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Instructional Coaching: How Does It Impact Teacher Efficacy In An Elementary Setting?

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INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING: HOW DOES IT IMPACT

TEACHER EFFICACY IN AN ELEMENTARY SETTING?

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to "K1," my mentor and friend.
Thank you for always believing in me, for challenging me,
and for helping me realize my true potential.
Our journey never ends!

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I owe a huge thank you to Marcia, Julie, and Virginia. You were truly the best team I could have ever asked for. Thank you for lending me your guidance, support, and expertise!

I would like to recognize the teachers in my building who became my participants. You continue to amaze me every single day. Thank you especially to those who volunteered to be part of my focus group. Without you, this project would not have been possible!

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge the love of my life, Charlie. Thank you for your support and patience throughout this entire project. Now onto the house projects...and the wedding!

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

*"Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because
of their ability to empower others."*
John C. Maxwell

Introduction

In my heart, I have always been a coach. As the oldest child in my family, I was the

leader, the teacher, and even at times, the provider. I remember being excited to read to my

younger brothers and I would often force them to "play school" with me. Of course, my role was

always the teacher and they were my students. All my life, I have surrounded myself with

literature and writing. I truly believe my love for learning and my passion for literacy will never

end. Sharing this love for literacy with children as their teacher, and now with adults as their

coach, has led me to ask the question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy*

in an elementary setting?

A Passion For Literacy

I have a distinct memory of myself as a small child watching my mother jot down a

grocery list. "Whoa! You write fast," was my response to watching her write. I remember

thinking, *Someday I hope I can write that fast!* Now I know that the expressive act of writing is

not all about the pace or the handwriting, but about many other things. It can be about generating

ideas, conveying information, evoking emotion, and getting the reader to visualize. Writing can

take us places we have never been. It can be therapeutic. Most of all, it can be fun. Fortunately, writing has been *all* of these things to me throughout my life.

When I was a child in elementary school, my grandfather used to force me to practice my handwriting by drawing ovals with a perfect slant. He would make me sit for an hour straight and draw these ovals every time we went over to his house. I did not mind this activity because he told me it would "make me a better writer." Of course, he was only talking about the art of handwriting, not writing to express ideas on paper. However, I do believe this process helped foster my love for writing, because being able to form letters never got in the way for me. As an added bonus, I always received praise from my teachers on my beautiful cursive handwriting.

Another early memory of writing comes back to me from fifth grade. My teacher, Mrs. Potts, nurtured our use of writer's notebooks. During this year, I fell in love with creative writing and wrote the most outlandish stories I could dream up. One such story involved a talking bookworm. Mrs. Potts did not tear down my ideas; rather, she built them up and encouraged me to keep writing.

Looking back, I also recall writing a very long, silly poem that year and entering it in a contest. Every other line rhymed and I thought it was the best piece I had ever written. It was perfect in my mind, so perfect that I did not care when I did not win the contest. This experience did not discourage me. In fact, I kept on writing and started a journal at home that year.

Mrs. Potts encouraged us to write every day. As a result, I wrote in my journal every night before bedtime. She also shared her writing with us and, as a 10 year old child, I saw how captivating it was. Now, as a coach, I want to share this appreciation for writing with students and demonstrate to teachers how sharing their passion for writing can have powerful effects in their classrooms.

Writing was not my only obsession when I was young. I also surrounded myself with books. Between writing and reading, I kept myself quite busy. Reading took me on fantastic adventures and helped me get to know "friends" I would never have had in real life. In elementary and middle school, I loved my friend Kristy from *The Babysitter's Club*, my twin friends from *The Sweet Valley High* series, and my friend R.L. Stine, author of the *Goosebumps* series.

My earliest memory of reading comes from when I was about three years old. My father used to read to me every night before bedtime. Often, we would visit my friend Clifford, the big red dog, because it was my favorite book at the time. We read it so many times that I memorized all the words and could say each line as my dad turned the pages. One night, he exclaimed to my mother, "Kristen is a genius! She can already read!" My mother came in and was marveled by my talent. Of course, we all knew I was not actually reading, but I believe this experience was just one of many in which I latched on to the importance of literacy and became confident in my ability to read and write well.

In later years, upon entering college, I already knew I was bound to be a teacher (I had announced this to my parents when I was in second grade). Coincidentally, Mrs. Potts made an appearance in my life again. She had transitioned from teaching fifth grade to teaching undergraduate courses at Gustavus Adolphus College where I was enrolled. I simply could not wait to have her as a professor for my elementary methods classes. During my junior year, she had us start using writer's notebooks. It did not take long before my notebook was filled up. That very notebook has been shared with first graders, second graders, third graders, and fifth graders--all grade levels I have taught throughout my nine years of teaching. There is something so

profound about showing students how their teacher is a reader and a writer in "real life." I strongly believe that making literacy authentic for our young learners is essential.

<u>An Inspiring Mentor</u>

In addition to Mrs. Potts, another individual who helped instill this fact in me was my mentor, Kaylinn (name changed to protect privacy). She was the literacy coach in our building for seven years. When I first began teaching, she had just begun her literacy coaching career. Kaylinn is an intelligent, well-read individual who "gets it" when it comes to literacy instruction. As a new teacher, I recognized what I needed to improve upon. I was always willing to have Kaylinn in my classroom because the conversations that ensued helped me improve my teaching. We became the nerdiest of friends--talking about professional literature over dinner, starting book clubs with our colleagues, attending conferences together, and dreaming of the days when we would become the next famous pair of literacy "Sisters" and publish our books. Over the years, we have helped each other grow professionally as both teachers and coaches.

Three years ago, a turning point happened for Kaylinn and I when we attended the *Literacy in Motion* summer conference in a suburb of Chicago. After the conference, our job was to bring back effective literacy strategies that would be valuable to the teachers in our building. We spent the remainder of the summer creating two staff development modules to share with our fellow teachers. The feedback from these presentations was very positive and our teachers commented on how refreshing it was to have staff development that was actually useful. This experience led me to begin thinking about how I could create some bigger changes.

Despite having only seven years of teaching experience at the time, I had worked diligently to make major changes in my own teaching practices over this time period. Some would call it the "seven year itch," but for me, it was the right time to implement changes in my

teaching career. I believed it was time to share my love of literacy not only with the students in

my classroom, but with my fellow teachers, too. During this same time period, I began the

Master of Arts in Literacy Education advanced degree program at Hamline University, hoping to

position myself professionally for a literacy coaching role within the next few years.

A Passion for Coaching

Much to my surprise, my coaching journey began my eighth year of working at a K-5

elementary school in an outer-ring suburb of the Twin Cities. Kaylinn, my former mentor, who

was still the literacy coach in my building at the time, heard that there might be an opening at

another school in our district for a half time literacy coach combined with a half time third grade

teacher. Of course I was excited about this opportunity, but I was apprehensive to begin a new

role at another school. Knowing that "stealing" Kaylinn's job at our school was not an option, I

interviewed for the position over the phone and the principal offered it to me right then and there.

My first year as a coach was filled with ups and downs. Unfortunately, there were mostly

downs. The biggest challenge was finding time to coach within the confines of a half time

schedule and fulfill numerous other responsibilities as a classroom teacher. Additionally, my

principal and colleagues did not truly understand my coaching role either, which made it even

more difficult. However, the unclear expectations were not anyone's fault. As I went through the

motions, I realized the coaching role was not well defined in any of the five elementary buildings

across our school district--except the school where I used to teach. In reality, Kaylinn was the

only coach who was actually coaching. This was mainly due to the fact that she had worked for

seven years to build up a positive culture for coaching and had a principal who supported her in

this endeavor. After realizing this, I felt very defeated. How would I go about getting this role

clarified and understood in my school and in our entire district? How could I create a sense of

urgency in order to establish a culture for coaching in my new building? I was willing to go the extra mile to make this happen and I was beginning to realize that coaching is where my true passion lies.

Rationale

Kaylinn and I shared the same beliefs and attitudes surrounding coaching. We also both recognized the need for changes in our school district in this regard. Our teachers needed consistency across buildings and, more importantly, they needed the opportunities to benefit from coaching. Together, we created a job description and a possible coaching schedule. During this time, I was still taking courses at Hamline through the Master of Arts in Literacy Education program along with some K-12 reading license courses. Two of these courses involved creating a job description for a literacy coach and creating a year-long building professional development plan. I was able to immediately apply the work from these assignments to benefit our school district. Kaylinn and I presented these ideas to our Director of Teaching and Learning, who was fairly new to our district. She was not aware that most of the literacy coaches and all of the instructional coaches, who were also half time, were not actually coaching in their buildings. As a firm believer and advocate for coaching herself, she took our ideas and wholeheartedly took action to implement instructional coaching district wide.

A turn of events happened after that year. Kaylinn accepted a position with a curriculum publishing company and moved to California to be with her husband. Our Director of Teaching and Learning had decided that the coaching roles needed to be clarified, needed to be full time positions, and that our district would hire a consultant to help us create a framework for coaching. All of the teachers who had previously held coaching jobs, both literacy coaches and instructional coaches, were invited into an interview pool. It was made clear that only people

who were truly interested in *coaching* should apply. I had never been so nervous in my entire life than I was during that interview. Looking back, I know it was because I wanted the position so badly. I feel so fortunate that our Director of Teaching and Learning saw value in me as a coach. Fortunately, I was offered a full time coaching position in my school district!

Now, only one year later, I am the instructional coach at my former K-5 elementary school with a focus on literacy instruction. I ended up "stealing" Kaylinn's job after all. Being back at this school makes me feel at home. I often think about the ups and downs from the previous year and use the downs as learning experiences--the mistakes have made me a better teacher and coach. Although I know I have big shoes to fill, I feel as though I am positively following in Kaylinn's footsteps. She worked tirelessly to set up a culture for coaching which is apparent as I work with the teachers in my building.

Therefore, my ultimate goal this year is to uphold the culture of coaching, create meaningful experiences for our early career teachers, and guide as many experienced teachers as I can to be the best they can be. I want my fellow teachers to feel confident and proud of the instruction they deliver to their students each day.

A New Reality

Although I have taught many different grade levels and have had some coaching experience, I do not claim to be an expert when I go into teachers' classrooms. For the most part, I act as a sounding board for reflection and make it known that we are learning together. I feel fortunate that our Director of Teaching and Learning has begun to set us up for success as coaches. Not only are the instructional coaching roles now clearly defined across the school district, but she also hired a national consultant, Steve Dunn, to provide monthly professional development sessions for us. He believes that coaching can transform school districts. I

absolutely see the value in his coaching framework--using the gradual release of responsibility with teachers.

Through Dunn's framework, I spend two full weeks in a teacher's classroom for 30-40 minutes each day. For the first few days, I demonstrate, while focusing on the specific goal the teacher has set for herself/himself. The teacher decides when it is time for us to co-teach and this can last up to six days. While we are co-teaching, the teacher is doing most of the teaching while I am jumping in every once in a while to "act as his/her brain." When the teacher feels comfortable, he/she teaches while I observe and give feedback immediately following the lesson.

Through my intense trainings with Steve Dunn, I have learned to identify at least five positive aspects of a teacher's instruction at the beginning of the coaching conversation. In addition, I ask the teacher to add to this list and identify why those aspects of instruction are so important. After we discuss the positive points, I give the teacher one coaching point. It is best practice for a teacher to have students focus on one learning target. Similarly, it is also best practice for coaches to support teachers by identifying one learning target.

Overall, the new coaching framework in my district has worked well thus far and the feedback from teachers has been very positive. I am looking forward to a year rich with new experiences, many opportunities to learn from my mistakes, and, most importantly, being able to contribute to student achievement at our school. Although I have always felt like a coach deep down in my heart, I now officially have the title to support the role. As I continue in this role, I am beginning to realize that my impact as a coach does not stop with one elementary teacher or one room of students.

Summary

Literacy has been an important part of my life ever since I was young. From the time I "read" Clifford books to later when I began teaching, I realized the power of being proficient in literacy. Throughout my teaching career, I have also realized the importance of demonstrating to students how their teachers are readers and writers in "real life." Moreover, I have realized that coaching is currently where my true passion lies. Now, as an instructional coach, I want to increase teacher efficacy in my elementary building through action research and support teachers with the application of best practices.

