Spring 2020

Implementing an Effective Instructional Coaching Program to Benefit the Teacher As a Learner

Amber Bentley

IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING PROGRAM TO

BENEFIT THE TEACHER AS A LEARNER

by

Amber Lynn Bentley

A capstone thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
May 2020

Capstone Project Facilitator: Trish Harvey
Content Reviewers: Adam Slaton
Peer Reviewer: Alexandria Romano

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

I have been an instructional coach for three years, and I love it. I believe all teachers should have access to an instructional coach to engage in reflective practice. We all thrive when we feel successful, and that is what I get to do every single day, guide teachers through their potential. I am a cheerleader, an open ear, a nonjudgmental sounding board, and, even at the most difficult times, a counselor. I have gotten new teachers who have thrown in the towel to pick it back up, wipe their tears with it and feel a little better about taking risks in their classroom. Because at the end of the day, it is about doing what is best for the students. I am fully invested and it brings me great pride when I see both teachers and students move in the direction of growth. The coach is the sand that fills the gaps between the stones and the pebbles, and it makes a difference. But this is my soapbox, philosophical "why" description of coaching, so what, exactly, is an instructional coach, what do they do and why are they so important?

An instructional coach works alongside teachers and administrators to build teacher capacity and, ultimately, achieve student growth. A coach wears many hats, and is, for example, a mentor, a resource provider, a specialist in curriculum, instruction and data, and my favorite, a catalyst for change. A coach is also a school leader, but not always an expert, and engages in ongoing learning, especially from his/her peers.

Coaching takes on two main forms, informal and formal cycles in planning, instruction and assessment. The main difference is that formal coaching is always focused around a specific goal, or goals, and is guided by data, while informal coaching consists of a quick pop-in by a teacher or a brief conversation in the hallway. A coaching focus depends on a specific need of a single teacher, like their classroom management, a small group of teachers, like PLC data, or even a school-wide need, like a new reading strategy. It can be initiated by a teacher, or even an administrator. Essentially, instructional coaching is a differentiated approach to professional development for teachers. However, coaching is only as effective as its proper implementation and dedication by a knowledgeable team, which is why I will be creating a reflective implementation workbook for an instructional coaching program to address my focus question, *how can a school implement an effective instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?*

Differentiation really is at the heart of coaching, and it is a concept I hold near and dear to my teacher heart. It was a central focus in my classroom over the years, and it now guides my coaching. Differentiation is really the "how" to coaching. A teacher will connect to a learning opportunity if they feel it is relevant and manageable within their classroom. Teachers attend a lot of professional development in their career, not only because it is required, but also because educators, by nature, are lifelong learners and want to impact student lives. It is not uncommon for a teacher to attend a large, conventional professional development with a broad spectrum focus, like classroom management, differentiation, or building student leadership, for example. But does this type of conventional professional development really meet the needs of an adult learner?

And does this approach really have a lasting impact on the growth of a teacher and their students? I believe that conventional professional development has a place in education, but not in isolation, it must be accompanied by the intentional implementation and differentiated follow through that an instructional coach can provide. No two people have the same prior knowledge, experience, interests, professional goals and learning styles or pace as another person, which is a "one size fits all" approach can only be so effective. For this reason, I believe that instructional coaching is the best approach, and investment, in professional development that a school can make.

Thankfully, differentiated instruction has received more and more attention in recent years. Prominent researchers, such as Tomlinson (Tomlinson et al., 2003), have been trailblazers in this field and classrooms are shifting; however, their work focuses on the student, not the adult. Learning theorist Malcolm Knowles (as cited in Cox, 2015) suggested decades ago that adult education must also be differentiated and must meet the needs of the adults' endeavors. However, this is not the approach we see in most conventional professional development. When it comes to the way in which teachers learn through professional development, I am always reminded of the phrase, "practice what you preach." As more and more schools are requiring teachers to differentiate the instruction in their classrooms, many of the same teachers are sitting through professional development workshops or conferences in a style completely opposite of how their classes are expected to run (Beavers, 2009). Why has differentiated instruction for teachers not progressed in the same way differentiated instruction has for students? Conventional professional development is failing both students and teachers, as this

model really does not pursue the learner at hand (Beavers, 2009). On the other hand, instructional coaching is effective differentiated professional development with sustainable gains. For this reason, it is in the best interest of schools to implement, or even perhaps revisit, an instructional coaching program to strengthen teacher capacity and achieve higher student growth. But it must be done with an educated dedication.

My Personal Investment into the Topic

It is important to begin by sharing my journey with differentiation to demonstrate the significance it holds in my career and my drive towards achieving it. When I refer to differentiation, I use it in the context of Tomlinson's definition as responding to a learners' needs (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Although a simple explanation, this concept is actually quite complex, which I will go into much further detail in my literature review. My experience with differentiation, or lack thereof, began early in my school years but was slowly introduced to me during university, and then eventually transformed my work as an educator.

I grew up in a small town in western Wisconsin where diversity, both in demographics and in academics, was virtually nonexistent. To give an idea, the English Language Learner position was not necessary, it did not exist in our district. We did not break out into small groups, it was dominantly whole group instruction. Students completed the same level of work, unless they fell into one of the very high or very low divergent groups. But what seemed like a very homogeneous population, was actually anything but. Although demographically similar, readiness levels, interests and learning profiles varied immensely. However, differentiated instruction was severely lacking.

It was not until my university years that I began to feel a shift. During my undergraduate years, there was more demographic diversity, leveled classes and choice in research topics. However, within a single class, we were all still doing the same thing. It was not until graduate school that I really felt like I had a voice in my learning; I was not just being told what I needed to know. I was learning about and experiencing true differentiated instruction for the first time. I remember thinking to myself, "Hmph, how come I didn't experience this as a younger student? Maybe it was just my schooling?" After speaking with many colleagues over the years, ranging in ages and nationalities, I found they had very similar experiences to my own. Could this be one reason differentiated instruction seems to be so difficult for many teachers to achieve in their own classrooms, because they did not experience it themselves? Little did I know that my journey with differentiated instruction was just beginning.

Once I received my teaching license, I wanted to teach internationally. It was only natural that I sought out my student teaching experience at an international school and, later, my first job as well. After my student teaching in Santo Domingo, I spent seven years living and working in Cap Cana, Dominican Republic at the Cap Cana Heritage School, a US accredited, international school with students from over 24 nations. Ninety nine percent of the student population was learning English as a second, third or even fourth language. Students came from incredibly diverse academic, political, and cultural backgrounds. My first five years at CCHS, I was the middle school social studies teacher. It was not uncommon for one class of 20 students to have a student who did not speak a word of English and have a learning difficulty to others who were fluent in English and

reading beyond their grade level, and everything in between. The only path to success would be differentiated instruction, and this would prove to be quite a challenge. I was thrilled, and very fortunate, to receive ongoing training in this area, however, moving from theory to practice certainly proved itself to be quite difficult. As I began to learn more about DI, I began to think about how it could be possible for teachers, anywhere, to effectively run a differentiated classroom when it was not modeled for them or if there was not a professional, like a coach, walking them through the steps in the classroom. Every school has varying capacities of support, and I was fortunate to have a strong team behind, and alongside, me.

