BETWEEN THE SPACES: INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES NEGOTIATING

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STUDY

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my two dads. Skip, my natural father, introduced me to the world of academia and the excitement of being in a space of discourse as a little girl shortly before his death. My adopted father, Joel, saw something in a sixteen year old girl that was worth wanting to be her father and chose me as his daughter. He has been an inspiration in my life, never letting me forget through the good times, bad times and nearly impossible times, that I can meet any challenge. He has supported me on my life journey and I am truly thankful.

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reignite my inner passion for social justice. I hope to always be able to keep that passion

alive. Dr. Nelson, my chair, has taught me so much, including how to be brave. I will

forever be in her debt. She is my hero.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Descriptions
AP	Assistant Principal
IC	Instructional Coach
PLC	Professional Leaning Community
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

ABSTRACT

Instructional coaches have become important to bringing embedded professional

development into schools as a response to school improvement (Anderson, 2009). The

literature reveals that instructional coaches can support teachers as they implement new

strategies (Killion, Harrison, Braun, & Clifton, 2012). The literature further supports that

the changes in teacher strategies may increases student achievement (Kretlow &

Bartholomew, 2010). However, there is limited research on the self-perception of coaches

in their role for school improvement. The instructional coach is unique because the

instructional coach occupies the space between administrators and teachers. This general

qualitative study uses a post-structural theoretical framework to analyze the perceptions

of instructional coaches and the work they do. Using in-depth interviewing, an online

discussion forum and a focus group, issues of power and positioning of self within the

system will be explored. Six female instructional coaches were interviewed, three

participated in the online discussion forum, and two participated in a focus group to

uncover their stories about coaching. The research questions were how do instructional

coaches negotiate the space between administrators and teachers? How do instructional

coaches position themselves within school improvement efforts? What forms of power

and influence do instructional coaches perceive they have? In what ways do instructional

coaches navigate the political structures of the school system? This study supports the

work of instructional coaches within the school improvement process by revealing how

these instructional coaches perceive power in the relationships with teachers and

administrators. A conceptual framework of the instructional coaches as landscaper is

explored to explain the work of the instructional coach through a post-structuralist frame.

I.   INTRODUCTION

In early summer 2007, I attended a multi-day professional development workshop led by Jim Knight, considered by many to be a leading expert on instructional coaching. This workshop was my introduction to instructional coaching. Although, in my position as a classroom teacher, I had worked with district coaches for several years, I did not understand their work as change agents until this training. Nonetheless, by the end of that summer, I was an instructional coach for the school district. Before this workshop, I had no intention to ever leave the classroom because I loved working with the students and helping them make sense of math. I knew I was a successful middle and high school math teacher, helping both students who struggled and those who excelled to reach deeper levels of mathematical thinking. By moving into a coaching position, I hoped I could influence other teachers to be successful with all of their math students. What I had not anticipated was the level of influence I would have with administrators in the system. As an instructional coach I found myself side-by-side with leaders helping to influence systemic change within schools. I began to wonder if other instructional coaches shared my experience.

The educational system often gets in the way of focusing on students when initiative after initiative is introduced, never fully implementing one before moving on to the next (Fullan, 2008). Knight (2007) refers to this process as, "adopt, attack, and abandon" (p. 200). Initiatives are adopted, implanted to some level, with or without fidelity, then before the program can be fully implemented, it is attacked for its shortcomings and lack of effectiveness. This leads to abandoning the initiative when the next innovation comes along and the cycle continues. Reeves (2009) contends,

"Educators are drowning under the weight of initiative fatigue-attempting to use the same amount of time, money, and emotional energy to accomplish more and more objectives" (p. 14). For many educators, the addition of instructional coaches is just another initiative to add to the previous ones which failed (Knight, 2009b), leading them to be skeptical of instructional coaches and their place within school improvement. Adding to teachers' skepticism, the current wave of instructional coaching emerged in response to the increased need for schools to perform well on high stakes testing (Anderson, 2009).

