: Read all of the essential questions. Do not answer them because they will be answered at the end of the day. The activities and information provided throughout the day will assist participants with answering the essential questions for the day.

(Time Frame for slides 4-12: 8:30-10:30 am)

Slide 4: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 4: Reflection

Slide 5: Reflection

"the practice of examining one's teaching in an analytical, critical way, with an eye toward improving and guiding future efforts" (Purcell, 2013)

Note: Ask participates how this definition relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 6: Reflection: Influence on PD

- Reflection is an ongoing process
- Reflection promotes transformational learning
- A reflective learner is a reflective thinker

Notes: Discuss-How does providing reflection effect PD? Why? Reasons reflections enhances PD experience. Why is reflection needed for partnership between the coach and teacher?

Slide 7: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 5: Dialogue

Slide 8: Dialogue

Shared conversations where no individual dominates the conversation

Note: Ask participates how this description relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 9: Dialogue: Influence on PD

- Teachers can explore and share ideas
- Promote two-way conversations between the coach and teacher
- Learn new practices (endless possibilities of learning)
- Everyone wins (no viewpoint prevails over another)

Notes: Discuss-How does dialogue effect the PD experience? How does dialogue enhance the partnership between the coach and teacher? Why is dialogue needed for partnership between the coach and teacher?

Slide 10: Kansas Partnership Coaching Model

Principle 6: Praxis

Slide 11: Praxis

"act of applying new ideas to our own lives" (Knight, 2002, p. 18).

Note: Ask participates how this definition relates to the role of the partnership between the instructional coach and the teacher in their opinion.

Slide 12: Praxis: Influence on PD

- Application of learning (*apply new ideas/learning to real-life applications*)
- Transfers to the classroom practices *(when learning is applied, application of knowledge is modeled in the classroom*)
- Students benefit when teachers implement praxis

Notes: Discuss-How does praxis effect the PD experience? How does praxis enhance the partnership between the coach and teacher? Why is praxis needed for partnership

between the coach and teacher? How does implementation of praxis effect student achievement?

*****Break*** (10:30-10:45 am)**

(*Time Frame: 10:45 – 11:05 am*)

Slide 13: Let's Review

Note: Review andragogy theory and 6 partnership learning principles. Answer any questions IC's might have.

(*Time Frame: 11:05 – 11:30 am*)

Slide 14: Putting Learning into practice

- Get in groups of four
- Create your own scenario for a school (include grade level(s), subject, problem, etc.)
- Turn it in prior to leaving for lunch

Lunch

(11:30-12:45pm)

(*Time Frame: 12:45 – 3:45 pm*)

Slide 15: Putting Learning into practice

Return to your group of four
Note: Distribute scenarios to another group. Provide directions for the project

Slide 16: Putting Learning into Practice

- Read the scenario as a group
- Create a 1 hour PD to address the problem in the scenario
- Keep in mind the andragogy theory when creating thee PD session
- Use the six Partnership Principles in the PD session

(Time Frame: 3:45 – 4:00 pm.)

Slide 17: Let's Review

Essential Question

- Why is it vital to implement the andragogy theory and partnership learning model when working with teachers?

Note: Allow participants to answer the question and support their opinion with information learned during the day. Complete Goals Based Evaluation

Reference Slide:

Knight, J. (2002). *Partnership Learning Fieldbook*. Kansas University Center for Research on Learning.

Knowles, M. (1984). The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (3rd Ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.

Knowles, M., & American Society for Training and Development, M. W. (1973). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*.

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Day 4

8:00 - 8:30 am – *Let's Talk*

Note: Welcome everyone back and lead a discussion about responses from the goals based evaluation. Answer questions and have a quick review from day one.

Introduction Slide:

"A coach is not a problem solver, a teacher, an adviser, an instructor or even an expert; he or she is a sounding board, facilitator…who raises awareness and responsibility." ~John Whitmore, 2002

Note: What does John Whitmore mean in this quote?

Slide 1 (Title Slide): Putting Practices Into Actions

Presenter: Nikkita Warfield

Slide 2: Today's objective

At the conclusion of this PD session, participants will be able to:

- Model principles of andragogy theory and partnership learning model

Slide 3: Essential Question

- Why is it vital to implement the andragogy theory and partnership learning model when working with teachers?