In Chapter Two, I will present the research through a review of literature on instructional coaching and how it impacts teacher efficacy. Chapter Three of this capstone will discuss the methods for this action research process. Chapters Four and Five will present the results and conclusions of my study. All of this will help me be better prepared to confidently answer this question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?*

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

"I find that knowledge is to coaching like a car is to driving.
It's what propels the activity forward, but it won't happen successfully
unless the person behind the wheel is skilled in steering it."
Cathy A. Toll

<u>Introduction</u>

My passion for literacy, my desire to support fellow teachers, and the knowledge I have

gained from my inspiring mentors have led me to believe in the power of coaching. Over the

course of my nine years of teaching, I have seen firsthand the need for quality staff development

programs and the need for consistency across school districts for administrators, coaches, and

teachers. The coaching experiences and training I have received thus far have set the stage for

my professional goals and this literature review.

As an instructional coach in a K-5 elementary school, my professional goal is to support

my fellow teachers by acknowledging their use of best practices and increasing their self-

confidence and effectiveness, or efficacy. This review of literature will delve into the research

on: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?* As I

began my study, I found that many of the researchers agree on a common definition of

instructional coaching. I also found common themes surrounding multiple coaching frameworks,

best practices for staff development, and the importance of teacher efficacy. In addition, I believe

coaches have the power to transform schools.

Instructional Coaching

Most researchers agree that coaching is a beneficial way to provide ongoing, job-embedded staff development for teachers (Allen, 2006, Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009, Knight, 2009, and Toll, 2014). However, in many school districts, administrators and teachers are encountering roadblocks due to the lack of a district-wide framework, or the use of a specific model for coaching. As a result, it is important for school districts to adopt a common definition and framework for coaching, and to hire teachers who possess effective qualities for becoming coaches.

Definition of coaching. How do the researchers define instructional coaching? Most of the researchers define instructional coaching as on-going, job-embedded professional development for teachers (Allen, 2006, Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009, Knight, 2009, and Toll, 2014). Coaches support teachers in the context of their classrooms because it has been proven that traditional "fly-by" models of professional development do not cause teachers to deeply reflect and change their teaching practices (Knight, 2005). Along with most teachers, I have been on the receiving end of traditional staff development and, while some of the information often seemed very valuable, I did not have the opportunity to implement the strategies learned in a timely manner or receive feedback on how well I was implementing the new strategies. Therefore, the informational packet given to us by the presenter was usually filed away, never to be seen again.

With coaching, both parties need to be committed to learning, changing and growing. Most researchers will agree that coaching involves two professionals, a coach and a teacher, in a trusting relationship who are working to improve both their teaching and student learning (Barkley & Bianco, 2005, Knight, 2009). Killion and Harrison describe a coach as, "a teacher

who has responsibility for, supports, and facilitates the professional learning of colleagues" (as

cited in Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008, p. 15). This clear and concise definition can be used by

coaches to communicate their role to teachers.

It may be important for coaches to communicate not only what their role is, but also what

their role is *not*. Aguilar (2013) believes coaching is not a way to enforce a program, it is not to

be used as a tool for fixing teachers, it is not therapy for teachers, and should not be presented as

consulting where coaches are viewed as the experts. Jim Knight (2009), a true expert in the field

of instructional coaching, believes the more coaches and teachers are seen as equal partners, the

more learning will take place. I will present more on Knight's partnership model later in the

teacher efficacy section of this literature review.

Coaching is unlike most traditional staff development in that there is consistent follow-up

by the coach and daily opportunities for the teacher to practice new instructional strategies or

refine current practices. This shift from traditional staff development to coaching has happened

in many school districts across the nation over the past decade (Knight, 2009). In many school

districts, staff development workshops and coaching are used simultaneously as a way to

improve teacher efficacy and increase student achievement.

Purpose of coaching. Why the shift from traditional staff development to coaching?

There are many reasons for adopting coaching as a way to enhance the learning gained from

traditional staff development. First and foremost, coaching can serve as the bridge between one-

time staff development presentations and ongoing classroom practice (Denton & Hasbrouck,

2009). The main problem teachers, coaches, and principals see with "fly-by" staff development

is that there is little follow-up and few ways to hold teachers accountable for new initiatives.

Why would teachers try something new when they are not going to receive any specific feedback

on how it is working and whether or not they are implementing it with fidelity and purpose? With instructional coaching, teachers have the opportunity to see coaches demonstrate best practices. They also have the chance to receive timely and constructive feedback on their instructional practices. Studies have shown that teachers are more likely to make lasting, positive changes with the support of an instructional coach (Knight, 2005).

Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers are known as pioneers in the development of coaching models (as cited in Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Their studies from the 1970's and 1980's suggested that teachers were more likely to integrate new teaching practices if they were involved in coaching, whether the coaches were experts or peers. Joyce and Showers further suggested, "Teachers may need to implement a complex new teaching practice about 25 times with feedback and support before that level of transfer can be attained" (as cited in Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009, p. 152). This reiterates the power of districts using a coaching model versus primarily using traditional, one-time staff development models.

In a study done by Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010), data suggested that pre-service teachers did not receive sufficient training in delivering research-based instruction on a consistent basis. They recommended coaching for novice teachers in order to support them in implementing research-based strategies. The early years of teaching can be daunting. In some school districts, such as mine, coaches are required to coach all non-tenured teachers. When new teachers know they have a coach who supports them, the transition from pre-service to the classroom can be less overwhelming.

In her book, *The Art of Coaching*, Elena Aguilar (2013) presents some of the most recent research on coaching, including a report from the Annenberg Foundation for Education Reform. The report concluded the following about how coaching:

- Encourages collaborative and reflective practices among teachers.

- Embeds professional learning and promotes positive cultural change in schools.

- Is linked to teachers' increased use of data to inform their practice.

- Promotes accountability for teachers.

- Keeps the focus on teaching and learning.

- Supports collective leadership.

Another purpose for coaching is the benefit of constant support for teachers with their district, school, and personal professional goals. Coaches can support teachers when new initiatives are being put into place. According to Vogt and Shearer, providing this direct support should be on a coach's list of responsibilities (2011). Working closely with a coach over time in a coaching cycle can help teachers meet short-term and long-term goals. I will explain the term "coaching cycle" later in this literature review. The power and effectiveness of a coaching cycle, however, greatly depends on the coach's communication skills, willingness to take risks in front of teachers, readiness to collaborate with others, and their ability to give feedback without passing on judgment.

Essentials of communication. Most researchers agree there are certain characteristics coaches need to possess in order to be effective when working with teachers. First and foremost, the ability to communicate well with adults is essential. Coaches need to be able to have conversations that stay focused on the teachers and their specific practices. Therefore, they need to be attentive, active listeners (Toll, 2014). Cathy Toll, a prominent figure in the world of coaching, believes listening is the most important aspect of coaching. She believes asking questions is the next most important aspect (2014). These two important aspects of a coach's job can help facilitate positive relationships.

In addition, developing positive relationships with teachers who know their opinions and ideas are valued and who know they will be listened to are all keys to a coach's success (Knight, 2005). In 1991, Dean and Ferro provided adult educators with a list of qualities they believed they should possess. First and foremost was the belief that adults can change and learn. Other characteristics they noted were enthusiasm about the learners and the topic, patience, willingness to listen to others, the ability to articulate clearly, flexibility, and a sense of humor (as cited in Dean, 2002). More will be discussed on adult learners later in the staff development section of this literature review.

In their book *Coaching Conversations*, Barkley and Bianco (2010) believe the way coaches use body language, committed listening, verbal and nonverbal communication can convey to teachers how much they are valued. Often times, a teacher simply needs someone to listen so that she has time to reflect on her practices. Coaches should value silence, know when to ask questions, and avoid criticism at all costs (Barkley & Bianco, 2010). Practicing effective communication techniques on a daily basis can facilitate positive relationships with teachers and can help send the message that teachers' perspectives are valued. All of this can increase teacher buy-in for coaching, especially if it is new to a school district or if some teachers are resistant.

Willingness to take risks. Instructional coaches must be willing to take risks. They must also be willing to allow teachers to see them make mistakes and even fail at times. We all know that we learn from mistakes and failures. Therefore, the willingness to take risks is an important trait for coaches to possess in order to build trust among colleagues and create a culture for coaching within a building (Toll, 2014).

Additionally, coaches must see themselves as teachers first (Dunn, 2014, and Knight, 2009). This can be established for teachers as coaches go into classrooms to demonstrate lessons.

Demonstration lessons can help teachers feel more at ease, as these lessons take the pressure off them for the first few days of the coaching cycle. In addition, demonstration lessons give coaches the opportunity to show the teacher how they are able to take risks and learn from their mistakes, thus creating a culture for coaching (Toll, 2006). Failures and mistakes can facilitate valuable coaching conversations. Debriefing demonstration lessons together gives coaches the opportunity to show teachers how they can continuously reflect on their lessons. The importance of reflection will be discussed later in the teacher efficacy section of this literature review.

 Collaborating with teachers. Jennifer Allen (2006) believes, in order to help create a culture for coaching, there must be a collaborative effort between the coach and the teacher. This includes supporting the teacher with planning before the lessons, allowing ample time for the teacher to practice the instructional strategies during the lessons, and allowing time to debrief shortly after the lessons. This means one essential trait coaches must possess is being able to work collaboratively with others. Not only can this help build relationships, but it can also help teachers see coaches as peers versus administration (Knight, 2009).

 Miller and Stewart (2013) suggest that principals and coaches present coaching as teamwork. Teachers are often used to working with a team of other teachers, so presenting coaching as teamwork can help to increase teacher buy-in. This can be especially valuable when coaching is new to a school or district. They also contend that coaching can bridge the gap between individual practice and team practice, as coaches sometimes work with entire teams of teachers at one time. This type of collaboration can, over time, transform the way individual teachers and teams of teachers integrate best practices and common assessments into their teaching.

    <u>Giving feedback without judgment.</u> Coaching involves assistance and support, not evaluation (Dunn, 2014, and Toll, 2014). Other researchers state that coaches must have the ability to give constructive feedback without revealing judgment. This includes both taking notes and asking questions in a non-judgmental way so that the teacher does not become defensive (L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean, 2010). This can be a fine line. Stating what the coach noticed and not what the coach liked or disliked can remove the judgment. An example of how coaches can do this is by saying, "I noticed you had your students turn and talk five times in 15 minutes. Why is this so important?" This focuses on the positive, while allowing the teacher to reflect on his students' engagement throughout the lesson.

    Coaches should also avoid using words such as "good" or "bad" when coaching teachers, as these words can be seen as judgmental and may cross the line into evaluation. In order to maintain positive relationships with staff members, many schools are making it clear in their framework that evaluating teachers is the principal's duty. Barkley and Bianco (2005) believe that teachers are more apt to focus on their weaknesses during coaching in order to improve their teaching overall, whereas during an evaluation by an administrator, they feel the need to solely showcase their strengths. These are all reasons why classroom teachers should be able to see their coaches as fellow teachers, or peers (Dunn, 2014, Knight, 2009, and Toll, 2014). Much of the time, coaching can bring about more positive, lasting change than standard evaluations which usually only happen once per year.

    All of this positive change, however, hinges on districts accepting and adopting a coaching definition, being able to see the positive reasons for implementing coaching, and hiring teachers who possess the qualities previously mentioned. In addition, adopting a common coaching framework as a school district can help teachers decipher between administrators' roles

and coaches' roles. In the next section of this literature review, I will present the research on coaching frameworks, the three levels of coaching activities, and the power of coaching conversations.

<u>Coaching Frameworks</u>

A framework for coaching is defined as a school district's model for how best to support teachers in their use of instructional best practices (Barkley, 2005). Different school districts have adopted a variety of frameworks for coaching. Although the primary goal of any coaching framework is to improve teacher efficacy and ultimately increase student achievement, it is important that each district commits to their framework and uses it consistently. There are many different coaching frameworks being utilized in schools throughout the nation. In the following section, I will describe five of these frameworks.