Instructional coaches play a unique role in schools: they are neither administrators nor classroom teachers (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Killion and Harrison (2006) explain, "[Coaches] facilitate teachers' thinking, planning, adapting, and personalizing new learning. They bring teachers together to share, reflect, revise, and offer feedback. They facilitate communities of practice. They expand the principal's capacity to be instructional leaders" (p. 19). This places the coach in the middle between teachers and principals, leading learning with both. Because coaches play a leadership role in schools, I consider them a type of educational leader. Therefore, although the term educational leader is often used when referring to formal leadership positions such as principal, and assistant principal, for the purposes of this study, I will use the term administrator when referring to these positions.

Much of the research on coaching is centered on how coaches support change in the use of instructional strategies and in student achievement (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2012; Rock & Young, 2011; Vanderburg and Stephens, 2010). This body of research suggests coaches can best implement change when they work with teachers to implement proven teaching strategies (Knight, 2005).

However, Coburn and Woulfin (2012) caution the change may be slow and gradual, implying that coaching is not a quick fix. Further, Fullan and Knight (2011) argue coaches need to be more than just the givers of new strategies, coaches should be concerned with "capacity building, teamwork, pedagogy and systematic reform" (p. 50). According to Brady (2007)

> Coaches and their principals must be ahead of the curve in learning how to help a teacher in a nonthreatening way to dissect a lesson and promote internal reflection and problem solving. The goal is to build teachers' capacity to analyze what they are doing in the classroom so they can expand on what works and change what doesn't. (p. 48)

However, for instructional coaches to build teacher capacity, the coach must also work with administrators to support teachers and their campus focus for improvement.

Statement of the Problem

As schools have faced increasing pressure to improve, instructional coaching has emerged as a strategy to enhance instructional practice and, in turn, increase student achievement (Anderson, 2009; Barkley, 2011; Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010; Knight, 2011a; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Anderson (2009) asserts, "the current reform movement has added new external forms of accountability including high stakes testing, the discipline of the market, school reconstitution, and the threat of public humiliation if annual targets are not achieved" (p. 12). This pressure on schools has led to increased pressure on instructional coaches to implement change (Anderson, 2009).

To meet the needs for schools to improve instruction, instructional coaches have

emerged as a way to provide sustained professional development for teachers and principals hoping this form of professional development will improve instruction (Knight, 2011a; Barkley, 2011). Not only do instructional coaches work with teachers to improve classroom instruction, instructional coaches have an important role in today's educational system as a liaison between classroom teachers and administrators (central office and campus) (Fullan & Knight, 2011). However, for instructional coaching to be an effective approach within school improvement systems, it is important for the roles and expectations between instructional coaches, teachers and administrators to be clearly defined (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Once the roles are defined, the shared vision for the improvement of the school can begin to be implemented. Instructional coaches in and of themselves are not what will lead to improvement in schools, but it is important that it is good coaching (Fullan & Knight, 2011).

This study is designed to explore the relationships between instructional coaches and administrators, as well as the relationships between the instructional coaches and teachers. Examining how instructional coaches work to influence change within the school and district by understanding the space they occupy, provides a deeper understanding of the work of instructional coaches.

In the school system, women traditionally maintain the place of teacher and follower, while school leaders are more often assumed to be males (Blackmore, 1997; Marshall & Young, 2013). For this reason, the role of teacher is coded female and the role of leader is coded male (Blackmore, 1997). The instructional coach occupies the space between these two gendered roles. Since the majority of instructional coaches are female (J. Knight, personal communication, September, 24, 2013), they must negotiate

the gendered space, working with others in female roles (teachers) and with those in male roles (leaders) (Wallin, 2001). In working in these relationships, some societal expectations, such as women are suited to be teachers because their nature is to care for children (Freedman, 2002), may be challenged (Wallin, 2001). Similarly, traditional roles, such as males being rational problem solvers, may be questioned by female coaches who are positioned in subservient roles (Zhu, 2011). In this way, instructional coaches balance a fine distinction between school administrators and teachers working to influence change within a system that is male dominant using the female voice of coaches. Although in the educational system there is a notion often taken-for-granted that, "men manage and women teach" (Blackmore, 1997, p. 443), women are the face of education (Marshall & Young, 2011). Freedman (2002) explains, "both male and female workers bring their deeply internalized understandings of proper gender role to the job" (p. 94). These gender dynamics create a complicated space within which instructional coaches work.

Therefore there are three players within schools' formal instructional coaching model with a focus towards student achievement: instructional coaches, principals, and teachers. In each of these relationships, gender and power play a part and occupy a space for coaches to negotiate.