Differentiated instruction really became a passion of mine in the classroom because I understood it to be my students' best path to success. I began to conduct extensive research on the topic, and asked a lot of questions to our support staff, like ELL and SpEd teachers and my principal, and immediately implemented strategies like student profiles, ongoing assessments, leveled note taking, flexible grouping and leveled stations. I asked for feedback and made modifications; I took risks. I let my students make a lot of choices while maintaining the structure they needed, and it worked beautifully. Data became my best friend and I became a proactive planner. My students were being challenged at their own levels, were enjoying class, and showed growth; there was a shift from, what I felt was, impossible theory to absolutely possible practice. I began to understand that DI was an entire proactive approach, and not just a handful of strategies in my tool box.

Reflecting on Differentiated Instruction

I offer my journey with DI for two important reasons. First, I do not believe that I would have been successful at achieving a differentiated classroom from just receiving workshops on the subject. The issue is not whether or not they are interesting, or well planned, it is the fact that nearly all short-term workshops are very surface level. In addition, most workshops that teachers experience follow a "one size fits all" approach where each person in the room is learning the same content regardless of their background knowledge and experience. This approach, no matter how well intentioned, goes against the very nature of educational learning theories. In order to effectively implement a new approach in a classroom, a more long-term, individualized and hands-on experience is absolutely necessary in order to respond to the teachers' needs and show long-term student growth (Beavers, 2009). Had I not proactively continued my education on DI and received the support I did, I do not believe I would have been effective in my application.

The second reason I offer my journey is because instructional coaching is differentiated instruction for teachers, instead of students, as the learner. After teaching middle school social studies for five years, I was asked to be an instructional coach and help build the first K-12 coaching program at our school. Because I was already passionate about differentiated instruction, I quickly became passionate about the role of an instructional coach and meeting teachers where they were at. Being an instructional coach has been one of the most rewarding and wide-reaching positions in my career.

The purpose of an instructional coach is to increase teacher capacity by responding to the learner's needs, which is ultimately driven to achieve student growth. In my new role, the learner was now the teacher. Conventional professional development does not reach this depth of personalization, no matter how well intentioned. Nearly every teacher has sat through a workshop or convention, received a load of materials, had every ambition to implement the theoretical topic and just could not make the time to do so, did not feel it really pertained to them or did not understand how to implement it within their particular situation. It is not a practical approach and it goes against how people learn, in this case adults.

Professional Development

Education is a career of lifelong learning, and continuous professional development is required to keep teachers up to date with best practices and license renewal. Does conventional professional development really respond to the adult learners' needs? Imagine the student growth that could be achieved if the answer was a resounding yes. According to adult educator Malcolm Knowles, an instructor must take into account the previous experience of an adult learner and then must differentiate the level of their work based on this experience. Knowles also urged that adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their work (Knowles et al., 2014). The Instructional Coach empowers the adult learner. The approach of an Instructional Coach is a cyclical process of analysis, preparation, implementation and reflection that the teacher is a part of every step. The work does not end until growth happens. A study about teacher development in The Mirage (2015), a publication by the New Teacher

Project (TNTP), showed that conventional professional development significantly fails at teacher growth, which ultimately does not result in student growth either. Not only does Instructional Coaching intentionally satisfy the needs of an adult learner, growth is a measurable focal point.

One of the greatest benefits of having an Instructional Coaching program in a school is to see student growth in the data. By nature, schools are goal oriented, having both long and short term goals. Coaching programs are student centered, meaning teachers and instructional coaches set measurable student goals aligned with curriculum and/or school-wide goals and are driven by data. A coach and a teacher will work together until the goal is met, possibly tweaking the steps along the way. For example, a math teacher might set a goal of "90% of students will achieve 80% or higher on the integers final assessment by differentiating the process." Depending on the agreement between the teacher and coach, there would be co-planning, observing, co-teaching, modeling, and/or whisper coaching on strategies of differentiating the process of learning. Assessments would be given, data would be collected and decisions would be made. By the end of the coaching cycle, this teacher will have worked one on one with a coach in creating and giving curriculum aligned assessments, have planned differentiated classes and have reflected on and made decisions based on the data. The point of this cycle is so that the teacher can replicate these skills over and over, reaching more and more students. Conventional professional development does not reach this depth or level of success. Not only does it not reach this level of student and teacher success, but it is also significantly more expensive than an instructional coach for far inferior results.

More than two billion dollars is spent nationwide per year on teacher professional development, with little to no student growth as a result (The Mirage, 2015). Learning is expensive, and professional development is no different. However, replacing most of the "one size fits all" professional development with instructional coaching is more cost effective for a school or district (The Mirage, 2015). The same study showed that the participating schools spent an average of $18,000 per teacher, per year on professional development, while the average Instructional Coach salary is $55,000 a year, equating to the cost of just three teachers. In terms of learning theories, student and teacher growth and cost analysis, instructional coaching is significantly more impactful than conventional professional development.

In order to answer my focus question, *how can a school implement an instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner,* I will create an instructional coaching program implementation workbook for schools that do not yet have one or need to revise their existing program. This implementation workbook will be interactive and reflective in nature. The workbook will pay close attention to the steps of a change process and what is needed by the administration, teachers and coaches in order to be successful.

Summary

In conclusion, I do not believe that conventional professional development opportunities for teachers are effective in teacher or student growth. Conventional professional development does not meet the needs of adult learners, it is not differentiated, teacher and student growth is not measurable and it is incredibly

expensive. Given my personal and professional experiences, I believe that schools who have instructional coaching programs really meet the needs of teachers as learners, which, ultimately, works towards meeting the academic needs of their students. Working with an instructional coach provides a teacher with a differentiated experience that ensures growth. Schools that do not already have a program in place should genuinely consider their current status of professional development and move towards implementing an effective instructional coaching program. Schools that have an existing instructional coaching program should reflect on its effectiveness, is it resulting in measurable growth?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this Literature Review is to provide an analysis of the research

that already exists on the grander scale of the topic of professional development and adult

learners, specifically educators. The topics that will be included in this literature review

are conventional professional development, adult learning theories, differentiation, and

finally instructional coaching. These topics will help to build an argument towards

answering my research question, *how can a school implement an effective instructional*

coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?

The first part of the Literature Review will analyze current conventional

professional development for teachers. Conventional professional development has been

criticized as not being effective in achieving teacher or student growth. Understanding

the current climate of conventional professional development is essential in analyzing the

use, or lack of, adult learning theories for lifelong learning in education. It is also

essential to understand how, or if, teacher capacity and student growth can be effectively

measured. In addition, it is important to understand professional development overall

costs for schools. This section will provide an overview of conventional professional

development models and strategies, how, or if, the adult as the learner is central to these

approaches, how, or if, teacher and student growth is effectively measured, and a cost

analysis of spending per school or district.

After conventional professional development has been analyzed, adult learning theories will be reviewed. Understanding how adults learn is an essential part to understanding where conventional professional development is lacking and why instructional coaching works so well. This section will provide an overview of how adults learn best by analyzing well-known theories. When the adult as a learner, in this case, the teacher, is taken into consideration during the planning of professional development, educational leaders are more likely to provide meaningful opportunities that will result in building teacher capacity and student growth.