The first framework for coaching is known as directive coaching (Aguilar, 2013). With directive coaching, also referred to as instructive coaching, the coach shows up as an expert in the area in which the teacher is inquiring about. For example, the coach may be asked by administration to support teachers in their implementation of the new Common Core State Standards. The coach then acts as a resource and expert who can answer teachers' questions on the standards. Within the use of this framework, teachers are less likely to see coaches as their peers.

A second framework, facilitative coaching, involves the coach facilitating the learning of others, not acting as the expert (Aguilar, 2013). A coaching conversation within this framework would build on the teacher's strengths and include many reflective questions. The facilitative coach provides scaffolding and supports the teacher within his/her Zone of Proximal Development, a concept introduced to education by Lev Vygotsky (as cited in Daniels, 2008).

This is also known as the gradual release of responsibility. More will be presented on the gradual release of responsibility in the next section. Within the facilitative coaching framework, coaches know their goal is to guide teachers to independence in a particular strategy or skill.

Many districts have chosen to use a third framework, cognitive coaching, as their primary framework and this may be the most well known model for coaching (Dantonio, 1995). Cognitive coaching, also referred to as ontological coaching, is a type of facilitative coaching where coaches address different ways of thinking for teachers. The primary goal of cognitive coaching is to change the way teachers think in order to ultimately change the way they behave (Aguilar, 2013). Many reflective questions are asked by the coach during a cognitive coaching session.

Peer coaching or collegial coaching, a fourth coaching framework, happens when two or more teachers work together to refine their practice through constant reflection (Dantonio, 1995). When this framework is used, the teachers have professional problem-solving conversations surrounding their goals. This can be seen as a non-threatening and non-evaluative way to improve their teaching. These reflective conversations can also help teams of teachers develop shared visions of effective teaching. This type of coaching usually does not involve a building coach.

A fifth framework for coaching, transformational coaching, brought forth by Robert Hargrove and used widely in the business world, has only recently made its way into schools (Aguilar, 2013). This framework for coaching combines strategies from directive, facilitative, ontological and cognitive coaching. With transformational coaching, coaches intend not only to reach individual teachers, but to affect change in a broader sense. Aguilar (2013) states, "In order to transform our schools, we'll need to improve the craft of instruction and leadership and

support educators to manage the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual demands of working in very diverse schools in a constantly changing environment" (p. 27). It seems as though transformational coaching can have powerful effects on school culture, teacher efficacy, and student achievement. Transformational coaching is the framework my school district has adopted and hopes to maintain for years to come.

Within any of these five coaching frameworks, coaches may be expected to use their time on different coaching activities. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) cite the three levels of coaching activities, as defined by International Reading Association (2009). These three levels of coaching activities include:

- Level One: informal coaching conversations, focused on relationship building, may include assessing students.
- Level Two: more formal, planning lessons with teachers, assisting teachers in interpreting data, planning staff development sessions.
- Level Three: most formal, demonstration lessons, co-teaching, observing teachers and providing feedback.

Districts may decide how coaches use different percentages of their time. For example, a new coach in a new building may have to spend more time on level one activities during her first year. A coach who has established positive relationships with most of her staff can move on to spending more time in levels two and three.

In my school district, coaches are expected to spend approximately 75% of their time coaching and 25% preparing for staff development presentations (Appendix A). According to Knight, increasing the amount of time spent coaching increases the overall effectiveness of the

coaching program (2009). This may seem obvious, but some coaches may struggle to figure out how the three levels of coaching activities fit within their district's coaching framework.

In summary, there are many types of coaching frameworks and coaches must decide how the three levels of coaching activities fit into their districts' adopted framework. However, in any coaching framework that is used, the primary goals are to improve teaching and learning. The essential components to any coaching framework include maintaining a consistent coaching model, building positive relationships, supporting teachers through the use of the gradual release of responsibility, demonstrating lessons, co-teaching, and having coaching conversations that focus on reflection so teachers can improve their efficacy and impact student achievement.

The gradual release of responsibility. Most elementary teachers understand that it is best practice to use the gradual release of responsibility with children. This can occur over a period of 30 minutes or even a period of three full weeks, depending on the complexity of the skill or strategy (Fisher & Frey, 2008). The coaching framework in my district, along with other districts throughout the United States, uses the gradual release of responsibility with teachers. For example, after the coach and teacher have had a pre-conference to discuss the teacher's professional goals, the coach visits that teacher's classroom on a daily basis for approximately 10 days. This is what is referred to as a coaching cycle. This time frame helps teachers hold themselves accountable for their professional goals and allows for constructive feedback from the coach each day (Dunn, 2014).

Demonstration lessons and co-teaching. Some coaching frameworks include demonstration lessons and many of the researchers agree coaching *should* include demonstration lessons. At the beginning of each coaching cycle, the coach teaches a few demonstration lessons while the classroom teacher observes and takes notes. The coach focuses on using the best

practices that align with the teacher's professional goals. These demonstration lessons can be powerful when coaches are trying to establish rapport with teachers and show that they are willing to take risks, as stated before (Walpole & McKenna, 2013, Knight, 2009, and Toll, 2014). Demonstration lessons, sometimes referred to as model lessons, have been proven to be an effective component of coaching. Knight (2009) suggests keeping the "You watch me, I watch you" concept as informal as possible. Recently, researchers have clarified the difference between a model lesson and a demonstration lesson. A model lesson shows the teacher what *should* happen. In contrast, a demonstration lesson shows what *could* happen (Shidler, 2009). More coaches have begun to refer to these lessons as demonstration lessons, as this can take some of the pressure off both parties.

Within some coaching frameworks, the teacher and coach both participate in co-teaching after the demonstration lessons. The co-teaching model has been proven to increase student achievement (Toll, 2006). It also allows for coaches to continually demonstrate best practices while classroom teachers are authentically practicing the instructional strategies needed to meet their professional goals and impact student achievement. Cook and Friend (1995), two experts on co-teaching, define the practice of co-teaching as, "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space" (p. 2). This means that both the teacher and coach are delivering the instruction. Therefore, the coach can guide the teacher during the lessons through prompting, asking questions, and giving students additional information. Not only does the co-teaching model benefit students, it also supports teachers in achieving their goals and opens the door for quality coaching conversations between the teacher and coach.

Coaching conversations. Coaching conversations are the heart of coaching. Within some coaching frameworks, coaching conversations happen every day after the lesson, whether it was a demonstration lesson, a co-taught lesson, or a lesson in which the teacher was being observed by the coach. It is key for these conversations to happen as immediately after the lesson as possible (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). They can even happen while the students are in the classroom. For example, while the students in the class are working on writing or reading independently, the teacher and coach discuss how the lesson went. After identifying at least five positive aspects of the lesson, the coach can use a bridging statement to present one coaching point (Dunn, 2014). The coaching conversation often promotes the most change, as it allows for reflection time.

Cheliotes and Reilly (2010) believe that coaching conversations have the power to transform teaching in schools. The main purpose of a coaching conversation is to allow teachers time to reflect on their teaching practices, thus getting new thinking patterns to emerge. When teachers are in the thick of their day-to-day routines, they are not allowed much time, if any, to think and reflect on their teaching practices. Ideally, coaching allows for this opportunity.

According to the new leadership model, the leaders in our schools can benefit from displaying to staff members that they themselves do not know all the answers (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2010). Many times, leaders in school districts become far removed from the level at which the most change needs to occur. Using the new leadership model attempts to bridge this gap. When leaders, teachers, and other staff members work together to solve problems and become more efficient, all parties benefit, including the students. Implementing the new leadership model along with coaching conversations in schools has the potential to bring about a lot of positive change.

In this section, I have presented the research on different coaching frameworks, the three levels of coaching activities and the power of coaching conversations. Now I will move on to what researchers say about how coaches and other school leaders can provide teachers with meaningful staff development opportunities. After all, coaches can make an even broader impact when they are able to bridge their coaching conversations with recent staff development sessions.

Staff Development

Most teachers consider themselves to be lifelong learners. Our populations of students are ever changing and teachers must be ready to meet the demands of not only these diverse students, but also the demands of rigorous standards. How can teachers be prepared to meet their students' needs and stay up to date on best practices? It is part of the role of the coach to advocate for high quality staff development opportunities and to facilitate these staff development sessions. Staff development and coaching go hand in hand as coaches provide professional support to adult learners.

Types of professional development. According to Dana & Yendol-Hoppey (2008), there are three types of teacher knowledge and many different types of professional development activities to support this teacher knowledge. They cite knowledge *for* practice, knowledge *in* practice, and knowledge *of* practice along with professional development activities in a table titled "Types of Teacher Knowledge and Professional Development" (Appendix B).

In most school districts, it is inevitable there will be non-student contact days where teachers will need to attend professional development workshops. Coaches, administrators, and other leaders can facilitate these workshops in order for teachers to gain knowledge *for* practice. However, when coaches and teachers work together and connect the material learned to how it can be implemented in the classroom, teachers are able to gain knowledge *in* practice. In short,

"sit and get" types of professional development might be necessary, but do not necessarily contribute to teacher growth and transfer of knowledge (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008). Aguilar (2013) reiterates this point by stating, "This kind of professional development by itself, which just about every teacher has experienced, rarely results in significant change in teacher practice and rarely results in increased learning for children" (Aguilar, p. 7). Knight (2009) supports this claim by explaining that when there is little follow-up to professional development, school leaders can expect approximately 10% implementation. He also suggests that one-time workshops can actually decrease teachers' interest in professional development and can create a hostile learning environment within a school. These are reasons why part of a coach's job is to advocate for high quality staff development in their settings.

    <u>High quality staff development.</u> Allen (2006) defines high quality professional development, according to the U.S. Department of Education, in her book *Becoming a Literacy Leader*. She states,

> "High quality professional development prepares teachers for the specific challenges when it is of sufficient length, frequency, and intensity; revolves around helping teachers move their students toward their state's content and performance standards; gives teachers a central role in planning their own professional development; and provides teachers with ample opportunity to practice skills and activities" (Allen, p. 100).

    Just as students tend to be more engaged when they are given choices, teachers are more likely to be invested in their learning when they have choices surrounding their own professional development. Coaches can be leaders who give teachers choices around their learning and can act as a sounding board, allowing for daily reflection.

Providing professional support. According to Cheliotes & Reilly (2010), an old leadership model and new leadership model both exist in schools today. The old leadership model focuses on telling teachers what to do, whereas the new leadership model focuses on asking teachers questions, having coaching conversations, and being mindful of teachers' personal growth. This new leadership model aligns well with coaching. Although coaches should often not be seen as administrators, there is no doubt they can be leaders within their schools. As stated previously, coaches are not always hired to evaluate teachers. Typically, their main role is to provide teachers with professional support.

Knight (2009) believes in "The Big Four" when coaches are providing professional support to teachers. These four teaching practices include classroom management, content, instruction, and assessment for learning. I think of "The Big Four" as building blocks. If a teacher is struggling with classroom management, this is where coaches should begin. Once classroom management has been sorted out, coaches can support teachers in planning the content they will be teaching. If teachers do not have a plan for conveying their content clearly, this is where coaches should begin. Once this is in place, coaches can begin to focus on instruction and eventually, more specific things such as formative assessment. All of these building blocks are important to keep in mind when coaching adults. Having knowledge about how adults learn best should also be on the forefront of coaches' minds.

Adult learners. Dr. Gary Kuhne (N.Y.) explains ten characteristics of adults as learners. These characteristics include the following:

- Adults generally desire to take more control over their learning than youth.

- Adults draw upon their experiences as a resource in their learning efforts.

- Adults tend to be more motivated in learning situations than youth.

- Adults are more pragmatic in learning than youth.

- In contrast to youth, the learner role is secondary for adults.

- Adults must fit their learning into life's "margins."

- Many adults lack confidence in their learning.

- Adults are more resistant to change than youth.

- Adults are more diverse than youth.

- Adults must compensate for aging in learning.

Because of these characteristics of adult learners, there are some implications for leaders who are planning professional learning opportunities. Coaches who are planning staff development must seek to include teachers in the planning process as much as possible and allow for self-assessment. Staff development planners must also connect new concepts to teachers' prior experiences, as these experiences can add richness to the discussions. In addition, presenters must connect the new learning to application in the classroom. Due to the fact that some adults are more resistant to change, staff developers need to explain the "why" when presenting changes, not just the "how." Finally, leaders in professional development must cater to different learning styles and allow adults to network together.