The Role of Instructional Coaches

Anderson (2009) argues instructional coaches are a quick response to accountability systems of the 21st century, implying that they are seen as a quick fix. Fullan and Knight (2011) suggest that, "next to principals, instructional coaches are the most critical change agent in the school" (p. 50). This implies that the coach can

implement change, but perhaps it is not a quick fix to the educational problems of today. For instructional coaching to be effective, it is important for all the players in the coaching relationship to understand the purpose and possibilities of coaching (Barkley, 2011).

Traditionally, instructional coaches have worked with individual teachers in what Knight (2011a) refers to as a bottom up approach, positioning the coach in a space where they work with teachers who choose to work with a coach. Many instructional coaching programs position coaches to work with teachers in need (Barkley, 2011); however, when instructional coaches work with teachers who want to work with the coach, the instructional coach proves to be more effective (Knight, 2007). Knight (2007) refers to this work as enrolling teachers into the coaching model. A growing body of literature suggests this bottom up approach can positively affect teachers' use of instructional strategies (Killion, Harrison, Braun, & Clifton, 2012; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Marsh, et al., 2012). There is less evidence connecting this approach to a measurable increase in student achievement (Vanderburg and Stephens, 2010).

Because there is limited evidence that instructional coaches working with a bottom up approach are positively affecting student achievement, some have argued for new models which place the coach in the space between teachers and administrators, thereby positioning the coach to support systemic improvement (Knight, 2011a). Fullan and Knight (2011) refer to this as a bottom up and top down model. The coach is positioned in the space between, expected to influence the practices of the teacher as well as the decisions of administrators. School district leaders have latched onto these newer models and are increasingly looking to instructional coaching as a means of improving

student achievement.

With the emergence of newer coaching models in response to pressures being placed on schools, how do instructional coaches conceptualize their work? Barkley (2011) and Knight (2011a), two of the most prominent scholars writing about instructional coaching, offer distinct conceptualizations of instructional coaches. Barkley (2011) visualizes the instructional coach as a circus performer simultaneously spinning multiple elevated plates representing the varied job duties of coaches such as modeling lessons, facilitating professional learning communities, working with principals, and presenting staff development workshops. Barkley's model suggests coaches have a high degree of autonomy within the system and can determine which plate to attend to at any given time. Barkley's model also focuses on the technical aspects of coaching. From his metaphor, the coach is working in isolation manipulating people as though they are spinning plates.

Fullan and Knight (2011) imagine the instructional coach as a dancer who moves between principal to district administrators to teachers and back again, suggesting a fluidity of movement which facilitates collaboration. In this model, the coach is in a relationship with their *dancing partner*, a shared relationship.

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) have added to the coaching metaphors suggesting coaches are "whisperers" (p. 27), much like a horse or dog whisperer. They explain that a horse whisperer does not think about "helping the horse. They rather understand themselves as connecting and communicating with the horse on such a deep level as to evoke transformation" (p. 27). Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) assert *whispering* is not a given talent, but is a set of skills that can be

developed over time. Whispering is a state of mind where the connection is the most important skill that coaches bring to coaching.

Each model positions instructional coaches as a bridge between leaders and teachers within school improvement efforts. While these models may be useful in conceptualizing instructional coaches as working in the space between, these models do not explain how instructional coaches go about their work nor do they highlight challenges instructional coaches encounter. In fact, these models seem to suggest a sort of easiness and clarity to the position, just keep dancing, spinning plates or whispering and deep sustained transformation will occur. There is little empirical evidence to document whether instructional coaches view their roles this way or whether the conditions allowing, or requiring, them to work as depicted in the models actually exist in schools. Further, none of these models account for the issue of gender and how gender plays a role in the coaching relationship.

Coaching is, in fact, a complex and often messy position (Psencik, 2011). Teachers are often unclear about the roles and responsibility of instructional coaches (Murphy, 2009), which leads them to think of coaching as an easy job with a great deal of autonomy. Similarly, administrators often do not know how best to use instructional coaches (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Coaches themselves are often unclear about the expectations of the job (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Because the role of instructional coach is often ill defined, the effectiveness of coaching is difficult to assess.