Following adult learning theories will be differentiation. Differentiation is responding to a learners' needs, in this case adults. The purpose of understanding Differentiated Instruction is to support the idea that instructional coaching is essentially differentiated professional development to support the adult as a learner. This section will provide an overview of the need for Differentiation in terms of adult learning and developmental theories.

Lastly, the literature review will analyze instructional coaching. This section will provide an overview of coaching models and strategies, how the adult as the learner is central to its approach, how teacher and student growth is measured, and a cost analysis of implementing a coaching program. This section will also include how instructional coaching is a means to differentiated professional development.

Conventional Professional Development

In education, professional development (PD) is considered to be any type of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help

educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). There is a wide variety of formats in which PD can take and include any topic related to education; the term "professional development" is actually quite generic for such a wide-reaching spectrum. It is undeniably accepted among teachers, administrators, lawmakers, and other important stakeholders, that professional development should continue to be a requirement for teachers as lifelong learners because of the fact that there are always new or revised trends, strategies, standards, and laws (Beavers, 2009). It is also widely agreed upon that there must be reform in professional development to improve its effectiveness, measurability, and cost (Beavers 2009; Knight 2010; Trotter, 2006).

There has been a significant increase in professional development in the last 15 years due to changing education laws (Knight, 2010). In 2002, President George Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that highlighted achievement gaps among disadvantaged students and supported a more standards-based reform to set measurable goals. This act resulted in more assessments for students in order for schools to receive funding. In 2010, President Barack Obama began revising the NCLB, now called Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to focus more on preparing students for college and future careers. The goals outlined in these education laws have led to both a higher demand for, and more support in, preparing teachers to meet these goals, and confront learning curves, such as in standards-based grading (US Department of Education, 2018). Not only has there been an increase in the demand for the amount of PD, but also in the demand for improved quality of PD.

In 1994, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), along with eleven different National Associations and Boards, decided to create a set of twelve standards to work towards achieving quality, consistency and efficiency in professional learning for teachers. These standards comprise of three categories that must be embarked upon simultaneously to ensure change: context standards, process standards and content standards (Hirsh, 2011). First, context standards describe the characteristics of the organization that must be in place to sustain the effects of professional development, second, process standards delineate the delivery of characteristics that facilitate successful adult change and finally, content standards specifically identify the knowledge and skills that educators need (Hirsh, 2011). Together, these standards state that teachers need a chance to collaborate, have access to a variety of resources and strategies, be provided with sustainable support, use and apply relevant data, receive and apply up-to-date research methods and facilitate meaningful partnerships with various stakeholders (Hirsh, 2011).

These 12 standards take the adult learner into consideration while ensuring a sustainable change process, however, they are not yet a requirement to be followed, but rather a suggested approach by several high-level professional groups, including the Department of Education. Over 40 states have adopted a portion of these standards and 25 have adopted them in its entirety (Hirsh, 2011). As the article stated, in order to achieve change through professional development, all standards must be implemented simultaneously; it can be concluded that the states that have only adopted a portion of the standards are not achieving, or maintaining, the change they are intending. This lack of a

cohesive set of requirements is one of the issues being raised towards the ineffectiveness of conventional professional development, in addition to ineffective delivery methods.

A majority of teacher professional development in the United States is delivered in a presenter style format that teaches to the masses in workshops and seminars (Beavers, 2009). This method of professional development often disappoints teachers because the content may be partially irrelevant to the needs of the teacher or school, the presenter may lack sufficient skills or the delivery method is not engaging to the needs of an adult learner (Beavers, 2009). In addition, most workshops and seminars do not include teachers in the decision making process of the content, nor does it usually include relevant data that pertains to each teachers' students. Rather, this style of professional development offers a theory, a strategy or program that is intended for teachers to take back to the classroom (Beavers, 2009). Overall, "research suggests that they (workshops & seminars) may not necessarily be the most effective because of their short duration and because they are removed in time from practice or implementation of the ideas contained in the workshops" (DeRoche, 2017, as cited in Penuel et al. 2007, p. 2). The result of this common approach has been deemed insufficient by various studies on the topic and include statements such as, "Unfortunately, as these courses are mandated and become institutionalized, the practical focus turns to credit counting rather than on the actual learning taking place" (Beavers, 2009, as cited in Confessore & Confessore, 1994, p. 25) and "This required, continued education can create an atmosphere of resentment towards the directors of the program and the courses themselves" (Beavers, 2009, as cited in Hiemstra & Brockett, 1994, p. 26). This resentment was concluded as being a result of

inconsistency and irrelevancy (Beavers, 2009). In a study that surveyed over 10,000

teachers, only 40% of teachers felt the professional development they received was either

beneficial to them or attributed to their student's growth (The Mirage, 2015).

The ultimate goal of any professional development is to result in student

achievement, but when using the conventional PD styles aforementioned, it is difficult, or

nearly impossible, to accurately measure growth. Within the last 15 years, there have

been two federally-funded studies regarding the effectiveness of professional

development. These studies concluded that, "these interventions did not result in

long-lasting, significant changes in teacher practice or student outcomes" (The Mirage

2015, p. 2). According to numerous, similar studies, the results are too mixed and the

evidence gathered is too weak for reliability (The Mirage, 2015). In addition to the

difficulty in measuring its effectiveness, conventional PD is quite expensive.

Professional development is an enormous expenditure for even the most money

conscious school district. When calculating the cost for professional development, there

is no one single formula used, but rather a variety of approaches from different districts,

which makes it difficult to make conclusions about a total cost analysis. However, one

study took various reports and calculated the average expenditure to range from

$1,500-$4,500 per teacher/per year for professional development. The same study

analyzed three separate, detailed reports that estimated that most school districts

underestimated their expenses by at least 50% because they were all missing important

factors of cost (Oden et al, 2002). Another independent study of three large school

districts found that the districts spend an average of $18,000 per teacher/per year, and

only reached a 30% teacher improvement rate in their professional evaluations (The Mirage, 2015). Because of the steep price tag of professional development, many districts are hesitant to make changes, fearing their expenditures will further increase, even though they acknowledge that changes need to be made in regards to the quality, sustainability and student achievement of PD (Rice, 2001).

In conclusion, professional development is an undeniably essential component in the field of education for continued learning because of ever changing elements such as trends, strategies, standards and laws. However, professional development opportunities are not created equal in quality, sustainability of learning, nor cost. It is nearly impossible to effectively measure student and teacher growth related to conventional professional development. In addition, conventional professional development many times does not meet the unique needs of the adult learner, as outlined in the following section.

Adult Learners

After a student enters into a profession, it is not uncommon that they will continue to engage on a path of lifelong learning. Most professions require ongoing professional development, or training of some nature, with many requiring it continuously for licensure, like in the field of education. Learning takes many forms, but starting with a basic definition of what learning is is an important foundation to understanding more complex adult learning theories. Learning theorists define learning in a variety of ways. According to Knowles et al. (2014), theorists either define learning as "a process by which behavior is changed, shaped or controlled" or as the process "of growth, development of competencies or fulfillment of potential" (p. 14). Not only is there a

variety of answers to the question, "What is learning?" but also to the question, "How do humans learn best?" The knowledge of how humans learn best is constantly being studied and adapted as the world discovers new information on how the brain works. There is no one single accepted answer, but rather a variety of theories, assumptions and generalizations. What is, however, widely accepted, is the idea that people learn differently, including adults who have a unique set of needs.