Note: Read all of the essential questions. Do not answer them because they will be answered at the end of the day. The activities and information provided throughout the day will assist participants with answering the essential questions for the day.

(Time Frame: 8:30 – 9:30 am)

Slide 4: Putting Learning into Practice

- Read the scenario as a group
- Create a 1 hour PD to address the problem in the scenario
- Keep in mind the andragogy theory when creating thee PD session
- Use the six Partnership Principles in the PD session

Note: Continue to work on presentation. We will begin presenting to the group at 9:30am.

(Time Frame: 9:30 – 11:30 am)

Slide 4: Presentations

(read scenario and present PD session)

Note: Listen to presentations and ensure all criteria is met.

Lunch

(11:30-12:45pm)

(Time Frame: 12:45 pm– 3:30 pm)

Slide 4: Presentations

(read scenario and present PD session)

Note: Listen to presentations and ensure all criteria is met.

Slide 5: Let's Review

Essential Question

- Why is it vital to implement the andragogy theory and partnership learning model when working with teachers?

Note: Allow participants to answer the question and support their opinion with information learned during the day.

(Time Frame: 3:45 – 4:00 pm.)

Note: Complete Goals Based Evaluation

Day 5

8:00 - 8:30 am – *Let's Talk*

Note: Welcome everyone back and lead a discussion about responses from the goals based evaluation. Answer questions and have a quick review from day one.

Introduction Slide:

"Effective Coaching: produces lasting changes in teacher behaviors…that promote more learning in the classroom." ~Anonymous

Note: Reflect on this quote and tell me your thoughts

Slide 1 (Title Slide): Listening to the Data

Presenter: Nikkita Warfield

Slide 2: Today's objective

At the conclusion of this PD session, participants will be able to:

- Review district and school data
- Create an action plan to address data

Slide 3: Essential Question

- How do I use data in my work?

Note: Read all of the essential questions. Do not answer them because they will be answered at the end of the day. The activities and information provided throughout the day will assist participants with answering the essential questions for the day.

(Time Frame: 8:30-9:45 am)

Slide 4: What is an Instructional Coach

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32a5pR3CUEc

Note: Share this video. Allow it to lead into the final subject for the training: Data facilitator

Slide 5: Listening to the Data

Notes: Provide each coach with a copy of the district's data from the previous school year. Also ensure the data is broken down by school. Engage in dialogue through a data

talk about the data, noting trends, opportunities for growth, possible ways to address the data.

*****Break***** (9:45-10:00 am)

(Time Frame: 10:00 – 11:30 am)

Have coaches to: create an action plan for the new year to address their schools' data. Including their role with assisting teachers, working with administration, and staying abreast of research to support their plan.

Lunch

(11:30-12:45pm)

12:45-3:00

Allow each coach 5-7 minutes to present their action plan and receive constructive feedback from other coaches and the presenter.

(Time Frame: 3:00-3:45pm)

Slide 6: Let's Review

Essential Question

- How can I use data in my work?

Note: Review the 5 day training with participants and answer essential questions for the day

Slide 7: You wear several hats!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mokw9aFWDWg

Note: Conclude with the video and thank them for their work. Reiterate the importance of their role and work.

(Time Frame: 3:45 – 4:00 pm.)

Note: Complete Goals Based Evaluation

Resource Slide:

Gardner, A. (2014). Instructional Coaching. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32a5pR3CUEc

Reiser, T. (2015). What is an instructional coach. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mokw9aFWDWg

Day 1 Materials:

- Powerpoint presentation
- Scenarios
- Post it notes
- Pens
- Markers
- Chart paper
- District's job description
- Goals based evaluation

Day 2 Materials

- Powerpoint presentation
- Videos
- IC's personal laptops
- Goals based evaluation
- Chart paper
- Markers

Day 3 Materials

- Powerpoint presentation
- IC's personal laptops
- Goals based evaluation
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Post it notes

Day 4 Materials

- Powerpoint presentation
- IC's personal laptops
- Goals based evaluation

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Post it notes

Day 5 Materials

- Powerpoint presentation
- Videos
- IC's personal laptops
- Goals based evaluation
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Post it notes
- District and School data

Day 1 Scenarios

Scenario 1

Mrs. Washington is in her third year 9th grade language arts teacher at the high school. She is frustrated because she has several students in her class that cannot read. Recently, she has made comments that students cannot read because the feeder elementary and middle school did not teach them how to read. She cannot understand why this is her job because she is a high school teacher. What do you do as the coach?