Instructional coaches are neither administrator nor teachers, but often work as a liaison between the two. Killion, et al. (2012) explain, "[Coaches] are the intermediaries between administrators who expect high-level student results and the teachers who must

bring about those results" (p. 9). This positioning of coaches places them in a unique space where they must work in both a top-down and bottom-up approach (Fullan & Knight, 2011). The coach must play the distinct role of supporting both teachers and administrators (Barkley, 2011; Knight, 2011a; Poglinco & Bach, 2004).

Working in this space between requires careful negotiation to prevent coaches from being seen as quasi administrators inspecting the work of teachers, or as teacher protectors interfering with improvement initiatives of the principal (Yager, Pederson, Yager, & Noppe, 2011-2012). Killion and Harrison (2006) submit the district-specific view of instructional coaches can make or break the instructional coaching program. When coaches are valued, their work can focus on student achievement and instructional improvement can be achieved (Killion & Harrison, 2006). In environments where coaches have undefined roles and little training or direction, instructional coaching will be ineffective.

Often coaches do their work without the benefit of professional development in adult learning or educational leadership. Instructional coaches are frequently plucked from the classroom and placed in coaching positions with little background or guidance on how to do the job (Fullan & Knight, 2011). With little or no training in the day-to-day skills necessary to be an effective coach, it is unlikely issues of power are ever addressed with coaches as they work with teachers and administrators. Looking at the history of education, coaching has been part of the educational system since Joyce and Showers introduced peer coaching in the 1980s (Showers & Joyce, 1996) and in a sense when Goldhammer and Cogan introduced the clinical supervision cycle in the 1960s (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Over the years, instructional coaching has appeared in many forms,

adding to the problem of understanding how instructional coaches fit into the educational system. There are unclear roles and responsibilities for the coach as well as a lack of understanding about the purpose of instructional coaches (Borman & Feger, 2006). With this lack of role definition for instructional coaches, it is difficult for teachers to transition to the coaching position.

Coaching adults requires different skills than teaching children (Murphy, 2009). Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for a teacher to be in the classroom one day and made an instructional coach the next (Barkley, 2011; Murphy, 2009). Marsh, et al. (2012) explain there is little to no research on how instructional coaches learn what they know about coaching, but that coaching can build school leadership capacity.

For any initiative to be implemented it is necessary for it to be done with fidelity, this is especially true with instructional coaches. Coaches are often asked to do non coaching jobs when there is a lack of clarity regarding their role (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) explain the fine line that coaches walk.

> There is more human resource support for teachers these days. Teachers are no longer on their own, and when they struggle, there are mentors and coaches to help them. But when programs are mandated inflexibly, coaches can quickly turn into compliance officers, and mentors into tormentors. (p. 43)

Dufour & Eaker (1998) assert the educational system of today still reflects the factory model of the nineteenth century. In this model, the focus of schools is on structures, such as rules about the amount of time for each class, and isolating teachers as they plan and deliver instruction. Therefore, for years, teachers worked in isolation, so learning to collaborate is new for many teachers. Reeves (2009) posits effective collaboration is not

easy for teachers. Reeves (2009) further suggests collaboration is neither natural nor enjoyable, so it must be supported by both principals and coaches.

Instructional coaches occupy a space within the educational reform system between teachers and administrators (Barkley, 2011; Fullan & Knight, 2011; Murphy, 2009). This provides opportunity for coaches to influence both teachers and district policy makers. West and Cameron (2013) view coaching as a dual function role, influencing change with classroom teachers and their practices as well as modeling a leadership role, working in partnership with principals.

The Role of the Principal

Principals are expected to be the instructional leader and also the manager of the school (Reeves, 2009). Elmore (2000) describes the role of the principal, as the instructional leader of a campus, as the "holy grail" (p. 7) of the principal, although most principals are not prepared to be instructional leaders. If principals need to be the instructional leaders as well as managers of the school, can they do all those jobs in an effective manner? Anderson (2009) asserts that today's principals need to act more like Masters of Business Administration (MBAs) than instructional leaders. Anderson (2009) further suggests principals need to be advocacy leaders, that is, leaders who work in multiple levels, always focusing on what is best for students. However, this seems to move the principal to the level of hero, the savior of the school, creating a learning environment for all students and increasing test scores.