Institutional adult education has been around since ancient times and most are commonly aware of famous adult educators such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. What has been lacking, until recently, however, is the formal support of and study behind adult learning as a theory and process. The movement toward adult education and learning really did not take off in the United States until 1926 with the creation of the American Association for Adult Education and the funding for research (Knowles et al., 2014). With this came a stream of publications of educational philosophy on adult learning.

Lindeman (as cited in Nixon-Ponder, 1995) was one of the first adult theorists who gained attention for his work titled, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, that focused on the significance of the learner's personal experiences for motivation and adaptation. This focus was a shift from previous notions that the learner must simply apply information delivered to them from the authoritative teacher, but rather, the teacher must serve as a guide in problem solving the adaptation of new situations and experiences alongside the adult learner. In addition, Lindeman's work went on to emphasize the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the learner, equal in nature and learning from one another, to mirror the ideology of the United States as a democratic

nation (Knowles et al., 2014, as cited in Gessner, 1956). The theorist summarized that adult education is, "a cooperative venture in non authoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct" (Knowles et al., 2014, as cited in Gessner, 1956, p. 21). Finally, Lindeman stated that learning is a lifelong process that goes well beyond the limited preparation for the future provided in conventional learning. To be a lifelong learner has no vocational limits, but instead can span across any profession or life situation (as cited in Nixon-Ponder, 1995).

Given Lindeman's principles behind adult learning, it only seems natural that he would support individual and small group learning, as opposed to large group lectures. He even went as far as to suggest the elimination of mass teaching altogether to better support the learner's experience (as cited in Nixon-Ponder, 1995). Motivation is an important facet of adult learning, often contingent upon whether or not a learners' needs and interests are reflected in the activities (Knowles et al., 2014). These concepts, in addition to lifelong learning and the emphasis on a learner's situation and experience, sparked a great deal of interest and further research among other theorists who would follow in Lindeman's footsteps, namely adult theorist, Malcolm Knowles.

In the 1970's, Knowles expanded the idea that children and adults learn differently. It may have been Lindeman who pegged the term andragogy, or the art and science of teaching adults, as opposed to pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children, but it was Knowles who would be known for further developing the concept

into the following five assumptions of adult learners (Beavers, 2009, as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 2007):

(1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (p. 26)

In addition to these five assumptions, Knowles also pegged seven outcomes that must be produced by effective adult learning: a mature understanding of oneself, acceptance and love for others, a dynamic attitude toward life, react to root causes, acquire necessary skills, understand the human experience, and be able to understand and change society (Beavers, 2009, as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Even though Knowle's theory of adult learning has been criticized over the decades for blurred lines between pedagogy and andragogy, it is still widely accepted that adults have a particular set of learning needs and several theorists have continued the path of this work.

In conclusion, adult learners must find learning relevant and useful to their current needs, they must engage in learning opportunities that provide competency, autonomy, and relationship building. Overall, learning theorists oppose large group learning, like conventional PD, and advocate small group and individual experiences whenever possible. Lastly, these small group and individual experiences must be differentiated in order to succeed in meeting these unique adult needs. The following section will explore the meaning and necessity of differentiated learning.

Differentiation

The quality of instruction is constantly being challenged through ongoing school reform and movements toward equal opportunity education. Current reforms look closely at academic and learner diversity, which are not new concepts to education, however, they are becoming widely accepted as required recognition in current shifts in pedagogical approaches (Tomlinson et al., 2003). In comparison, there is also a shift in andrological approaches resulting from a demand for an improved quality of professional development that addresses the needs of adult learners. It is interesting that these shifts are occurring simultaneously. What these shifts have in common is a differentiated approach that responds to the learners' needs. There is a tremendous amount of literature on what differentiated instruction looks like for children in the classroom, but, there is not as much for the adult as the learner, however, it is becoming increasingly recognized that learning through instructional coaching reaches these ideals (Aguilar, 2013).

Just like when students enter the classroom, teachers have a diverse level of knowledge and requisite skills, also known as readiness, in their profession (Beavers, 2009). An individual's level of readiness must be recognized in order to create opportunities for growth. The grey area of content or skills that is neither too simple nor too difficult to achieve creates a moderate challenge where learning, sustainability and perseverance actually occur (Aguilar, 2013, as cited in Howard, 1994). This "just right" level of challenge is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). When a learner, both children and adults alike, are not in the ZPD, it results in negative outcomes and attitudes towards learning and self that may include disengagement, low self-worth and

frustration (Aguilar, 2013, as cited in Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993). The ZPD is especially important in each of the Instructional Coaching frameworks discussed in the upcoming Instructional Coaching section.

It must be recognized that each teacher is at a different phase in their career and personal life. According to Trotter (2006), author of *Adult Learning Theories: Impacting Professional Development Programs*, different phases of development need to be understood in order to individually meet teachers' needs. The first phase, Age Theory, contends that depending on the chronological age of a person depends on their level of ability to deeply reflect. The next phase, Stage Theory, recognizes that adults continue to go through levels of development, going from survival, to fitting in and conforming to critically thinking. The beginning phases bring with it impulsivity and self-centeredness, while the later phases bring a clearer image of self and the ability to make more connections to others. Next, cognitive development theory involves various degrees of abstractness and interpersonal maturity. The lower degrees include negativity, generalization and personal needs, while the higher degrees include the ability to understand multiple viewpoints and internal motivation. Lastly, functional theory states that adults must have a purpose and need to learn and that it must adapt to the conditions of their life. In conclusion, theorists argue that professional development must be reflective in practice, teachers need to partake in the planning process, their learning must be voluntary, they must be provided with choice, and opportunities must vary depending on developmental need (Trotter, 2006). For example, a young novice teacher would have

strikingly different needs than a new, older teacher. Additionally, an experienced teacher would have vastly different needs than a recent graduate.

Overall, professional development must be differentiated in order to meet the unique needs of teachers as learners; "Teacher development appears to be a highly individualized process, one that has been dramatically oversimplified" (The Mirage, 2015, p. 3). Professional development through instructional coaching addresses this differentiated process, as outlined in the following section.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is not just a program, but rather a culture of conversation and reflection that is adopted by a school (Knight, 2007). According to Elena Aguilar (2013), author of *The Art of Coaching*, "Coaching is a form of professional development that brings out the best in people, uncovers strengths and skills, builds effective teams, cultivates compassion and builds emotionally resilient educators" (p. 6). She continues to argue that coaching is really our natural, and one of the most ancient, ways of teaching and learning: found in apprenticeship, mentoring, and even in parenting (2013).

A qualified coach needs certain characteristics in order to be effective, such as the ability to build relationships, using strong listening and questioning skills (Knight, 2007). Building trustworthy relationships is the first, and most important, step a coach must take. In order for the partnership to thrive and for learning to take place, the teacher and the coach must be seen as equals (Knight, 2007). A coach needs to spend ample time just getting to know the people they work with. In addition, a coach must maintain an equal status and not be seen as an evaluator, a superior, "the expert," or someone who "fixes"

teachers, but must remain a true partner in learning. Another part to building a

trustworthy relationship is to have a clear set of roles and responsibilities for coaches to

ensure there are no blurry lines that may negatively impact a teacher-coach or

administrator-coach relationship. Once a coach is seen as a trustworthy, equal

professional, they must maintain this delicate relationship with essential communication

skills. Arguably the two most important communication skills for a coach to possess are

listening and question asking (Aguilar, 2013). These two skills sound quite simplistic, but

they really are anything but. A teacher must feel that they are valued and understood. An

effective coach will often repeat what they hear and guide conversations using reflective

questions that get the teacher to think critically (Knight, 2007). Building and maintaining

positive relationships must be a priority, no matter what coaching framework is applied.