Scenario 2

You are observing the 6th grade collaboration teams' PLC. You note there are four team members, but only three are present. During the meeting, the team members begin to gripe about administration, their instructional expectations, students' poor performance, and frustration with their teammate that never showing up for the planning meeting on time. What do you do as the coach?

Scenario 3

During the leadership meeting, the elementary principal reviews the school improvement plan. He discusses the need to improve reading scores based on results of state and district testing data. He notes that a plan needs to be in place to address this area of concern. What do you do as an instructional coach?

Scenario 4

You have delivered a PD session on differentiated instruction to teachers in your building. At the end of the presentation, Ms. Buttercup ask you to co-teach with her the next day as she implements differentiated instruction in her lesson. She sends you the lesson plan later that evening. You stay up late in efforts to prepare for tomorrow's lesson. The next day you walk in the class to co-teach with Ms. Buttercup. As she begins the lesson, you notice that she is not following the lesson plan she sent to you. Suddenly, she turns the lesson over to you and goes to a table in the back to grade papers. What do you do as the coach?

Name: _____ Date: _____

List the goals/objectives for the day:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Did the PD session promote mastery of the goal/objective? If so how (provide examples).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would enhance your PD experience this week?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: Descriptive and Reflective Fieldnotes

Researcher Name: _____

Participant: _____

Place: _____

Purpose: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Length of Observation: _____

Diagram of Classroom

Adapted from Creswell, J. (2012) and Merriam, S. (2009) Fieldnotes Examples

Descriptive Fieldnotes		**Reflective Fieldnotes**
Time	*Notes*	*Notes*

Adapted from Creswell, J. (2012) and Merriam, S. (2009) Fieldnotes Examples

Appendix C: Instructional Coach Interview Questions

Adapted version of Common Coaching Program Evaluation Questions by Audience

Researcher Name: _____

Interviewee: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Number of years in educational field:__ Number of years as an Instructional Coach: ___

1. How do you see your role as an instructional coach? How does this compare to your written job description?
2. How do you assist in improving the instructional practices of teachers? Please give me an example.
3. What factors contribute to building the instructional capacity of teachers? How does building instructional capacity of teachers effect student achievement?
4. In what areas are you experiencing the greatest challenges with being an instructional coach? What supports would assist with overcoming those challenges?
5. What PD is needed to support you in your role as an instructional coach?
6. What is the coaching model used in your district to guide you as an instructional coach? How did you use the model when coaching teachers? Did you modify the model? If so, what modifications were made and what were the benefits or drawbacks of the modification(s)?
7. What are the skills you need to be an effective instructional coach?
8. What type(s) of PD do you receive as an instructional coach? Who provides the training?
9. How often do you receive PD?

Adapted from Coaching Matters, by Killion, J., Harrison, C., Bryan, C., & Clifton, H. (2012)

Appendix D: Observation Form

Principles of Coaching	**Examples of Principles from Observation**
Equality	
Choice	
Voice	
Reflection	
Dialogue	
Praxis	

Developed from Six Principles of Coaching, by Knight, J. (2002)

APPENDIX E: Written Job Description of Instructional Coaches from District Under Study

POSITION: **Instructional Coach**
REPORTS TO: Principal and/or Director of Elementary/Secondary Education

JOB GOAL: The primary function of the Instructional Coach is to enhance the quality of educational services offered to students.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Holds a Valid Georgia Certification at the T-5 level or higher.
2. Has a minimum of 5 years teaching experience in a K-5 classroom setting.
3. Possess leadership experience at the school or system level.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

1. Demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills.
2. Demonstrates ability to attend to details and to efficiently multi-task.
3. Demonstrates proficiency in Microsoft Office Programs.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of Georgia Standards of Excellence and Georgia Performance Standards.
5. Demonstrates knowledge of research-based instructional strategies.
6. Demonstrates ability to model and assist teachers in implementing instructional strategies in the designated content area.
7. Demonstrates knowledge of available instructional interventions and the ability to supervise and evaluate their effective implementation.
8. Demonstrates ability to interpret and implement federal laws, state rules, and local policies.
9. Demonstrates an ability to collect, analyze, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data.
10. Demonstrates professional interpersonal skills with school staff, central office staff, parents/guardians, students, and community.
11. Demonstrates ability to work with limited supervision.
12. Demonstrates an excellent attendance record.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES:

1. Supports instructional programs and services provided to all Title I schools.
2. Supports Georgia Performance Standards implementation and aids in the training of the appropriate and effective use of research-based instructional strategies.
3. Supports teachers in building background knowledge for students to aid in their acquisition of the Georgia Performance Standards.

Updated June 2015

4. Supports teachers in increasing the use of instructional technology as an essential instructional tool.
5. Provides support and structure for codification, implementation, and sharing of best practices across within and schools through the school-level Professional Learning Communities.
6. Develops and assists in the implementation of professional learning opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness in the delivery of the Georgia Performance Standards.
7. Maintains accurate and current information of program activities and prepares reports as requested.
8. Facilitates effective instructional progress monitoring and data collection utilizing results to impact academic achievement.
9. Provides intensive instructional support services for schools in NCLB Needs Improvement Status.
10. Attends professional learning opportunities that support the role of instructional facilitator.
11. Works cooperatively with school leaders, teachers, parents/guardians, and students to effectively implement program activities.
12. Communicates effectively the district's purpose to align teaching practices to learning.
13. Focuses on relationships among school(s), customers, and stakeholders.
14. Perform other assigned duties.

APPENDIX F: Educational Acronyms and Explanations

These are the acronyms, and the explanations of them, that instructional coaches mentioned during their interviews. Of note, the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) is a statewide umbrella for 7 professional affiliate associations: Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals (GAESP); Georgia Association of Middle School Principals (GAMSP); Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP); Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors (GACIS); Georgia Association of Superintendents Association (GSSA); Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE); Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators (GASPA)). The reference to Title 1 notes that instructional coaches are paid through Title 1 as a means of assisting schools with achievement.

Acronym	Explanations
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Membership-based non-profit organization serving educators across the globe providing programs, services, and products to influence student achievement and address the needs of educators and administration
Café Frameworks	System that incorporates strategies to assist students with Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expanding vocabulary. Used to assess, instruct, and monitor student learning. Delivered through the Daily 5 framework.
Canvas Training	Learning Management System used to organize digital tools in one easy-to-locate platform for students and colleagues. Teachers received training on how to use this resource.
Daily 5	Framework for teaching literacy; focuses on reading, writing, and independent work
Edivate	Online professional learning resource system used by administration to evaluate teacher practices, offer resources, and provide online professional resources to support instructional practices. Personalized to address the needs of the teacher.
ELA	English Language Arts
GA DOE	Georgia Department of Education

GACIS	Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors. Professional organization for educators working with curriculum development and instructional supervision in Georgia
GAEL	Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. Organization that focuses on school leadership in Georgia
Illuminate	A computerized data notebook. Online resource platform for understanding student data so teachers can make real-time data-driven decisions on instructional practices.
Jim Knight's Cycle	Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching Cycle or Jim Knight's Partnership Model. Focuses on relationship between teacher and instructional coach
PD	Professional Development
PLC	Professional Learning Community. On-going process of collaboration focused on continuous improvement in educator's performance and student learning
RBIS	Research Based Instructional Strategies. Strategies shown to have the greatest effect on increasing student achievement for all students, subject areas, and grade levels
RESA	Regional Educational Service Agency. Serves South Metro County School Systems by offering employees support, resources, and professional development
Schmoker's Book	"Leading with Focus: Elevating the Essentials for School and District Improvement" by Mike Schmoker
SSTAGE	Student Support Team Association for Georgia Educators. Focuses on improving student outcomes by providing in-depth understanding of Response To Intervention (RTI) process and implementation of Student Support Teams (SST)
Title I Training	Federal funding program to schools to improve academic achievement for disadvantaged students. Training provides insight about the do's and don't's of Title I allocation of funds.