According to Sousa (2009), a leader in brain research, coaches should know how adults learn best. Teacher effectiveness will only increase if teachers are intrinsically motivated to learn. Therefore, coaches should make staff development opportunities relevant and connect the learning to positive emotions. Coaching is one type of staff development that offers teachers the opportunity to evaluate their professional goals and practice new instructional strategies within the context of their own classrooms (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). This authenticity can increase motivation and, in turn, increase student learning. When teachers see firsthand how

student learning is increased, they are more likely to reflect on and change their instructional

practices. All of this can also increase buy-in for coaching (Miller & Stewart, 2013).

Stephen Brookfield (1985), an expert in the field of adult education, supports these

beliefs in his work. His research suggests that adults need to have their sense of self-worth built

up in order to engage in critical learning processes. Brookfield's vision of high quality staff

development would include asking questions of the audience, opportunities for collaboration

during the presentation, and making connections between the learners' experiences and what is

being taught. He also adds that adult education must provide time for reflection and deeper

thinking. Therefore, when planning staff development sessions, coaches and other leaders should

include all of these components in order to facilitate as much learning as possible.

Although coaches and other leaders speak to large groups during some staff development

sessions, there are also times when coaches work with smaller groups, such as a grade level

teams of teachers. In an article, from The Reading Teacher journal, titled *Literacy Learning

Through Team Coaching*, Miller and Stewart (2013) present a case study on coaching. Their data

suggests that coaches can successfully coach teams of adults when there is a clearly defined

coaching model, they have knowledgeable and qualified coaches, and coaches maintain a neutral

stance. Through their work with teams, coaches can bridge the gap between individual practice

and team practice. However, most coaching occurs on a one-to-one basis with teachers in their

classrooms.

In their book *Systems for Change in Literacy Education: A Guide to Professional

Development*, Lyons and Pinnell (2001) describe the ideal staff development environment for

teachers. They suggest that staff developers create positive environmental conditions where

teachers feel willing to try new things. The environment they describe also involves the staff

developer accepting that everyone in the room always has something new to learn. Part of the role of coaches and other staff developers is to push teachers' thinking. As a result, there should be ongoing learning in the environment every day.

In summary, the different types of high quality staff development districts choose to use should support teachers professionally. Coaches can continually improve teaching and learning by being aware of how adults learn best and by creating positive learning environments for the adults they support. These ideas have led me to the last section of my literature review, teacher efficacy. The primary goal of any coaching framework is to increase student success, but this can only be achieved if teachers have efficacy--the belief that they have the power to help their students succeed.

<u>Teacher Efficacy</u>

Coaching can be a powerful tool for guiding teachers in improving their instructional practices and it can also be a powerful tool for increasing teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is defined as, "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Tschannen & Hoy, 1998). Gibson and Dembo (2009) state, "A teacher's sense of efficacy has proven to be a powerful indicator of how much time teachers spend in teaching content and ultimately student outcomes" (as cited in Shidler). Teachers who have strong instructional efficacy have high standards for their students and are more likely to reflect upon *themselves* as the issue when their students struggle to learn. In contrast, teachers with low instructional efficacy often blame failures and struggles on *children's* lack of motivation or lack of ability (Shidler, 2009).

Knight (2009) ties teacher efficacy to motivation. He suggests that when efficacy increases, teacher motivation increases, which will eventually produce better results among

students. He also suggests that when there is higher efficacy in a building, teachers are more willing to try new things and are more open to new ideas. Overall, increased efficacy leads to increased enthusiasm for teaching. Part of a coach's role is to support teachers in order to increase the efficacy in their settings.

The importance of reflection. Barkley and Bianco (2005) believe that coaching can serve as a powerful tool for reflection and that sometimes coaching allows teachers to discover this reflection piece for the first time. This enhances teachers' goal setting, instruction, and efficacy. By constantly reflecting, teachers may come to realize the changes they need to make and may be more likely to take action in implementing these changes.

In addition, Knight (2009) believes reflection is an essential part of professional learning. Through the partnership coaching model, each partner respects the other's point of view while collaborating. Therefore, instructional coaches can encourage teachers to consider many ideas before making their own decisions. This encourages reflective thinking instead of what could be referred to as "one way" thinking.

The importance of feedback. Similarly to how teachers know it is best practice to give students specific feedback, it is also essential for coaches to give teachers specific feedback while supporting them in their classrooms (Saphier, 2011). According to Sousa's (2009) brain research, effective feedback is both timely and specific. When used properly, it can stimulate reflection. In contrast, giving negative feedback does the exact opposite. Hearing a lot of negative feedback can cause teachers stress and can cause them to shut down. As stated before, adults tend to be more motivated in their learning than children. Even so, continuous feedback can increase motivation even more.

Furthermore, Cheliotes & Reilly (2010) explain the differences between negative feedback, conciliatory feedback, and communicative feedback. Negative feedback is often the easiest type of feedback to give others, as it can be obvious as to what the teacher did "wrong." However, negative feedback often causes defensive attitudes. Coaches should avoid giving negative feedback, especially when trying to develop positive relationships. In short, hearing negative feedback constantly can negatively impact teacher efficacy.

Conciliatory feedback is positive, yet vague. It happens when the administrator or coach wants to avoid conflict, but still wants to remain supportive. This type of feedback has its place when coaches are trying to build positive relationships with their staff members, but eventually teachers realize the feedback can be empty.

In contrast, communicative feedback clarifies ideas and behaviors that coaches are seeing. This type of feedback involves asking teachers to clarify so that both parties know they are discussing the same topics. With communicative feedback, a coach can communicate positive features first and then move on to suggestions for improvement (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2010). Communicative feedback is usually seen as respectful, yet honest and has the potential to promote the most change in teachers' attitudes and behaviors.

Knight (2009) suggests there are two types of feedback. There is a top-down approach to feedback and a partnership approach to feedback. In a top-down approach, the coach or administrator uses data to tell the teacher what he/she did wrong, which operates under the assumption that the person giving feedback knows all the right answers. In a partnership approach, the person giving feedback uses the data to have an open dialogue. With this approach, the coach or administrator makes it known that they are open to hearing other points of view. Through this use of feedback, the two parties can both agree on the next steps that would benefit

the students (Dunn, 2014 and Knight, 2009). Through the use of these approaches to feedback, both the teacher and coach can learn.

Coaches as learners. Teachers are not the only people who learn from coaching. Many researchers state how beneficial the process is for coaches' learning also. "It is important to talk with the teacher to learn more about her underlying thinking. Coaching is two-sided: both persons learn more about their role and build theoretical understanding as they go." (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 112). Barkley & Bianco (2005) state, "The feedback provided by coaching is extremely beneficial to the teacher. Coaches can see confusion or omissions when watching other people teach more easily than they can recognize it in themselves. Therefore, they learn in the process, too" (p. 8). Knight (2009) believes that instructional coaches should expect to get as much as they give. As a result, when coaches and teachers have constructive conversations through the partnership lens, both can continue to improve and grow.

Summary

There is endless research to support how instructional coaching can have an impact on teaching. By adopting a coaching framework, school districts can use coaching to their full advantage, if they hire teachers who possess the qualities needed to be successful coaches. Elena Aguilar, Jennifer Allen, Jim Knight, Cathy Toll, and many others have spent countless numbers of hours researching instructional coaching and how it can impact teaching.

Although I do not have several years of coaching experience, I have already learned a great deal by digging deeper into the research and by having daily coaching conversations with my peers. I truly believe I will never stop learning. This literature review leads into Chapter Three, the methods of my own action research, where I will attempt to answer the question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?*

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

"Coaches are farmers who cultivate talent in others. A farmer must be aware of local climate--
you can't plant pineapples in Alaska and expect them to thrive."
Elena Aguilar

<u>Introduction</u>

As was explained in Chapter Two, coaching was not well defined in my school district in

past years. Each elementary building had half time instructional coaches, but most of their time

was spent coordinating testing schedules and checking in with teachers regarding curriculum.

Each elementary building also had half time literacy coaches, but how they spent their time

varied greatly from building to building. The lack of clear job descriptions led to misconceptions

among staff members about what the instructional coaches and literacy coaches did. It also led to

unfairness between coaches' workloads since only one literacy coach out of five was actually

utilizing a coaching framework to support the teachers in her building.

Now we have one clearly defined job description across the five elementary schools in

our district and teachers know what to expect when they are about to go through a coaching

cycle. As instructional coaches, we present them with a 10-day coaching timeline and a list of 10

coaching agreements (Appendix C and Appendix D). Teachers who are not tenured are required

to have at least one coaching cycle throughout the year. At the beginning of the school year, each

instructional coach introduced herself and gave an overview of her new role to the entire staff.

The definition of this new role in our schools is: to provide direct coaching and professional development support for teachers and other specialists resulting in the continual growth and improvement of instructional/professional practices in the district (Appendix A). Being new in this coaching role has led me to ask this question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?*

In the previous chapter, I presented the research on how coaching can impact teacher efficacy. Highlights from the research included committing to and maintaining a consistent coaching framework throughout the school district, the main purposes for adopting coaching, qualities coaches should possess, best practices for staff development, and the importance of teacher efficacy. In this chapter, I will focus on the methods for my action research project.

Setting

To reference Aguilar's quote at the beginning of this chapter, it is essential for me as a coach to be aware of the climate in my building in order to help my teachers reach their highest potential. I will begin by presenting the demographics of my school district as a whole and then move next to the specifics of the elementary school where I work.

District demographics. I teach in a tier two suburb of the Twin Cities. There are approximately 7,800 students in the school district. We currently have five elementary buildings, a sixth grade center, two junior high buildings, and one high school. According to the 2014 data, our school district serves approximately 64% white students, 13.5% Asian/Pacific Islander students, 12.7% Hispanic students, 8% African American students, and 1.8% American Indian students. Of these students, approximately 11% are English Language Learners, 15% are special education students, and 34.7% receive free lunch due to low family income.

School demographics. My elementary school includes kindergarten through fifth grade classes. We serve approximately 720 students. Among these students, 59.3% are white, 14.4% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 13.2% are African American, 11.3% are Hispanic, and 1.8% are American Indian. Of these students, 19.9% are English Language Learners, 15.1% receive special education services, and 38.6% receive free lunch at school. This concludes that our school is slightly more diverse compared to the district as a whole. A recent visit from our superintendent verified that our school indeed has the most diverse student population among the schools in the entire district.

Our school was built in 2002 and is the third newest elementary building in the district. The classrooms surround clusters, or common areas where students can work and teachers can meet with small groups. This creates a sense of community throughout the building, although most classrooms still remain self-contained most of the day. The principal in our building has been the administrator since the school opened and about one-third of the teachers have been teaching in the building since it opened as well. This past fall, our district chose to hire assistant principals for each elementary building and our assistant principal is new to the elementary setting. Overall, there has been consistency and not much turnover in personnel since I was hired in 2006.

Participants

The participants in my study included a sample of the teachers at my K-5 school. In the building, we have 31 general education teachers, seven specialist teachers, seven special education teachers, four intervention teachers (two reading and two math), four English Language teachers, and one high potential teacher. In my coaching role, I am required to coach every teacher at some point. This year, I was required to coach all non-tenured teachers and any

tenured teachers who had chosen to be coached by me in lieu of their formal observation by administration. By the end of the school year, I will have coached nine non-tenured teachers and the 15 tenured teachers who volunteered for a coaching cycle. This means I had 24 total teachers on my caseload. These 24 teachers made up the participants in my study.

Most of the participants in my study also worked with Kaylinn, the former literacy coach, in past years. As I stated in Chapter One, Kaylinn worked for seven years to establish a culture for coaching in the building. However, because the literacy coaches' job descriptions were not consistent across the district, she wore many other hats every day. As a result, she was only able to commit to "fly by" coaching sessions. Now that I have a clear job description as an instructional coach, adequate administrative support, and can commit to the coaching framework, I am able to dedicate much more time to the teachers in my building. A coaching cycle consists of approximately 1-3 demonstration lessons by me, 3-6 days of co-teaching, and 1-3 days where I am observing the teacher and giving feedback (Appendix C). Coaching conversations happen every day after the lesson. Overall, teachers have been very receptive to this new framework and I will present the results and an analysis of my teacher survey and focus group in Chapter Four (Appendix E and Appendix F).