There are different coaching frameworks that support teachers in various ways.

No matter the framework applied, the ultimate goal is teacher and student growth. It is

common that a coach uses more than one of these frameworks depending on the need of

the teacher (Aguilar, 2013). In each of the following frameworks, the teacher must be

supported within their zone of proximal development, a concept mentioned in the

previous section on Differentiation (as cited in Aguilar, 2013). The coaching frameworks

that will be outlined are directive, facilitative, cognitive and transformational.

The first framework is directive coaching and is used to change behavior. For

example, if a coach instructs the teacher to use a specific instructional strategy, or if the

coach models it for the teacher, this is a directive framework. In this framework, the

coach is seen as more of a resource, and may be used with beginning teachers, a teacher

on an improvement plan, with those who explicitly ask for the direction, for program implementation or content-specific needs. Caution must be used with this framework so that the coach is not always seen as "the expert," otherwise, the equal relationship may begin to tarnish (Aguilar, 2013).

The second framework is facilitative coaching, where the coach facilitates learning by building upon, or exploring different approaches through what the teacher already knows, much like scaffolding. The coaching conversation in this framework is much more reflective and it is intended for the teacher to reach their own conclusion. The goal with this framework is gradual release of responsibility (Aguilar, 2013). An example of this framework would be a conversation in which the coach asks a teacher to explain how they came to make a particular decision, or to identify the steps they took to prepare for a lesson, or to brainstorm possible outcomes of a new strategy to best prepare for them.

The next framework is cognitive coaching where the coach guides the teacher to be a self-directed and reflective learner. The coach might offer a variety of ideas, or guide the teacher to think of new approaches using reflective questioning. In this framework, the coach will focus on the teacher's patterns of thinking, assumptions, or beliefs to best understand the decisions they make in order to change the patterns they are stuck in (Aguilar, 2013). A coach may ask questions like, "What did you see or hear from your students that made you feel that way?" or "Tell me how you decided to react to your student when you saw him/her (fill in the blank)."

The last framework is transformational coaching and is a combination of the Directive, Facilitative and Cognitive framework. "Transformational coaching directly and intentionally attends to ways of being. We explore language, nonverbal communication, and emotions, and how these affect relationships, performance, and results" (Aguilar, 2013, p. 26). An essential aspect of this framework is being able to identify the missing pieces between seemingly small problems and larger, systematic issues. A coach needs to understand when to apply the different frameworks in order to achieve transformational coaching (Aguilar, 2013).

No matter the framework used, a teacher can work with a coach formally or informally. Formal coaching is called a Coaching Cycle that is focused on a measurable goal set by the teacher and coach. A cycle usually lasts between four to six weeks and data is consistently collected to make informed decisions and guide reflective conversations (Knight, 2007). During this time the coach and teacher will agree on a coaching plan that will include a combination of observations, co-teaching, modeling, whisper coaching, peer observation, etc. A coaching cycle usually follows a cyclical pattern of planning, implementing, and reflecting (Sweeny, 2013).

Informal coaching, on the other hand, is not focused on a measurable goal, but is, for example, when a teacher wants to run an idea by the coach before class or wants to brainstorm project ideas. Both formal and informal coaching are necessary, however, informal coaching should be monitored carefully as to not be taking the place or the more powerful and long-lasting benefits of a coaching cycle (Sweeny, 2013).

Research consistently shows that Instructional Coaching is far more beneficial than conventional professional development alone. Coaching does what conventional PD cannot: it builds a personal relationship with the teacher, it provides autonomy, it provides individualized observation, guidance and reflection, it builds upon a teacher's existing knowledge and experience and ensures competency, it uses student data to make informed decisions, it provides follow up and frequent feedback and it does not end until the goal is met (Cox, 2015). In a comparative study, it was concluded that the implementation rate of what is learned in conventional professional development versus what is learned with an instructional coach was 10% compared to 90% (DeRoche et al., 2017). One reason for this vast difference is because instructional coaching is intended to be more student-centred than conventional PD (Sweeney, 2013). According to Diane Sweeney (2013), author of several Student-Centered Coaching books, a student-centered approach achieves greater student success because it is based on standards and uses data to help teachers inform instruction. Because conventional PD is teacher-centered it is difficult to measure student outcomes, as opposed to instructional coaching that is student-centered. Data is a focal point of coaching and is used to make the focus goal of the teacher and is used to measure student growth (Knight, 2007). Another area of research that shows a significant difference between the efficacy of conventional PD and instructional coaching is the application of adult learning theories.

The adult learner is at the heart of instructional coaching. As mentioned in the previous section on Adult Learners, in order to learn, adults must have a need to be met and must be able to draw on their own experiences. The following outlines exactly how

instructional coaching aligns to Knowles' six characteristics of adult learners (Cox, 2015):

1. *The Need to Know:* An adult must have a real-world problem that needs to be addressed. In coaching, the person being coached chooses the area of focus based on their need in the classroom.

2. *Adults of Self-Directed*: As adults age, they become more and more self-directed and have a need for others to see them as being capable. However, the process of becoming self-directed must, oftentimes, be nurtured along the way, which is a part of the process of coaching.

3. *Adults have an abundance of prior life and work experiences:* Observation and reflection towards learning stem from experience, however, adults may have difficulty in new learning and being open to expanding upon new experiences through active experimentation. It is the role of a coach to challenge old assumptions and introduce new learning opportunities.

4. *Adults learn when they are ready and when they have a need to learn:* Coaching is sought out when a change needs to happen. The work between a teacher and a coach is focused around a goal created from the need. In order to reach the goal, several options are explored and a plan is implemented on how to meet this need.

5. *Adults are life-centered in their orientation to learning:* Teachers live and work in a reality of 'immediacy" where they have constant needs that must be met immediately, like grading, communication with parents, lesson

planning, meetings, implementing new requirements, etc. So when a

teacher is learning something new, or is implementing a change, they must

feel that it will be useful to them in addressing their immediate problems.

Coaching addresses relevant issues that are in the "now."

6. *Adults can respond to external motivators, but for the most part, they are*

internally motivated: Teachers have values and needs that must be met in

order for them to feel satisfied and successful in the classroom. It is the

role of the coach to connect the values of a teacher to the outcomes of

their work together (pp. 29-30).

An accurate cost analysis of instructional coaching is difficult because it is a fairly

new approach that arrived to school districts within the last ten years and more research is

needed. David Knight (2010), author of *The Economic Cost of Instructional Coaching*,

conducted a comparative study of three actual schools and one professionally developed

model. In terms of time spent, Knight concluded that a teacher spends an average of 14

hours with an instructional coach each year, which includes both student and non-student

time. The average cost of one instructional coach per teacher ranges from $2,300-$3,300,

with an average of 74.71% of that cost being the coach's salary. A total cost of one

instructional coach per school per school year is $74,437. This total cost includes the

coach's salary and other expenses, including some one time costs. It can be concluded

that the majority of the cost is the coach's salary. It is important to note that the author

used high estimated averages in the conclusions, and actual results may have been lower.