Principals as hero. Heroes have historically been constructed as male, sweeping in and saving the day (Binns, 2008). Because of this, there is an association of maleness with the role of principal as hero (Binns, 2008). Even when a female occupies the role of

principal, they often take on traits associated with maleness. Ciolac (2013) explains, "women who reach top positions in the organization adopt a male model in their attitude and approach, striving for acknowledgement and success. Their feminine attitude is left aside" (p. 58).

Sanchez and Thornton (2010) state because the characteristics of leaders are often associated with maleness, there are often more leadership possibilities for men. They conclude, "in the workplace, and specifically in public schools, the stereotypical frames of effective leaders have worked against aspiring female leaders" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 4). The transition from classroom teacher to leadership positions within a school can be difficult for many female leaders because it requires a different skill set (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). According to Schuch, et al. (2014), female leaders' skills include being supportive, communal, empathic, and gentle, whereas, male leaders are described as assertive, dominant, competitive, and controlling.

Principals as instructional leader. West and Cameron (2013) found that although principals are expected to be the instructional leaders on their campus, they have too many responsibilities to also coach teachers, as well. Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013) conducted a longitudinal study of 100 urban principals for three years, collecting data person-to-person, and through full day observations of the principals. They found a positive correlation between student learning and principals who coached individual teachers; however, they also found this was what principals spent the least amount of time doing. Walkthroughs and informal classroom observations, which were a more common use of the principals' time, were negatively correlation to student achievement. This study concluded it was not that the principals did not have the time to coach

teachers, but more likely, they lacked the skills or desire to coach.

It is naïve of administrators or district leaders to think that just putting people into coaching positions will create change (Killion, et al., 2012; Knight, 2011b). As Knight (2005) explains, "if principals and other decision makers do not understand exemplary coaching practices, they risk spending precious dollars on instructional coaching programs that have little or no effect on student achievement" (p. 16). Therefore, it is important for principals to understand and support the role of the instructional coach.

The Role of the Teachers

Many teachers today are experiencing a changing teaching environment with changes in standards, accountability, and student demographics (Sergiovanni, Starratt, & Cho, 2014). Administration is focused on student achievement and often blames teachers for the educational gap (Sergiovanni, et al., 2014). This is the environment in which instructional coaches must work with teachers. Brady (2007) explains, "coaches must demonstrate that they know how adults learn, give colleagues time to process new information, and resist sending the message that someone is trying to 'fix' them" (p. 47). Knight (2011b) suggests coaches help teachers to identify goals, working with data, and it is important the coach does not go into classrooms with their own set of pre-determined goals. Coaches should do what is necessary to make implementing new techniques as easy as possible. This may include prepping materials to be used (Knight, 2005). Brady (2007) explains:

> Coaches and their principals must be ahead of the curve in learning how to help a
> teacher in a nonthreatening way to dissect a lesson and promote internal reflection
> and problem solving. The goal is to build teachers' capacity to analyze what they

are doing in the classroom so they can expand on what works and change what

doesn't. (p. 48)

This last part is critical, to recognize what works and to expand on that. When teachers

feel what they do is not recognized as being student centered, they will resist all change

(Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011).

Coaches, principals, and teachers all play a role in school improvement, with the

coach occupying the space between, neither administrator nor teacher. In a time where

test scores define the success of a school, it is important for instruction to be effective for

all students. This environment has specifically precipitated the implementation of

instructional coaching. As instructional coaches work to influence change issues of power

arise over how coaches negotiate the space between administrators and teachers. Binns

(2008) explains, "if power is an inevitable part of the fabric of relationships, it is

important to understand how it operates in the leadership context with what effects" (p.

602). She further suggests, "it is important to look at relational power through a gender

lens" (p. 602).

Purpose of the Study

Due to an increase in instructional coaches and the potential for them to influence

school improvement, it is important to understand how instructional coaches perceive

their role in the school improvement process. If coaches do not believe they can

implement change, or it is not their responsibility to implement school-wide or district-

wide change, can they ever be effective? This study examined how instructional coaches

understand and conceptualize their role and how they negotiated the space between

teachers and administrators to affect systemic school improvement. Given that 90% of

instructional coaches are women (J. Knight, personal communication, September, 24, 2013); gender must be in the center of any examination of the work of instructional coaches. As such, this study drew from post-structural feminist theory to explore issues of power, efficacy, and self-positioning among instructional coaches.