Procedures

Since my question was: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?* I knew specific feedback from teachers regarding coaching would be the best way to begin answering my question. I sent out an online survey to all 24 teachers I had coached this year in order to collect some quantitative data. My participants could choose one of five responses for each statement on the survey: "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree," or "I don't know." The 10 statements included:

1) *My main goal during my coaching cycle was...*

2) *I felt supported by my coach.*

3) *Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into my daily practice.*

4) *Instructional Coaching helped me feel more confident in my ability to deliver instruction to my students.*

5) *Seeing my coach demonstrate lessons was valuable.*

6) *The time spent co-teaching with my coach was valuable.*

7) *Specific feedback from my coach was non-evaluative and helped me reflect upon my teaching.*

8) *Coaching positively influenced student achievement in my classroom.*

9) *I would volunteer for a coaching cycle again, even if it wasn't required.*

10) *Other feedback about coaching…*

This survey was sent out via google forms and the responses remained anonymous. Participants in my study could opt-out of the survey if they chose to do so.

In addition to the teacher survey, I facilitated a focus group of 5-6 volunteer teachers where we discussed coaching using some guiding questions. This allowed me to collect some qualitative data (Appendix F). During the focus group, I used the following questions to guide our discussion:

1) *How did you feel about the coaching experience overall?*

2) *What was the most beneficial part of coaching?*

3) *What was the biggest challenge of coaching?*

4) *Did coaching impact your self-confidence?*

5) *Did coaching impact your ability to deliver instruction to your students?*

6) Did coaching positively impact student achievement in your classroom? If so, how?

7) What changes, if any, would you make to how coaching is set up in our district?

8) Any other concerns or comments about coaching?

Although the teacher survey and focus group were designed to give me a balance of quantitative and qualitative data, I also kept a weekly reflection journal as a way to collect even more qualitative data. I will present the results of my teacher survey, data shared during the focus group, and excerpts from my reflection journal next in Chapter Four.

Organization & Data Analysis

After I collected my data, I organized it so that it could be carefully analyzed. The teacher survey was the most straightforward. I sent out the google form link via e-mail and, as responses came in, google forms organized the data for me through a spreadsheet, similar to an Excel spreadsheet. For the focus group, I recorded the entire discussion and then typed everything that the participants and I stated into a transcript. For my reflection journal, the data was organized weekly.

Now that I had a clear picture of how to organize both the qualitative and quantitative data, I wondered how would I analyze the data in order to help me answer my research question. I analyzed the first nine questions of the teacher survey first by looking solely at the numbers-- how many teachers chose "strongly agree" or "agree" versus "disagree" or "strongly disagree?" I also looked at the trends in the numbers and asked myself which pieces of coaching were lacking this year to see where I needed to improve. High numbers in the "strongly agree" and "agree" categories signaled to me that I should remain on a similar course next year. These pieces were my quantitative data. In order to present the qualitative data, I analyzed the last question on the teacher survey by looking for common themes among those who chose to comment (this

question was optional). In addition, searching for common themes in the focus group transcript and my weekly reflection journal served as qualitative data.

Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the setting where I conducted my research, the participants who were involved, and the research methods I used. In Chapter Four, I will present the results and analysis of my teacher survey, focus group, and reflection journal. In Chapter Five, I will draw conclusions and reflect on whether or not I am better prepared to answer the question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?*

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

"When teachers stop learning, so do students."
Jim Knight

Introduction

I mentioned in Chapter Two how I truly believe it is important to never stop learning. To reference Knight's (2009) quote above, it is essential for teachers and coaches to have a growth mindset. This action research study has taught me a great deal about instructional coaching and I know I am already a better coach because of my constant learning. In this chapter, I will discuss the results of my action research project. These results allowed me to begin to answer the question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?* I collected quantitative and qualitative data for this action research study. The quantitative data was collected through a 10-question teacher survey (Appendix E). The qualitative data was collected by meeting with a focus group (Appendix F) and keeping a weekly reflection journal (Appendix G) that included my observations, thoughts, and insights about my coaching experiences.

Results of Teacher Survey

Of my 24 participants, 20 voluntarily chose to respond to the survey. This means 83% of my participants responded. As was previously shared in Chapter Three, the participants could choose one of five options for each question: "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree," or "I don't know." The questions were written as follows:

1) *My main goal during my coaching cycle was...*

2) *I felt supported by my coach.*

3) *Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into my daily practice.*

4) *Instructional Coaching helped me feel more confident in my ability to deliver instruction to my students.*

5) *Seeing my coach demonstrate lessons was valuable.*

6) *The time spent co-teaching with my coach was valuable.*

7) *Specific feedback from my coach was non-evaluative and helped me reflect upon my teaching.*

8) *Coaching positively influenced student achievement in my classroom.*

9) *I would volunteer for a coaching cycle again, even if it wasn't required.*

10) *Other feedback about coaching…*

The following nine tables outline the results of the teacher survey, broken down by question, options, and the numbers of responses for each option.

1) My main goal during my coaching cycle was...	Number of Respondents
The Gradual Release of Responsibility	6
Student Engagement	5
Reading - Core Instruction	1
Writing - Core Instruction	5
Small Group Instruction	3
I don't know	0

2) I felt supported by my coach...	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	20
Agree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

3) Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into my daily practice.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	16
Agree	4
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

4) Instructional Coaching helped me feel more confident in my ability to deliver instruction to my students.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	17
Agree	3
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

5) Seeing my coach demonstrate lessons was valuable.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

6) The time spent co-teaching with my coach was valuable.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

7) Specific feedback from my coach was non-evaluative and helped me reflect upon my teaching.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	19
Agree	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

8) Coaching positively influenced student achievement in my classroom.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

9) I would volunteer for a coaching cycle again, even if it wasn't required.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

The final question on the survey was optional and asked participants for any additional comments or feedback about coaching. Five participants chose to answer this question (Appendix E). I noticed that 100% of the responses were positive. Most of the respondents commented on how coaching had positively impacted their teaching through the use of ongoing reflection. Others commented on how coaching helped them utilize more instructional strategies and engagement strategies. One person stated how, in his/her opinion, coaching was more effective than formal observations from administration.

Through these quantitative survey results and by analyzing teachers' comments, I can strongly conclude that instructional coaching has made a positive impact on the teachers in my building and is beginning to result in positive instructional changes. I can also conclude that

instructional coaching has been well received this year and that teachers in my building continue to have a positive outlook on coaching.

Analysis of Teacher Survey

I was honored by the results of the teacher survey I administered in my study. Not one teacher chose "disagree," "strongly disagree," or "I don't know" for any of the statements. All of the comments for the last question were positive. Overall, this data shows how coaching has been well-established in the building and shows how receptive teachers have been to the new coaching framework. It also shows my ability to be an effective and supportive coach who gives non-evaluative, yet specific, feedback to teachers.

In addition, parts of the survey helped me answer my overarching question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?* For example, statement number four was: *Instructional Coaching helped me feel more confident in my ability to deliver instruction to my students* and 100% of respondents chose "strongly agree" or "agree" for this question. This documents how coaching has helped the teachers in my building feel more confident in their ability to deliver instruction to their students. In addition, 100% of respondents chose "strongly agree" or "agree" for statement number three: *Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into my daily practice.* This demonstrates how teachers are transferring what they are learning from coaching into their daily practice and, in turn, this has increased their teacher efficacy. Overall, my analysis of the teacher survey shows how instructional coaching has made a positive impact this year.

In contrast, statement number three on the survey: *Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into*

my daily practice stood out to me for a different reason. Fewer teachers chose "strongly agree" for this statement compared to the other statements. I can attribute this to the fact that we still have a lot of "sit and get" types of staff development sessions in our district. Perhaps teachers might not yet be able to see the connection between staff development and coaching. Through this analysis, it has come to my attention that I need to be more forward in our coaching meetings about how we are, as a district, individualizing staff development.

In addition to individualizing staff development, I believe administration will need to receive some coaching training. As stated before, one comment on the survey was: *I think that instructional coaching is much more effective and beneficial than observations from administration.* Although it is an administrator's job to evaluate teachers, the data shows how coaching conversations can be even more valuable when the goal is to get teachers to focus on improving their ability to deliver instruction. It may be worth exploring how the administration in our district can find a balance between having evaluative conversations and coaching conversations.

Results of My Reflection Journal

Beginning in January of 2015, I decided to keep a journal (Appendix G) of my own observations, thoughts, and insights regarding my coaching experiences. I wrote weekly entries to include qualitative data in my study. A few themes emerged as I looked back and reflected on my journal entries:

- Building relationships and trust are the foundations of coaching.

- Demonstration lessons and co-teaching are the building blocks of coaching.

- The gradual release of responsibility is essential for both student learning and teacher growth.

- Small group instruction is the heart of balanced literacy.

- Planning with teachers leads to key conversations.

- Having a growth mindset is essential for moving forward.

These themes encompass what I have tried to accomplish this year as an instructional coach.

Analysis of My Reflection Journal

Much of what I read from the researchers, presented in Chapter Two, supported how critical it is for coaches to build trust and positive relationships with teachers. After keeping a journal where I reflected on my coaching experiences, I can confidently say that I have observed firsthand how positive relationships and trust are the solid foundation for coaching. Without these two things, it is possible that coaching will be seen as a waste of time for both parties and may not make a lasting impact on effective teaching.

With positive relationships and trust as the solid foundation, I now consider demonstration lessons and co-teaching to be the building blocks for coaching. Based on the qualitative data I collected, demonstration lessons helped not only build trust with teachers, but also helped me refine my instructional skills in the classroom. Demonstration lessons allowed the teachers in my study to see that, as a coach, I was willing to take risks. They are a powerful component of a coaching cycle because they take the pressure off the classroom teacher for the first few days. Another aspect of demonstration lessons that makes them powerful is that teachers get to see coaches reflect. Coaches are not only demonstrating lessons, but are also demonstrating how to reflect more deeply afterward.

In addition, co-teaching allows teachers to have a coach beside them, someone who is willing to support and guide them, while they are delivering most of the instruction. In my experiences this year, teachers often mentioned how co-teaching was their favorite part of

coaching. These two components, demonstration lessons and co-teaching, support the use of the gradual release of responsibility with teachers.

Using the gradual release of responsibility with teachers, as with students, is essential for the transfer of skills and strategies. As elementary teachers, we would not think twice about using the gradual release with our students because this has consistently demonstrated to be how they learn best. Although this model is fairly new to the coaching world, it only makes sense. Teachers are allowed to see demonstration lessons, to see coaches reflect, to teach while someone is there guiding them, and to receive specific feedback on their teaching. In turn, teachers will feel more confident in themselves and in their instruction after this scaffolding process occurs.

Through the coaching process, teachers may also gain confidence in their ability to plan lessons. This is another theme that emerged as I looked back in my reflection journal. Planning with teachers is another building block of coaching. Although I did not give myself as much time to plan with teachers as I would have liked this year, I did some and the outcome was very positive. As my "coachees" and I sat down to plan, we discussed how to teach toward independence using the gradual release of responsibility. We discussed how we could minimize teacher talk and maximize student talk during our lessons. In addition, we discussed how we could keep the students engaged. Overall, these critical planning conversations resulted in better instruction and more quality lessons.

Some of this time was used to plan for small group instruction, as many of my teachers had this as their goal for their second coaching cycle. After looking back on my reflection journal and seeing how many times I mentioned the importance of small group instruction, I firmly believe small group instruction is the heart of a balanced literacy program. Meeting

students where they are at by differentiating instruction is key to learning. This also happens to be the ultimate goal of coaching.

The last, but certainly not the least theme to emerge from my reflection journal was the importance of having a growth mindset. This will be of utmost importance as we move forward in our school district. Moreover, it is knowing that as teachers, we are never done learning. In my coaching role, I will continue to show teachers how I have a growth mindset and, in turn, they will hopefully take on this mindset as well. From what I have observed, most teachers in my building already have a growth mindset. This was evident when I met with my focus group for my action research.