Knight concluded that, overall, an instructional coaching program is an investment with

upfront costs that are not yearly, however, the researched benefits of a coaching program far outweigh those of conventional professional development (2010).

In conclusion, instructional coaching is differentiated professional development that addresses the needs of adult learners, namely teachers. Coaching can be informal or formal and focus on a specific goal for growth. There are different coaching frameworks depending on the needs and experience of the teacher, which just further supports this differentiated approach.

Summary

In summary, this literature review highlighted the following topics: conventional professional development, adult learning theories, differentiation, and finally instructional coaching. These topics help to build an argument towards answering my focus question, *how can a school implement an effective instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?* It also supports my Capstone project of developing a reflective implementation workbook for an instructional coaching program.

Professional development is an undeniably essential component in the field of education for continued learning because of ever changing elements such as trends, strategies, standards and laws. However, professional development opportunities are not created equal in quality, sustainability of learning, nor cost. It is nearly impossible to effectively measure student and teacher growth related to conventional professional development. In addition, conventional professional development often does not meet the needs of the adult learner, which should be held at the heart of PD planning.

On the other hand, professional development through instructional coaching does, in fact, meet the needs of the adult learner because it is in itself a naturally differentiated process. Coaching addresses the "here and now," keeping it relevant and useful to the teacher's current needs. Coaching also supports a teacher's competency, autonomy and relationship building with colleagues and students. In addition, coaching happens individually, or even in small groups, as encouraged by adult learning theorists. Coaching is focused around a goal and data is collected, so that growth is actually measured.

Overall, instructional coaching really addresses a variety of needs that cannot happen in conventional professional development. This literature review certainly strengthens an argument towards answering my research question, "*how can a school implement an effective instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?*

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain what my project will be, how it will be published and how its effectiveness will be measured. I believe that an instructional coaching program is the most effective differentiated professional development a school can invest in that builds measurable teacher and student capacity. However, an instructional coaching program is only as effective as its proper implementation and dedication by a knowledgeable team. For this reason, I will create a comprehensive and reflective workbook called *Building the Foundations of a Coaching Culture* that addresses my focus question, *how can a school implement an effective instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?*

Description of the Project

Instructional Coaching is more than just a program; it is a culture of conversation and reflection (Knight, 2007). For this reason, this workbook will reach beyond the technicalities of coaching and dive into the external and internal transitions of cultures and systems within participating schools. The purpose of this workbook is to guide stakeholders in building and maintaining a systemic culture of reflection and growth through instructional coaching as a means to building teacher and student capacity. The completion of this reflective workbook will result in a working implementation plan and

will provide vital content for a functioning instructional coaching handbook. This workbook is suitable for schools with a variety of missions and visions.

The workbook will begin with a clear purpose and rationale, and then move into general reflective questions followed by recommended action steps and an application workspace. Change process leaders, and other stakeholders like coaches and teachers, will be able to reflect on what direction the school would like to go, who will be involved in this change, the timeframe of the change and an evaluation method to measure both the effectiveness of the implementation and benefits of the program.

This layout will allow the change process leaders to go from a broad to narrow scope of implementing an instructional coaching program. When stakeholders complete the workbook, they will have created their own implementation plan that is tailored to their own school and mission and vision, as there is no one size fits all coaching, just like there is no one size fits all professional development.

Researched Rationale

The reason I chose to create an implementation plan for instructional coaching is that according to Speck (1996), author of *The Change Process in a School Learning Community*, in order for improvement to take place, change must happen; and the most important factor to a successful change process in a school is the creation of an implementation plan. In schools where instructional coaching seems like more of a chore and time consumer than an essential factor in teacher and student growth, there is a lack of an implementation and maintenance plan for the program. An implementation plan allows for careful reflection and planning with roles, responsibilities, timeframes and

evaluation processes to ensure movement in the right direction, although it must be expected that there will be setbacks and possible hesitant participants along the way (Speck,1996).

Without an implementation plan, it is easy to slip back into old routines and continue on the same path as before the change was initiated. Change takes time and is not easy. In most traditional schools, the single most influential stakeholder in change is the principal, but an analysis over the past century has shown a failure in sustainable change, as very little has actually shifted over the years. Speck (2016) argued that in order to achieve systemic, sustainable change towards improvement, then a variety of stakeholders must be involved who understand the entire innovation and are given a chance to ask questions and provide feedback that is actually used toward creating the change process, or implementation plan. Without a plan where multiple stakeholders are involved, one single vision can be skewed and proceeded in various directions, which only creates confusion, dissatisfaction, a feeling of no direction and a loss of precious time (Speck, 2016).

Project Audience and Setting

The audience for my project will be any school that does not yet have an Instructional Coaching program and is wanting to implement one, or a school that is looking to reflect on its existing program that is not operating at an optimal level. This workbook is intended for any change process leaders in a school including directors, principals, instructional coaches and teachers. It is important to include a variety of voices and perspectives in any change process. For example, a teacher may wish to

engage in coaching but does not have access to a program at their school, and may ask to work alongside administration in using this implementation workbook.

The scope of this project within the Capstone course will be the completion of the instructional coaching implementation workbook. However, I would like to continue growing this professional endeavor into an instructional coaching website in the future. A website would significantly grow my audience and allow me to also expand my teacher development platform.

Measuring Effectiveness

I will gather invaluable feedback through the use of surveys and testimonials that will allow me to continue refining my workbook to best fit the needs of stakeholders. Creating a website will also aid in this process, as they provide tracking tools that can be used for numerical data and also support the sending and receiving of survey data. Initial distribution of this workbook will be done through extensive networking, in which I will offer my support that will also provide me with immediate feedback about the process.

Project Timeline

In order to create a thorough, highly effective and well-revised workbook, I will need until the end of my project semester that ends in May of 2020. The website creation however, will be an ongoing process that will exceed the school's semester.

Summary

In conclusion, my project will be the creation of an implementation workbook that will eventually be published on an instructional coaching website that I create for professional endeavors in expanding my coaching career. The implementation plan will

be reflective in nature and will follow the well-researched change process of a school

learning community.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Introduction

I believe that an instructional coaching program is the most effective

differentiated professional development a school can invest in that builds measurable

teacher and student capacity. However, an instructional coaching program is only as

effective as its proper implementation and dedication by a knowledgeable team. For this

reason, I have created a comprehensive workbook called *Building the Foundations of a*

Coaching Culture that addresses my focus question, *how can a school implement an*

effective instructional coaching program to benefit the teacher as a learner?

In this chapter, I will conclude my capstone project by addressing eight main

topics: my learning during the process, connections to my literature review, possible

implications, possible limitations, future plans, communicating results, benefits to the

profession and a summary. In the first topic, I will outline three of my major learnings

that include the need for reflection to grow, how one project leads to more projects, and

the fact that I have a lot more to learn. Next, in revisiting my literature review, I will

highlight four areas, Knights (2007) focus on building a coaching culture, Knowles et al.