Instructional coaching helps to make change over time, it is not a quick fix because it only works when the relationships have been established (Knight, 2005). Hull, Balka, and Miles (2010) explain, "Coaches must remember that change takes positive pressure and support and that it occurs over time. Without positive pressure, time and support, teachers will quickly forget or ignore new strategies in the hectic pace of day-to-day teaching" (p. 42). Coaching is not about just establishing relationships and hoping for change, it is about creating relationships so that trust is established and change becomes a possibility. This study explored how instructional coaches explained their work in order to understand how instructional coaches see themselves in the change process of school improvement.

Theoretical Framework

Post-structural feminism asserts the roles of men and women in society are socially constructed (Marshall & Young, 2013; St. Pierre, 2000). Post-structuralism, as defined by Caplan (1989), "is a theory, or bundle of theories and intellectual practices, that derives from a creative engagement with its 'predecessor,' structuralism" (p. 265). Post-structuralism rejects the closed system of structuralism and embraces an open system where truth can be known not because you are in a privileged position, but because truth is open to all (Caplan, 1989).

Drawing from the work of Foucault, St. Pierre (2000) suggests working from a

post-structural position is difficult work because it requires us to "think differently" (p. 478). This work requires looking at the familiar with a different lens. If we accept that the gender roles of society are constructed, then they can be both deconstructed and reconstructed (St. Pierre). However, St. Pierre (2000) suggests that because post-structural feminism is a response to humanism, or what we consider natural, it is important to recognize societal constructions, particularly binaries, so they can be disrupted. Binaries inherently privilege someone over the other (St. Pierre, 2000). St. Pierre (2000) explains:

> Since women are usually on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies, feminists have troubled these structures that often brutalize women. For instance, feminists believe that the first term in binaries such as culture/nature, mind/body, rational/irrational, subject/object is male and privilege and the second term is female and disadvantages. (p. 481)

This binary can also apply to administrators/teachers within the school system (Blackmore, 1997). Martin (1990) discusses the male/female binary as the public/private dichotomy. She explains that public is male, such as the principal or leader of the school and private is female, such as the teacher in her classroom with the door closed.

This study precedes using post-structuralist feminist philosophy insofar as this study assumes inherent issues of power in every relationship (Blackmore, 2013). Further, the study is predicated on a notion of a power that is not fixed, but rather a power which flows between participants and is ever changing (St. Pierre, 2000). English and Irving (2008) explain, "post-structuralism provides us with the conceptual tools to address power, discourse, and knowledge in the research process" (p. 270). Using the post-

structural feminist lens, this study will examine how power circulates among the coach, administrators, and teachers. The language used by the participants and their stories will be deconstructed, which is "a method of reading that not only exposes the limitations or inconsistencies of any particular set of conceptual oppositions and priorities in a text, but also shows how the text's attempt to maintain this system undermines the very principles of its own operation" (Caplan, 1989, p. 267). St. Pierre (2000) clarifies, "Feminists and others representing disadvantaged groups use post-structural critiques of language, particularly deconstruction, to make visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world" (p. 481). "Deconstruction is not about tearing down but about rebuilding; it is not about pointing out an error but about looking at how a structure has been constructed, what holds it together, what is produces" (p. 482).

When we interact with one another, what we know changes as we reflect on what we know, examine our beliefs and change what we believe. This interaction with each other allows for knowledge to be co-constructed between learners when they exchange ideas (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and engage in dialogue (Isaacs, 1999). Freire (1998) explains that knowledge is created when we talk and listen to each other and when the positioning of oneself is in relationship to another. Knight (2011b) suggests dialogue is necessary for the best ideas to be realized. The concept of being in relationship and in dialogue is essential to any coaching model, whether it is Knight's (2007) partnership principles, Barkley's (2011) coaching with the end in mind, or Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran's (2010) evocative coaching. However, none of the models account for the influence of gender in the coaching relationship and none of these models considers

how language is used to structure work among teachers, coaches, and administrators.

According to Blackmore (1997), gender issues in education may have changed, but they have not been eliminated. In a system where leadership is identified as male and teaching identified as female (Blackmore, 1997), issues of gender inequities can arise in the relationships between coaches and administration. Binns (2008) asserts when there is relational power, it is important to look at the relationship with a gender lens.