Results of Focus Group

As part of my research study, I also met with a focus group (Appendix F) of six teachers to discuss instructional coaching. These teachers volunteered to be part of this focus group. I wanted to hear their specific thoughts and feelings regarding their coaching experiences. I knew I would be able to gain more qualitative data from a focus group compared to a survey. I was hoping to get at least four volunteers for my focus group. Fortunately, I ended up with six teachers in the group. The focus group was made up of four classroom teachers, one English Language teacher, and one special education teacher. I used the following questions to guide the focus group discussion:

9) *How did you feel about the coaching experience overall?*

10) *What was the most beneficial part of coaching?*

11) *What was the biggest challenge of coaching?*

12) *Did coaching impact your self-confidence?*

13) *Did coaching impact your ability to deliver instruction to your students?*

14) Did coaching positively impact student achievement in your classroom? If so, how?

15) What changes, if any, would you make to how coaching is set up in our district?

16) Any other concerns or comments about coaching?

<u>Analysis of Focus Group</u>

During the focus group discussion, my participants reiterated what I had already summarized from the survey and my reflection journal. However, they were able to go more in-depth with each question and were able to share specific examples of how coaching had impacted them and their students. I decided to analyze this data by highlighting themes I found in the transcript. Five common themes emerged:

- Better transfer of skills

- Gaining new ideas, reflection

- Feeling more confident

- Student achievement

Several teachers in the focus group stated that they were better able to transfer skills and strategies into practice during coaching. One teacher noted, "Seeing the entire process of the gradual release was so helpful." Since I am able to coach in classrooms for 10 days at a time, the teachers can see how certain skills or strategies unfold after time. There are no "fly by" coaching sessions. Although I am not the one holding them accountable for using certain strategies, most teachers have a desire to learn new instructional strategies that are considered best practices. Moreover, they have time to practice these new strategies in order to receive feedback the same day. Another teacher commented, "I use everything now that I used when you were with me." All of this demonstrates how coaching can have a positive and powerful impact on effective classroom instruction.

Gaining new ideas was another theme that emerged from the focus group. The teachers discussed how coaching got them to "think outside the box" and gain new ideas from the coaching cycle. One teacher said, "When we think about collaboration, this is what it is. The thought that two heads are better than one. Being able to bounce ideas back and forth and to get new ideas, to me, that's what teaching is all about." Since we have been trained as coaches in best practices, the new ideas I bring into classrooms are research-based and have been proven to help students learn. Seeing teachers implement these new ideas successfully in their classrooms throughout the year has been a rewarding experience.

Reflection was another key theme from our discussion. Several teachers made comments about how coaching allowed them not only to reflect, but also to reflect more deeply on their teaching practices. A non-tenured teacher noted, "What I appreciated was the fact that I could observe you first. It allowed me to shift gears and be more reflective." A teacher with many years of experience stated, "I think that reflective piece, but on a deeper level, is what is so beneficial." As a coach, it made me proud to hear how these teachers were beginning to reflect on a more significant level.

During the focus group discussion, confidence was another topic that was addressed. Since my overarching question was: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy in an elementary setting?* I was curious to know if coaching had increased their confidence and/or teaching abilities. A first-year teacher mentioned how coaching had increased her ability to plan for guided reading groups. She also stated how being coached on "think alouds" increased her confidence overall. A special education teacher and a classroom teacher both mentioned how they thought their ability to teach writing had improved after coaching. Another classroom teacher stated, "I would say, too, for walk-throughs by the administration, I do feel more

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

"The problem is not that we do not have enough good teachers. The problem is we have way too many. There is too much 'good teaching.' This good teaching has become totally acceptable, and some teachers have been doing a good job for years. Good has become marginalized. To create a major improvement in learning within a system or a district or even a state, we need programs that will move large numbers of good teachers to become great teachers."
Stephen G. Barkley

<u>Introduction</u>

In Chapter Four, I presented my results and an analysis of my data that was collected

through a teacher survey, a focus group discussion, and a reflection journal. This quantitative and

qualitative data helped me answer the question: *How does instructional coaching impact teacher*

efficacy in an elementary setting? My results showed that instructional coaching does indeed

have a positive impact on teacher efficacy. To reference Barkley's quote above, I firmly believe

instructional coaching has the potential to turn good teachers into great teachers. In this chapter, I

will first revisit my review of literature. I will then move onto discussing the broader

implications of my research, my recommendations for the future, and the limitations of my

study.

<u>Review of Literature</u>

In Chapter Two, I cited the major researchers in the field of coaching. My review of

literature encompassed Jim Knight's research on instructional coaching, Cathy Toll's research on

literacy coaching, Elena Aguilar's research on the art of coaching, Jennifer Allen's research on creating a culture for coaching, Barkley & Bianco's research on feedback, and Cheliotes & Reilly's research on the power of coaching conversations, among others who believe in the power of ongoing, embedded, individualized professional development.

The knowledge I gained from analyzing current research further instilled a passion for coaching within me. Working to create a culture for coaching across our district, building positive relationships with teachers, and maintaining a consistent coaching framework have all been successful this year. Through examining the research and conducting research in my school setting, I learned how important it is to take risks, give specific feedback, and to also see myself as a lifelong learner. This leads to the implications of my study.

Implications

How did my action research contribute to the learning of others? First and foremost, the coaching framework our district adopted allowed me to be in multiple classrooms every day over the course of several days. This provided the opportunity for teachers to practice the strategies and, in turn, transfer their learning to their daily classroom practice. Fortunately, this learning did not stop in individual classrooms.

Most of the teachers I coached shared their learning with their grade level teams. This was a result implication I was not expecting. I had many conversations with teachers about how they had brought back what we practiced to their own Professional Learning Communities. Although I did not have the chance to see if the other teachers on the team had increased efficacy because of this, I do know they gained more ideas and were aware of more strategies they could use in their classrooms. To me, this demonstrates the power and the ripple effect of coaching.

<u>Recommendations</u>

How might the results of my study be used in the future? I know my fellow coaches and I will be able to use the results of my study to continue our path forward. Our long-term goals are to instill the growth mindset in all teachers and to create a culture for coaching across our entire district. When I share the results of my action research with the other coaches, they will be able to use similar methods to conduct their own action research. As a team of coaches, we may want to use the teacher survey annually in order to see what changes or modifications we need to make to continuously improve our instructional coaching model.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the impact coaching conversations had on teacher efficacy in my building. Teachers stated that coaching was more beneficial than observations from administration. One recommendation I can make is having our district support administration in finding the balance between evaluation and coaching, in order to continue to help turn good teachers into great teachers.

<u>Limitations</u>

Throughout this year, I found myself using the term "learning curve" over and over. As a group of 10 coaches across the district, we were all sharing common experiences because it was the first year we were positioned full time. It was the first year we were using the 10-day coaching timeline, and ultimately, the gradual release of responsibility with teachers. That being said, it was a limitation of my study because it wasn't a typical year. I was not able to be in classrooms right away at the beginning of the year. Overall, I needed to spend more time building relationships and discussing the new coaching framework than I will in future years.

Another limitation of my study was the fact that tenured teachers could volunteer for coaching in lieu of their formal observation by administration. This may have skewed the data

because I was not required to coach anyone who did not want to be coached. The non-tenured

teachers who were required to have coaching were very open to the process. It would be

interesting to see if the results were similar, had I been required to coach teachers on a non-

volunteer basis.

Future Research

Coaching will continue in our district next year. We will continue our framework, our

timeline, and our daily coaching conversations. I will continue to stay up to date on current

research and best practices. Based on my action research this year, I have determined that I will

send out a teacher survey every year to gather feedback on my strengths and areas of

professional growth. There are many books and articles I discovered while I was writing my

review of literature that I did not have a chance to read thoroughly. In the coming years, I want

to continue to read these and examine the most current research on my own to help develop

myself as a strong, informed professional.

Conclusion

The journey I have taken this year, both personally and professionally, has been

impactful in so many ways. In Chapter One, I referenced the inspiring mentors I have had in my

life. From Mrs. Potts, my fifth grade teacher and college professor, to Kaylinn, my coaching

mentor, I continue to admire those who have helped me grow as a learner and a leader. Not only

have I grown as a teacher and coach this year, but I have been given the opportunity to support

other teachers in their growth journeys. Seeing this progress, day after day, is what keeps my

passion for coaching alive. I truly believe coaching has the power to transform teachers, schools,

and districts. I cannot wait to see what this journey holds for us next year.

APPENDIX A: Job Description

APPENDIX A: Job Description

Position Title: Instructional Coach
Department: District Teaching and Learning
Position Classification: Teacher on Special Assignment (1.0 FTE)
Reports To: Director of Teaching and Learning
Revision Date: March 2014

JOB SUMMARY: Provide direct coaching and professional development support for teachers and other specialists resulting in the continual growth and improvement of instructional/professional practices in the district. This position will be reposted every three years and current coaches can reapply.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Model "best practice" lessons in the classroom
- Co-plan and teach with teachers using new strategies of instruction
- Teach lessons for teachers to observe, discuss, and reflect on
- Observe lessons and coach teachers through questioning and reflection
- Plan and work with building PLC teams
- Develop lesson plans with individuals or PLC teams
- Work collaboratively with "lab classroom" teachers to encourage risk-taking and advancement of best practices
- Work closely with assigned building principals to plan for continual improvement of instructional practices
- Support new teachers and non-tenured teachers at the building level (Induction Program)
- Assist with the planning and delivery of district and building professional development
- Assist with the implementation of district strategic direction and goals
- Assist and support the implementation of the district instructional model
- Attend regular meetings with district coordinators to align work and practices across buildings
- Attend training and workshops aligned to district strategic direction and goals
- Assist with curriculum articulation committee meetings (when appropriate)
- Other duties as assigned by the Director of Teaching and Learning

WORK REQUIREMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS:
Education/Certification Requirements:
- Must possess a current teaching license
- Master's degree or higher in Teaching and Learning preferred
- Demonstrated knowledge or certification in literacy preferred

Preferred Experience:
- 3 or more years of teaching experience
- Prior experience in coaching

Essential Skills Required to Perform the Work:
- Ability to coach, mentor and motivate individuals and/or groups of teachers towards continuous improvement of practice
- Possess high quality instructional practices in all aspects of teaching and learning
- Excellent human relations skills including the ability to work effectively with others
- Demonstrates an understanding of "best practices" and latest literature in the field

Additional Job Requirements:
- Position requires exercising confidentiality in handling school district and teacher information
- Position requires flexibility and a willingness to undertake a variety of tasks, sometimes at the direction of more than one person
- Position requires a commitment to the continuous improvement of practice
- Position requires working collaboratively with district and building staff to accomplish the goals of the district
- Position requires the ability to work well with a variety of individuals and groups
- Position requires the ability to problem solve or resolve conflicts when issues arise
- Position requires the ability to contribute to a positive and professional working environment

APPENDIX B: Types of Teacher Knowledge and Professional Development

APPENDIX B: Types of Teacher Knowledge and Professional Development

	Knowledge *for* Practice	Knowledge *in* Practice	Knowledge *of* Practice
Knowledge Source	Behaviors that show potential, are verified and acknowledged as effective	Recognizes the importance of practical knowledge and its role in improving teacher practice	Emerges from teacher questions and the study of their own teaching
Professional Development Activities	● Book study ● Workshop ● Observe another teacher	● Implement a new strategy and reflect individually ● Reflect with a mentor ● Reflect with a learning community	● Engage in teacher research individually ● Engage in teacher research with a partner ● Engage in teacher research as part of a PLC

Adapted from Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008

APPENDIX C: Coaching Timeline

APPENDIX C: Coaching Timeline

10-Day Coaching Cycle

1

Demonstration by coach (1-3 days)

2

3

4

Co-Teaching (3-6 days)

5

6

7

Observation by coach (2-5 days)

8

9

10

Wilking, 2015

APPENDIX D: Coaching Agreements

Coaching Agreements
_____ Schools
2014-2015

1.) The coaching cycle will last approximately 2 weeks.

2.) The coach will be in the teacher's classroom (on time) for 30-40 minutes each day.

3.) There will be no sharing to administrators or other teachers about the teacher who is being coached.

4.) Coaching will be based upon our school-wide goals.