(2014) focus on competency, autonomy, relationship and differentiation for adult

learners, Speck's (1996) argument for the necessity of implementation plans for a

successful change process and finally, Aguilar's (2013) instructional coaching

frameworks. Following a connection to literature, I will discuss the implications of my

project and how it provides clear direction for decision making stakeholders in schools to

implement an instructional coaching program. After implications, I will offer any

possible limitations of my project. Then, in future plans I will explore next steps for me

or other researchers, including additional project ideas. I will then explain how I will

share my project by networking and through a website that will have dual functionality of

disbursement and data collection. This will lead me to how my project will benefit the

profession of education by highlighting the importance of implementation plans and

knowledgeable teams. Finally, I will summarize my topics and outline my main

conclusions.

What I Have Learned

The purpose of this capstone is to have a transformative experience, both

personally and professionally. The word transformative was so wisely chosen for this

endeavor, as this is exactly what it does. I have acquired significant knowledge as a

researcher, a writer and most importantly, I feel, as a learner.

First, the capstone has been a reflective process for me. Although reflection is a

natural part of my career as an instructional coach, I learned how to be more personally

reflective and challenged myself to think about how I can use a project to grow

professionally. Where do I want this project to lead me? What other opportunities can

this project open for me? I know that I want to continue on a path of leadership after my

journey as an instructional coach. I have found so much joy in supporting teachers to

become the best version of themselves to reach their students. How can I continue to grow from here? I have thought about pursuing my administrative license, going into consulting, or even opening my own school with former, brilliant colleagues. With all this in mind, I planned my project to strategically put me in a path of future growth. Whichever path I take, I know that reflection will always guide me.

The second thing I learned during this capstone is that projects can lead to many more projects. My topic is the implementation of an instructional coaching program; but really, the overarching theme is the importance of a solid implementation plan overall, regardless of the topic. I found it was essential to organize my project into well-developed targets that lead to a clear stopping point, otherwise, finding a good stopping point would have been elusive; and this also helps for future continuation.

Every subtopic in my project can in itself lead to another project. I broke my project into four main phases: Anticipate, Design, Implement and Evaluate. Each one of these phases could be its own project. Each of the phases is also broken into sections, which could also lead to their own project. For example, I stress the importance of building a culture of learning in a school as a part of implementing an instructional coaching program. A whole new project about building a purposeful culture is one option for an additional project. And the list continues, there are so many more options.

Finally, I have also learned that I have a lot more to learn. Because I have ambitions to continue growing in education, I need to be a researcher for the remainder of my career. I need to stay on top of the most recent trends not only in andragogy and pedagogy, but also in child development, growth mindset, social-emotional learning,

leadership, etc. It is important to keep a broad scope of knowledge to keep myself current and growing. All educators are expected to be lifelong learners, but there is a defining difference between those who stay on one end of the spectrum of learning to those who transition to the other end of the spectrum of using that learning for change.

What I learned during this capstone process is much attributed to the content in my literature review. The main concepts that I highlight in my workbook project are building a coaching culture, an adult learner's needs of competency, autonomy, relationship and differentiated experiences, and finally, the research behind the effectiveness of implementation plans.

Literature Review

One of the major concepts that drove my workbook was that learning, particularly through instructional coaching, is a culture of conversation and reflection (Knight, 2007). Culture, in this sense, is not something that just happens, but it is something that must be built with purpose and meaningful planning. I have experienced this first hand. I have been an instructional coach in a school where a culture of coaching was intentionally built prior to launching the program and I have also been an instructional coach in a school where coaching just started one year and the culture is still trying to catch up with it. For this reason, I made my workbook reflective in nature and also focused on the importance of building a culture of learning as a part of the implementation plan.

I also built my workbook around the unique needs of the adult learner, as the adult learner is at the heart of instructional coaching, and also at the heart of my workbook. The adult learner was highlighted in the work of Beavers (2009) Cox (2015), Knowles et

al. (2014) and Nixon-Ponder (1995), with much of their work a summarization and comparative analysis of adult learning theorists such as Lindeman and Knowles. In very short summary, an adult learner must find the learning relevant and useful to their current needs, it must provide opportunities for competency, autonomy, relationship building and be differentiated.

My workbook advocates for the implementation of an instructional coaching program because I believe coaching to be the most effective differentiated professional development a teacher can participate in. Good coaching meets all the unique needs aforementioned of an adult learner. Aside from the topic of instructional coaching, the structure of my workbook also keeps the adult learner in mind. The reflective nature of the workbook trusts that the stakeholders completing the process have the required knowledge to do so, or will obtain it, and are capable of making choices that address the needs and current reality of their school. For this reason, I am very careful to only provide a list of recommended resources, but do not tell the stakeholders what they should use. This is also why I offer a reflective process and not a prescriptive process; there is no one size fits all implementation plan, there has to be input from stakeholders.

Lastly, I chose to create a reflective workbook that results in an implementation plan because according to Speck (1996), it is the most effective approach to the change process. In order for improvement to take place, change must happen; and the most important factor to a successful change process in a school is the creation of an implementation plan. An implementation plan allows for careful reflection and planning with roles, responsibilities, timeframes and evaluation processes to ensure movement in

the right direction, although it must be expected that there will be setbacks and possible hesitant participants along the way (Speck,1996). It was for these reasons that I designed my workbook into the phases and sections that I did. This resource helped me tremendously in creating structure and direction that flowed from foundational basics to functioning and evaluative. I believe that good educators are reflective by nature, but without direction, a clear path can be elusive, which is why I followed this outline.

Even though I did not get deep into the nuts and bolts of coaching in my workbook, I did refer to the four widely accepted coaching frameworks by Aguilar (2013), directive, facilitative, cognitive and transformational. The purpose of including these was for stakeholders to reflect on the benefits and drawbacks for each framework, when it would be appropriate to use them and when caution should be taken. The larger purpose of my including these was because the stakeholder's interpretation and reflection of each will greatly shape the learning culture of the program and among the teachers. How these frameworks are used can really make or break a teacher-coach relationship, and I wanted to drive this point home. This is the only specific literature that I refer to in my workbook, simply to avoid creating bias and maintain true autonomy.

My literature review greatly informed the decisions that I made while creating my workbook. Also, it supported my argument that differentiated professional development, such as instructional coaching, is far more effective than conventional professional development, both financially and in terms of teacher and student growth. While creating my workbook, I was very careful to keep the adult learner at heart while building a purposeful coaching culture in the school. The structure of my workbook was also

intentionally planned based on my literature view and the needs of stakeholders, who are all adult learners. I feel that all of the literature in my review helped to inform me in one way or another. If it did not shape the structure of my workbook, it helped me craft the content of the essential questions, learning targets and reflective questions. In the following section, I will discuss possible implications of decision makers.

Possible Implications

The main audience of my implementation workbook is leaders of the change process within a school and/or district. This can include a variety of stakeholders such as directors, principals, instructional coaches and possibly teachers; it is important to have a variety of stakeholders involved in a process of change. In order to achieve systemic, sustainable change towards improvement, according to Speck (2016), then a variety of stakeholders must be involved who understand the entire innovation and are given a chance to ask questions and provide feedback that is actually used toward creating the change process, or implementation plan. Without a plan where multiple stakeholders are involved, one single vision can be skewed and proceeded in various directions, which only creates confusion, dissatisfaction, a feeling of no direction and a loss of precious time. My implementation plan provides clear direction for involved stakeholders.