There are several underlying assumptions of post-structural feminism that I bring to this study based on the work of Blackmore (1997), Binns, (2008), Lather (1992), St. Pierre (2000), Wallin (2001) and Zhu (2011).

- In any human relationship, gender influences the relationship.

- Power is flexible and can move between the people in the relationship.

- Administrators historically are associated with being male; whereas, teachers and coaches are predominantly women creating a structure based on a binary which needs to be disrupted.

- Because of the influence by society on gender issues, some women do not acknowledge, understand, or identify power as it is associated with gender.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe two types of power, "power over" and "power with" (p. 49). Coaches would benefit from understanding the difference in these two powers so that they can position themselves to operate from the "power with." Understanding the differences in these two powers allows for coaches to reframe their role as working with teachers, so they can move on to become system leaders. However, society has positioned power as "power over." In order to affect systemic change, instructional coaches must move beyond gender boundaries and use the power of this in-

between space to facilitate the pushes and pulls of change. This study will explore whether and how the instructional coaches understand positions of power within their relationships with teachers and administrators.

St. Pierre (2000) suggests that not applying a post-structural feminist view of the world, accepting the world as it is, allows the responsibility for socially constructed gender roles to be placed elsewhere and allows society to avoid any responsibility for implementing change. The metanarrative of schools assigns power to the administrators within the school. When instructional coaches accept this narrative, they may be unwilling to question the authority of the principal, and yet, challenging administrators' thinking may be necessary to affect change and school improvement (Berg, Bosch, & Souvanna, 2013; Pankake & Moller, 2007). As West and Cameron (2013) explain:

> A coach can really assist a principal in her role as instructional leader, but only if the principal is willing to see the coach as a partner rather than a subordinate, and recognize the potential influence a coach can have on the faculty. If the principal is willing to learn from and with the coach she will gain the respect of the staff and simultaneously make a strong statement about the importance of being coached. (p. 51)

This need to question, as well as listen to, administrators may be challenging for female coaches who have been raised in a society where males who have the power should not be challenged (Berg, et al., 2013). Clifford (2002) points out, "Many women spend much of their time trying to figure out what other people want of them" (p. 16). This positioning of women as *pleasers* within the relationship may influence how coaches interact with others. Zhu (2011) explains:

From childhood, girls are told by their parents to behave like ladies. There're

many rules and restrictions imposed upon them such as the way they speak, dress

and so on. The little girl from early age had become conscious of what a good girl

should be like although she doesn't know the conception of 'women stereotypes'.

In people's eyes, women should be attractive, docile and compliant. More

importantly, women should be very polite, because they are the preservers of

morality and civility. They should be at home and take on the supportive and

caring roles as wives and mothers. (p. 614)

Instructional coaches need to be aware of stereotypes associated with women in order to

understand their place between administrators and teachers.

Knight (2011b) explains when we just tell people what to do, we are not really

influencing systemic change, we are actually dehumanizing the educational system. He

believes humility needs to return to the educational reform process. All parties in school

reform need to have a voice and be aware of the voices of others. Instructional coaching

positions the coach in a place where he or she could have power over the teacher when

the teacher sees the coach in a position of power (Fullan & Knight, 2011). All coaching

models acknowledge the relationships between the coach and the teacher are critical for

the process to be successful. Knight (2011a) suggests, "people will not embrace learning

with us unless they're comfortable working with us" (p. 22). Knight (2011a) explains

although coaches listen to the teacher's opinions or strategies, coaches also offer their

own opinions and do not just sit quietly as teachers explore instructional options.

However, there are other players in the systems who are important for instructional

coaches to work with in order to impact change. Coaches need to work with principals to

establish the focus of the change within the school (Knight, 2005).

Sergiovanni (2007) suggests, "whenever there is an unequal distribution of power between two people the relationship becomes a moral one" (p. 23). Both of these thoughts bring out issues of feminism. Women's voices are often silenced in the workplace, so it is a struggle for women to share their voice in school reform (Skrla, Reyes, & Scheurich, 2000). Then there is the issue of power. If as a society we are not willing to acknowledge there is a male dominance of power over women (hooks, 2000), then women coaches will always struggle for their position within the educational system.