5.) Coaching conversations are not meant to talk about individual children, but rather the instructional strategies being used.

6.) The teacher will be in the classroom the entire time.

7.) The teacher will take notes during demonstration lessons.

8.) If there is a substitute, the coach will not be in the classroom for the scheduled time.

9.) The teacher needs to have something for the students to do independently immediately following the lesson.

10.) The teacher will adjust his/her schedule to accommodate the coaching sessions.

I am excited to share this experience with you!

~Kristen

Wilking, 2015

APPENDIX E: Teacher Survey Data

APPENDIX E: Teacher Survey Data

My main goal during my coaching cycle was...	Number of Respondents
The Gradual Release of Responsibility	6
Student Engagement	5
Reading - Core Instruction	1
Writing - Core Instruction	5
Small Group Instruction	3
I don't know	0

I felt supported by my coach...	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	20
Agree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Instructional Coaching helped me meet my professional goals by embedding effective practices learned in staff development into my daily practice.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	16
Agree	4
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Instructional Coaching helped me feel more confident in my ability to deliver instruction to my students.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	17
Agree	3
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Seeing my coach demonstrate lessons was valuable.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

The time spent co-teaching with my coach was valuable.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Specific feedback from my coach was non-evaluative and helped me reflect upon my teaching.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	19
Agree	1
Disagree	0

Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Coaching positively influenced student achievement in my classroom.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

I would volunteer for a coaching cycle again, even if it wasn't required.	Number of Responses
Strongly agree	18
Agree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I don't know	0

Other feedback on instructional coaching…

● My instructional coach did an amazing job. She helped me become a stronger teacher. She showed me things to make my children more engaged and improve academically.

● Through the coaching process, I was able to pause and reflect on my teaching and observe an experienced colleague. I gained additional tips in classroom management at the same time. I also appreciated a chance to receive feedback on what I am doing well. This focus on the positive celebrations helped me prioritize what to keep in my

instructional practice to make it more effective and keep students engaged. Collaborating

with my IC in planning my instruction energized me. Furthermore, I gained tips from an

experienced classroom teacher on effective paragraph writing strategies.

- I think that instructional coaching is much more effective and beneficial than

  observations from administration.

- Coaching helped increase the rate I was able to add instructional strategies to my

  teaching. I was able to adapt the new strategies and quickly transfer them to my

  instruction in other subjects.

- It was great to see a model and bounce ideas off another professional giving positive

  feedback. Would love to do it again!

Wilking, 2015

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Transcript

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Transcript

Focus group held on April 10, 2015 at 7:30 am

All names, except mine, have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants.

Kristen: Thank you all for joining me this morning. As you know, we are here to discuss coaching and how it's impacted you this year. Just remember that your names will be changed in my paper and that I will delete the recording as soon as I type up the transcript of the discussion. The first question I have for you is: How did you feel about the coaching experience overall?

Katie: I thought it was super beneficial, that we could just sit and talk every day. It was a consistent time. It wasn't just talking about one lesson to improve on, but it was a range of skills. I use everything now that I used when you were with me.

Kristen: That's the point of individualized coaching, that it's ongoing and hopefully you're transferring the strategies and skills into your daily practice in the classroom!

Allison: What I appreciated was the fact that I could observe you first. It allowed me to shift gears and be more reflective. Often times you are reflecting on a lesson ONLY, not everything you do as a teacher. It just helped me be more reflective overall.

Kristen: So your thinking was more broad?

Allison: Yes, it helped me think about engagement strategies that I could not only use with that group, but my other groups, too.

Holly: I liked that I could change my thinking. I could see how you were teaching and I could still use my teaching strategies, but I could use yours too. That's the point of coaching, to get more ideas. I also learned that I didn't have to necessarily follow the curriculum as it's written, I could do other things in different ways while still following the guidelines.

Audrey: I would say everything they said, but also add seeing the entire process of the gradual release was so helpful. An entire week. That it's not just a straight process. You go back and forth on the spectrum

Kristen: That the gradual release is not necessarily linear?

Audrey: Exactly. And also the assessments I should be giving throughout the week. They gave me so much information, but they were super informal.

Cathy: I sought you out because I was having trouble with one particular writing group. Writing is kind of our nemesis in SpEd because we want to get them to be skilled writers, but we don't always feel like we have the tools to do so. And having you in my room was amazing because we came up with the idea of these writing folders together.

Kristen: Oh yeah, they were the mini anchor charts!

Cathy: They love them! I have a small room and I don't have a lot of room for posters and we still refer to their folders every day. So the experience we had together was very beneficial for the kids and for me--across the board. Now getting those skills to apply is the tricky part!

Monica: Overall, I think it's been fantastic. I feel like when we think about collaboration, this is what it is. The thought that two heads are better than one. Being able to bounce ideas back and forth and to get new ideas, to me that's what teaching is all about. Having you in the classroom as a non-administrator, it's a lot easier to do that. It's a lot less intimidating. I think it's the principal's purpose...he wants us to become better teachers, but this is the nitty gritty of what it's all about. This is HOW we improve our teaching. My favorite part was the co-teaching.

Holly: I loved the co-teaching the best, too. It's so much fun for the kids. They're like, "This is great, we have two teachers!"

Kristen: You already kind of touched on this, but does anyone want to add to the question, what was the most beneficial part of coaching? You mentioned that you are able to transfer what you learned to other groups and to other subject areas. You also mentioned the co-teaching.

Cathy: I think that reflective piece, but on a deeper level is what is most beneficial.

Katie: I would also say the observing because you sit through how many professional development trainings, like do this, do turn and talks, do think alouds, and you're just like, 'Okay I got that.' You have the picture in your mind of how it's going to go. But when you have someone in your classroom who is doing it, it's like this light bulb goes off and it's a lot easier...it's doable.

Monica: That's one of my favorite things, too. When you get to go observe other teachers to get more ideas. But logistically, it's not possible, so having you makes that possible. And it's realistic.

Kristen: Yes, how often do you get the opportunity to go observe other teachers? There's just so much going on all the time. So with that, what do you feel is the biggest challenge about coaching? I know that it's more work for you guys, to be very planful and to check in with me. Are there any challenges?

Katie: The only challenge I would see is that there is another person involved. Overall, it's not really even a challenge, but it's one more person on our team. If my team is planning something and we make changes because of coaching and that's fine, but that's the only challenge I saw.

Holly: Yeah, I would agree the changes we made. If you're a little bit off schedule with your team and you might feel like you're behind. That could be a challenge.

[Pause]

Kristen: Good, I'm glad there aren't very many challenges!

Allison: Well, I think you're very flexible. You are meeting us where we're at every single time.

Kristen: I would hope that you guys don't see me as being very far-removed from the classroom, so I hope I am realistic about how much time it takes to plan and get things ready. My next question is: Do you feel like coaching increased your self-confidence? My research question is: How does instructional coaching impact teacher efficacy? And efficacy is not only your ability to be an effective teacher, but also how confident you feel.

Holly: I think as a first-year teacher, it's especially important to have instructional coaching because you're trying to work through all this information that's being thrown at you and someone is there to help you sort through it. We did a second cycle with guided reading and that was really helpful because I had this idea in my head about how I'm supposed to have a packet and a book at their level and it was overwhelming if I got behind in my planning. But when you were with me, I learned that it could be simpler because I could focus on one strategy and it could be as easy as having a piece of paper and a passage. So that's helped my confidence that I'm better able to plan for my guided reading groups.

Kristen: That's great! I had hoped that I would be able to get you guys to "think outside the box" a little more.

Monica: Kind of piggy-backing off of what she [Holly] said...to me, it's just kind of been a reassurance that my way of thinking is okay. Sometimes you go in your classroom and it's like you're in your own little box and your own little world. So having those "aha's" when you were teaching, like, 'I do that, too!' What I'm doing is the right thing! That was good because you don't always get that because you're in your own little world most of the time.

Katie: I would say, too, for walk-throughs by the administration, I do feel more confident if it's something I've done with you. Even when you're not in the room, I'm still doing what we

worked on, so when he comes in the room I'm like, 'Hey, watch me do this!' I'm not afraid that the principal is in my room right now, so...that I think is a big piece.

Cathy: Especially with those critical subject areas. I mean, it's huge. Even with the two times we met, I was like, 'I can do this.'

Allison: I felt like my ability to teach writing improved a lot. The marriage between modeling your own writing and having the kids write...I guess I wasn't doing that as much prior to the coaching. I just have noticed how my students are doing better by having the modeling and by watching me share my thinking.

Kristen: That's great. They need to be able to see that you are a writer, too.

Monica: Can I just say, too, how helpful the document cameras have been for teaching writing? It's been a game changer because it's way more authentic. The kids are seeing me write on a piece of paper that's the same size as theirs, not like on the Smartboard.

Kristen: I'm glad they have been valuable! Next question--do you feel coaching has impacted your ability to deliver instruction to your students? So this is getting away from the confidence piece. More of, did it increase your ability to teach?

Holly: I think your strategies of showing your thinking have been really helpful. Also, when students don't get the answers right, you gave them a confidence boost and said stuff like, 'You're almost there' or 'I noticed' and guided them toward the answer. I just took away a lot of phrases for instruction and that was really helpful.

Kristen: I'm so glad you took away some of my phrases! Did anyone take away anything as far as pacing?

Audrey: I think for mine that was really helpful because when we were working together, my students seemed to 'get' things a lot faster than before. I think it was all because of how we talked about when they could go faster or when they needed to back up.

Kristen: That makes sense. And we worked a lot on formative assessment, too. Seeing where they're at and where they need to go or if they need to 'back the train up.' Do you feel like coaching positively impacted student achievement in your classroom? If so, can you give an example?

Monica: I can! It's not really from my class, but it's from Audrey's [mentee]. During our PLC time yesterday, we were looking at some data and her class' test scores were super high. I said, 'What have you been doing?' And she said, 'Well, I've been doing coaching with Kristen!' And

that makes a lot of sense because when you were in my class and we were working on small-group instruction, I felt like my kids 'got it' so much quicker. And that's evidence right there.

Kristen: That's so awesome!

Holly: I think it was also the fact that you kept pushing us to keep teaching it until they got it. With the curriculum, I was so focused on...okay, we have to move on to the next week or the next thing. But you were just like, 'No, they obviously don't get this. We need to spend the next two days on it.' And that obviously increases their confidence and their test scores.

Monica: I think another piece of it, too, is the art of teaching. Last year when we adopted Benchmark, I was following it more like a script, but this year it's more about doing what I feel is right for my kids. You affirmed that what I'm doing is okay--using Benchmark as a guide, but really teaching my kids what they need.

Kristen: So many of my coaching sessions have focused on looking at the cover pages of the Benchmark curriculum and prioritizing lessons based on that class.

Katie: I think, too, with the small-group instruction...we used to think of it only as guided reading and as a level, but you've helped me with my strategy groups. It's a whole new way of thinking about small groups. That it doesn't have to be these kids are all at the same fluency level so they're in a group every time. I love the strategy groups.

Monica: I love the feeling of being able to have a one-page passage instead of thinking I always need to have a Benchmark book. It's totally changed how I do my small groups.

Kristen: So, as you know, coaching has completely changed this year. For those of you who are new to our district, just to give you some background--in previous years, the coaches could do "fly by" coaching sessions, but couldn't commit to being in a classroom for two weeks. Personally, I'm really happy with the changes the district has made to our coaching framework. What I want to know from you is: if you could make any changes to the current coaching framework, what would they be?

Katie: Having another coach in every building! That way you could do more cycles. I'm on my second coaching cycle and it's been awesome. I wish I could have done more. Now I'm thinking, I want to do math, but there's not enough of you to go around. One more person to get in every room.

Monica: I agree. It's sad when you leave!

Holly: The two week model is really nice. The timeline is perfect.

Kristen: So you wouldn't shorten the timeline?

Holly: Nope. I loved being able to observe you at first. That was so nice. It took the pressure off and then when we co-taught I still didn't feel too nervous because I knew you were there to help me out.

Katie: I think that's really important for people who you maybe don't have a relationship with you already. With me, we already knew each other pretty well. But if I was a first-year teacher and you came in and observed me on the first day, that would be a lot of pressure. For you to come in first and teach, I think that helps build the relationship.