I built direction into the design of the workbook. Each phase of the workbook includes an essential question, along with a learning target for each subsequent section. Then following each learning target is a set of reflective questions and recommended action steps to help guide stakeholders in making decisions towards building, or revising,

their instructional coaching program. The timeframe of completion will vary depending on the unique needs of each school.

It was my intention to create the structure of my workbook to best guide stakeholders to make decisions through a reflective practice. In the next section of future plans, I will outline my next possible steps.

Possible Limitations

I do not believe that I have any unexpected occurrences that impacted my project.

Future Plans

It is my goal to continue developing my *Building the Foundations of a Coaching Culture* workbook beyond this Capstone course. I envision my next phase of this workbook to be the creation of an instructional coaching website. I feel that a website is the best option for publishing the implementation plan because websites are far-reaching and access is not limited. In addition, websites provide tracking tools that can be used for numerical data, but I can also gather feedback through surveys that will be invaluable for the improvement of my work.

The use and effectiveness of this workbook could open professional doors for me. As I mentioned in my learning, I would like to grow into my leadership as an educator, such as administration, consulting, or even, eventually, director. I have come to realize that my passion is the umbrella impact of larger decisions made within a school. But I fully understand that decisions create change, and change is a process that needs a foundational culture of learning and growth from all stakeholders. Building this culture is

at the heart of my passion. I look forward to the professional endeavors that result from

the creation of this workbook.

As I mentioned in my learning, this workbook can lead to many additional

projects for me, and even other researchers. It is my hope that I draw attention to the

serious importance of approaching any change as a process and the need for solid

implementation plans. The needs of students and teachers are far too important to

overlook these kinds of processes. How I distribute and gather results will have a big

impact on the potential outreach and impact of my work.

Communicating Results

In the beginning, sharing my project will rely on strong networking. I have been

fortunate to work, and become friends with, very influential people in wide reaching

national and international education communities. These colleagues have supported and

mentored me through this process, and I know that they will continue to do what they can

to make my workbook a functioning reality wherever they can.

In addition to networking, as the next phase of this project will lead me to

building a website, I will be able to distribute this workbook to a variety of schools and

consultation companies. My goal is to get this workbook in the hands of leaders in

decision making.

Not only will this website be used for distribution, but also to gather feedback to

inform the improvement of my work. For example, anyone who uses this workbook will

be asked to complete a survey in order for me to improve the structure, aesthetics and

content of my work. In addition, positive results speak for themselves, and I could build

positive testimonials into both my workbook and website. Feedback and reflection will always inform my work.

In summary, I will distribute my project through networking and the creation of a website. I will continue to improve my work by gathering feedback from surveys. I believe there are many opportunities for this work to provide a benefit in the educational profession.

Professional Benefit

In education there will always be innovation, it is the nature of the profession, no matter the position. Curriculums will evolve, new programs will be created, new environments will be suggested, and new strategies will be encouraged, just to name a few. With new innovation comes adaptation and change, with adaptation and change comes a plan of implementation. My project provides a layout that could be used for the implementation of any topic, not just instructional coaching and could be developed into many further projects. Because of this design, and necessity for creating and following plans for any innovation, I believe my project serves as a benefit to the profession because doing quality work is an expectation among all educators. My project demonstrates the importance of a well thought out plan. It begins with reflecting on the current reality of the need, like instructional coaching, and ends with evaluating the effectiveness of both the implementation plan and the program itself. Change should never be taken lightly, implemented quickly or reserved for the highest voices; any change process is only as effective as its proper implementation and dedication by a knowledgeable team

Summary

I have been an instructional coach for three years, and I love it. I believe all teachers should have access to an effective instructional coach to engage in a reflective, and differentiated learning experience. We all thrive when we feel successful. At the end of the day, it is about doing what is best for the students, and for that reason it is so important to build a safe environment and learning culture where teachers can grow their craft by taking risks and trying new things. I am fully invested in coaching and it brings me great pride when I see both teachers and students move in the direction of growth. The coach is the sand that fills the gaps between the stones and the pebbles, and it makes a difference. And even more, there is an insurmountable amount of research that supports this type of professional development. For these reasons, all teachers should have access to an effective coach.

In conclusion, I have learned a great deal during this capstone project, both personally and professionally. I feel that both my research and creation of my project have not only deepened my interest and understanding, but have also served as a catalyst to the next steps in my profession.

REFERENCES

Aguilar, E. (2013). *The art of coaching: effective strategies for school transformation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Brand.

Beavers, A. (2009). Teachers as learners: implications of adult education for professional development. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, *6*(7), 25-30.

Cox, E. (2015). Coaching and adult learning: theory and practice. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 2015, 148, 27-38. Retrieved from: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=111336396&sie=ehoT-live

DeRoche, J., Rotermund, S., & Ottem, R. (2017). Teacher professional development by selected teacher and school characteristics: 2011-12 [PDF file]. *Stats in Brief*. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017200.pdf

Great Schools Partnership. (2014). Glossary of Education Reform. Retrieved from: www.edglossary.org

Hirsh, S. (2007). Developing a staff of learners. NSDC standards and tools help strengthen professional development, 2007, XIX(1). Retrieved from: http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v19n01/nsdc-standards-tools.html

Knight, D. (2010). The economic cost of instructional coaching [PDF file]. Retrieved from:https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/7735/Knight_ku_0099M_1244_ATA_1.pdf;sequence=1

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: a partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: NSDC.

Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2014). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Amsterdam: Elsevier. Retrieved from: https://books.google.com/books?id=1 We2BQAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&lr&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false

Nixon-Ponder, S. (1995). Eduard C. Lindeman, leaders in the field of adult education [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED380667.pdf

Odden, A., Archibald, S., Fermanich, M., & Gallagher, H. A. (2002). A cost framework for professional development [PDF file]. *Journal of Education Finance*, 28, 51-74. Retrieved from: http://outlier.uchicago.edu/computerscience/OS4CS/ landscapestudy/resources/Odden-Achibald-Fermanich-and-Gallagher-2002.pdf

Rice, J. K. (2001). Cost framework for teacher preparation and professional development [PDF file]. *Finance Project.* Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED472668.pdf

Speck, M. (1996). The change process in a school learning community [PDF file]. *School Community Journal, 6, 69-79.* Retrieved from: http://www.adi.org/journal/ss96/speckspring1996.pdf

Sweeney, D. (2013). *Student-centered coaching at the secondary Level*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The Mirage: Confronting the hard truth about our quest for teacher development (2015). Retrieved from: https://tntp.org/assets/documents/ TNTP-Mirage_2015.pdf

Tomlinson, C. A., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimijoin,

    K., Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student

    readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: a

    review of literature [PDF file]. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *27*(2),

    119–145. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ787917.pdf

Trotter, Y. D. (2006). Adult Learning Theories: Impacting Professional Development

    Programs. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *72*(2). Retrieved from:

    http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/nmsmithpages/irex2012/Readings/Susan/Susan%20

    Turner20Reading%201.pdf.

US Department of Education. (2018). Every student succeeds act. Retrieved from:

    https://www.ed.gov/essa