Cathy: Especially if you're not very confident in that subject area.

Katie: Yes! And that's usually the subject area that you are choosing to work on.

Kristen: And some of you have observed me when I have completely 'bombed' a lesson! It goes to show that I'm not the expert or this master teacher, but it's important for people to see how I reflect on my lessons, too.

Holly: It's so nice to see how you're human, too, and my kids also misbehave not only for me. It makes me feel better.

Monica: It's eye opening. And it keeps you at our level...a real level. You're in there in the trenches with us and sometimes administration doesn't really understand.

Katie: It was also interesting to watch my kids when I was observing you. I had a separate sheet where I took notes just on my kids. It was a good perspective. You never really get a chance to do that.

Holly: I appreciated that you were in there for that classroom management piece, too. I took away a lot from that.

Allison: At first, I thought, 'Wow, two weeks. That seems really intense.' And I didn't really know you either. I felt more at ease to open up as a professional after you demonstrated the lessons. That built trust. I never felt like I was being evaluated. It was way more authentic...the feedback helped me improve my teaching.

Kristen: Thank you for sharing that it was more authentic!

Katie: It totally makes more of an impact. When we were sitting down with the principal at our last PLC meeting, we were showing him all this data and we mentioned your name many times. Our data really reflects what you've been doing with us in classrooms. Being able to sit down and discuss your kids with someone every day...it does make an impact.

Cathy: I was going to say, I found myself envious as I walked around the building and saw all these awesome anchor charts up in classrooms. I wanted the information about the anchor charts and how they were created. I find myself craving more staff development on this. I'm hoping next year I can take more advantage of coaching. I don't know if everyone could benefit, but it might be nice to do some monthly trainings.

Kristen: We're talking about that for next year...doing some math training and possible some monthly literacy staff development sessions.

Cathy: I definitely think the one-on-one coaching is the most valuable, but I'm also thinking big picture...some way to get the information out to everyone.

Kristen: That makes sense. I think we have a lot of great changes coming our way! Well, is there anything else that anyone wants to say before we wrap up?

Allison: Thank you!

Katie, Cathy, Audrey, Heather, Monica: Yes, thank you.

Kristen: No, thank YOU all for coming in this early in the morning to talk about coaching! I really appreciate it. Thank you for having that growth mindset that we are all learners and we will never stop learning. We had some great conversations. Have a great day!

Wilking, 2015

APPENDIX G: Reflection Journal

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Weekly Reflections on Coaching

Spring Semester

January 9, 2015

This year I have been thinking a lot about what makes teachers good versus great. I can confidently say that I worked with three great teachers this week. They are not just good teachers. What makes them great? First of all, they all use small-group instruction to their advantage. They make the most of their targeted time and they don't put small-group instruction on the back burner. One of the teachers I was working with had small-group instruction as her goal. I thought, "What in the world am I even going to teach her?" At the end of the week, she commented on how refreshing it was to have me in the room and how she has fallen in love with guided reading once again. She said I got her "out of her funk." This was a huge celebration for me. I realized that even experienced teachers, when they have a growth mindset, can learn so much from coaching.

January 16, 2015

I have to be honest, this week was the toughest week for me this entire school year. Although I continued to coach two great teachers, I also began coaching someone who did not seem to be very excited about coaching. During my demonstration lessons, this teacher did not take many notes (this differs from what I have seen this year from teachers) and seemed very disengaged during our coaching conversations. The teacher attempted to avoid our conversations. In addition, the students in the class are very disengaged, off-task, and disruptive. The students in Special Education are not held accountable for any work or participation. I am worried to see where this goes, but I am determined to stay and try to make a difference. My challenge will be trying to build a positive relationship while attempting to show this teacher how coaching can make an impact.

On a positive note, co-teaching with those two great teachers is going really well. We have been planning and delivering the lessons together. During our planning time, we talk about the gradual release of responsibility and how we will engage the children. After each lesson, we discuss the next steps needed to get the students to learn. Co-teaching has been a very positive aspect of coaching for me and I hope the data at the end of the year shows that it has been a positive experience for the teachers also. I'm so glad our district switched over to this new coaching framework, as it allows time for co-teaching. I believe this is where we will see the most positive change.

January 23, 2015

This week I continued to coach two great teachers and stuck with the teacher who I was worried about. It has been a defeating week in the sense that I've stopped coaching that teacher. I had to have a meeting with my principal and assistant principal to let them know I am no longer coaching the teacher. It was difficult to not give too much information in hopes that I would not destroy the positive relationship. They understood. They agreed that it wasn't the right time for that teacher to have coaching.

On the flip side, I observed the two other teachers for a few days. They taught on their own while I took notes and identified a coaching point. One important aspect I'm seeing is my ability to identify at least five positive points about the instruction and sticking to one coaching point. Focusing on the positive is not only important for building relationships, but for building teachers' confidence.

This week, in addition to my coaching sessions, I met with four new people for their pre-conferences. During these pre-conferences, I lay out the coaching timeline and the coaching agreements. Teachers seem very excited about the longer timeline. I've often heard this phrase, "I get you for 10 days?!" This makes me feel like a valued asset in our building.

January 30, 2015

I had to be very organized and planned out this week, as I was coaching four people each day and doing a couple demonstration lessons in a Special Education classroom. I had a very "mixed bag" of coachees this time around--one 5th grade teacher, an EBD teacher, a 3rd grade teacher, and an EL teacher. I'm finding that it's getting easier to "switch my brain over" as I move from subject to subject and grade level to grade level. In 5th grade, Special Education, and EL, I coached on writing. This has always been and continues to be a passion of mine. In 3rd grade, I was coaching in reading core. I'm glad we have mostly focused on literacy this year, as this is more of my forte.

Since I have started coaching non-tenured teachers, I am seeing the importance of classroom management as a building block. If teachers do not have this down solid, they are unable to do other things well. I would like to bring this up at our next coaches' PLC meeting to see if others are seeing similar trends and to get their thoughts on coaching classroom management. One of the teachers I was coaching realized classroom management was not her strength, so we made that a "side goal" for her.

February 6, 2015

It has been a very interesting experience coaching an EL and a SpEd teacher. I have absolutely loved the kids in both of these groups. What makes it so interesting? I do not have backgrounds in Special Education or English Language Learning! This is a time when I say, "We are learning alongside each other to improve. You are the expert in your area and I have a lot to learn from you, too." This takes some of the pressure off the teachers when they know I am here to learn. In both the groups, the teachers and I planned together. Both groups were working on writing, which is a strong area for me. I think both teachers are benefiting from my new ideas and how I pace lessons.

February 13, 2015

On Tuesday of this week, I had a shadow. A lady I met through summer school last year is interested in coaching and is also getting her administrative license. She had e-mailed me a few weeks back, asking if she could shadow me for her hours. Of course I said yes. I felt very complimented that she approached me. She got to see me doing demonstration lessons and/or co-teaching in four different rooms. I had gotten permission from each of my coachees to have her sit in on the lessons and coaching conversations. After each lesson, she and I went back to my office and debriefed. I think the day gave her a great picture of what coaching is and how it can positively impact teaching.

February 20, 2015

This week was filled with me observing teachers and giving feedback. I am enjoying this part of my job much more than I originally thought I would. As an introvert, I sometimes struggle to come up with a coaching point on the spot because I am so reflective. I often think of great things to say after the fact. Here are some things I have learned about feedback through my research and experiences…

- Feedback needs to start with listing the positives first. If this is not done, the teacher may shut down or be so focused on the negative that she/he does not hear anything positive.
- Feedback, as often as possible, should be centered on student learning. This has often been my "next steps" question: What are the next steps to get these kids to independence with this skill/strategy? Giving feedback that's centered on student learning and what I saw students doing takes away the evaluative-ness that can sometimes happen. Instead of saying, "I don't think your kids were very engaged," I would say, "I noticed there were times when only four students had their hands up. What are some ways to get more hands in the air?"

February 27, 2015

This week I began coaching four new teachers at the same time. That means I did four different demonstration lessons every day for at least three days. It was a lot to plan! I know elementary teachers are used to planning at least twice that many lessons every day, but I'm teaching four different grade levels, four different subject areas, and each teacher has a different goal. What have I learned from this? Next year, I want to be better about staggering my coaching cycles. For example, I might have two teachers starting on the same day, but the other 2-3 teachers would start a few days later. I might be finishing up with 2-3 teachers from the week before, so it will be a mixture of demonstration lessons, co-teaching, and observations.

This week I started coaching in a Special Education small group. Although this was not the first time, each time is very unique depending on the teacher and the group of kids. There were two boys in this group who warmed up to me right away. The teacher's primary goal was writing instruction. Since I am not trained in Special Education, I wondered what I could bring to the table. It turns out, there was a lot this teacher could benefit from. I taught her how to utilize anchor charts to her advantage, so the boys could use them as a resource when they were writing. I also threw out the idea of having writing journals in the classroom because they were writing on a separate piece of paper each time. The teacher loved this idea and wants to continue using the journals after I leave.

March 6, 2015

This week, I finished up with the 5th grade teacher and the Special Ed teacher. I continued to work with a 4th grade teacher on small-group instruction and continued with another 4th grade teacher in reading core. I've always known how important small-group instruction is, but the more I coach in this area, the more I think that small-group instruction really is the heart of everything we should be doing. If you think about it, it just makes sense. The teacher is meeting the kids where they're at...the information is not too simple and not too complex. When teachers do whole-group lessons they are meeting the standards, but how many kids in the class are they reaching? Typically, I would say the middle one-third. With small-group instruction, the kids are more able to stay engaged and learn at their levels. The 4th grade teacher I'm working with has been doing a great job pre-assessing her kids to see what they need

when they meet with her in small groups. She doesn't just do guided reading, but does strategy groups also. This is so powerful.

March 13, 2015

This week I got to start second rounds of coaching with three teachers! I was very excited because the first round went by so quickly. All three teachers (and classes) were excited to have me back, or so it seemed. I continued with the 4th grade teacher from last week, too. In 5th grade, I started teaching something that I've always loved teaching--figurative language. It was eye-opening, however, due to the fact that this class has a lot of EL students and is lower in general. They didn't seem to pick up on things as quickly as my classes have in the past, so many of our coaching conversations were surrounding the gradual release of responsibility. We've also utilized a lot of songs in our instruction. It took us the whole week to get most of the kids to have a handle on similes and metaphors. I am curious to see how they grow with their poetry next week.

The other coaches and I have been working closely with Steve Dunn, a national consultant who is a literacy guru. I have taken so many ideas from him and I always get excited when I can share what he's taught us with classroom teachers. This week in 4th grade, the class was working on summarizing. With Steve Dunn, we have worked on a strategy for summarizing non-fiction and a strategy for summarizing fiction. I got to share the ideas I've learned and the teacher latched onto them right away. She said she was surprised how quickly the students "got it." Win win!

March 20, 2015

This week, I began second rounds with two more teachers. One of them wanted to focus on reading core and the other wanted to focus on small-group instruction in reading. This was my first time working on small-group instruction within a larger class. The teacher and I had some really great conversations about the importance of small-group instruction. It really is the heart of a balanced literacy program. During small-group instruction, the teacher is meeting each student at his or her level.

March 27, 2015

This week was a "lighter" week than I am used to because it was the week before spring break. Essentially, it was a three day week because classes were doing parties on Thursday and Friday was a teacher work day with no students. I wore my "staff development hat," helping teachers out who needed CEU's (Continuing Education Units) to get their licenses renewed. Although this does take more preparation, I am enjoying this part of my job. I even met with the band teacher and we discussed how to embed literacy strategies into band lessons. It helps me pass on the growth mindset.

April 10, 2015

This will be the last weekly entry I will keep for my capstone data collection. I was immersed in small-group instruction this week. All four teachers I coached had small-group instruction as their primary goal. I know I have written about this before, but I cannot reiterate enough how important small-group instruction is!

I had my first formal observation from our Director of Teaching & Learning on Tuesday. I was both nervous and excited for her to see the impact coaching is making in my building. She

watched me co-teach a lesson and also sat in on the coaching conversation. We had a great discussion about engagement and how to make sure every student is sharing within their groups. The teacher identified his own coaching point--the power of reflection!

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