St. Pierre (2000) argues the work of post-structural feminism is a difficult task because the structures around us support the binary.

> The language, practice, and effects of humanism have been operating for centuries, envelop us every moment, and have become 'natural.' Humanism is the air we breathe, the language we speak, the shape of our homes we live in, the relations we are able to have with others, the politics we practice, the map that locates us on the earth, the futures we can imagine, the limits of our pleasures. Humanism is everywhere overwhelming in its totality; and since it is so 'natural,' it is difficult to watch it work. (p. 478)

In order to do post-structural feminist work, one must not accept what is considered natural, but must, instead, deeply examine the structure.

Women's Ways of Knowing

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule (1986) conducted the seminal study on how women know. They were the first to question that perhaps women learned

differently than men in society.

> We believe that conceptions of knowledge and truth are accepted and articulated
>
> today have been shaped throughout history by the male-dominated majority
>
> culture. Drawing on their own perspectives and visions, men have constructed the
>
> prevailing theories, written history, and set values that have become guiding
>
> principles for men and women alike. (p. 5)

They researched 135 women to help understand how women learn and construct their own knowledge. From their research, Belenky, et al. (1986) concluded there were five categories which could classify women's ways of knowing: silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge. As they describe these five categories, they imply a hierarchy with silence being the least empowering for women and constructed knowledge as the most empowering. Silence is used to describe women who are powerless and dependent on men. This silence is isolating for women. Received knowledge occurs when women learn by listening, but have a limited voice. Belenky, et al. (1986) state:

> While received knowers can be very open to take in what others have to offer,
>
> they have little confidence in their own ability to speak. Believing that truth
>
> comes from others, they still their own voice to hear the voices of others. (p. 37)

Belenky, et al. (1986) divide subjective knowledge into two parts, first is inner voice, followed by the quest for self. When women transform to subjective knowledge they start to listen to their inner voice:

> Although they have not yet realized the power of their own minds, and are
>
> reluctant to generalize from their experience to advise others, they begin to feel

that they can rely on their experience and, "what feels right" to them as an

important asset in making decisions for themselves. (p. 61)

Belenky, et al. assert after the women listen to their inner voice, they start to gain a voice.

They may not use the voice, but they begin to recognize they may have a voice. Belenky,

et al. (1986) explain, "subjectivist women value what they see and hear around them and

begin to feel a need to understand the people with whom they live and who impinge on

their lives" (p. 85-86). Moving from subjective knowledge is a change to procedural

knowledge. This change is from the intuitive to a rational voice. They share, "truth is not

immediately accessible, that you cannot 'just know.' Things are not always what they

seem to be. Truth lies hidden beneath the surface, and you must ferret it out. Knowing

requires careful observation and analysis" (93-94).

As with the subjective knowledge, Belenky, et al. (1986) divide procedural

knowledge into two parts, separate and connected knowing. They compare separate

knowledge to subjective knowledge by saying, "separate knowing is in a sense the

opposite of subjectivism. While subjectivists assume that everyone is right, separate

knowers assume that everyone – including themselves – may be wrong" (p. 104).

Connected knowledge is more focused on the emotional compared to the separate which

is very pragmatic. Belenky, et al (1986) share:

Connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other people's

knowledge. At the heart of these procedures is the capacity for empathy. Since

knowledge comes from experience, the only way they can hope to understand

another person's ideas is to try to share the experience. (p. 113)

The final category is constructed knowledge where women integrate the voices

and construct their own knowledge. The women in the Belenky, et al. study seemed to understand knowledge is related to the context so the knowledge is ever changing. Once the women reached this level of knowledge, many of them became action oriented in their lives. Nonetheless, Belenky, et al. also found that no matter the level a woman attained in gaining knowledge, her voice was often silenced. "Even among women who feel they have found their voice, problems with voice abound. Some women told us, in anger and frustration, how frequently they felt unheard and unheeded – both at home and at work" (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 146). While the idea of a monolithic way of women's knowing has been critiqued (Barbor, 2004), the notion that women may have different ways of knowing is an important one. This study uses women's voices, expressing how they understand their work, to probe for deeper understanding of women who coach.

The History of Gender Roles in Education

Blount (2000) explains the role of teachers was a male role prior to the mid-1880s when the balance between male and female teachers began shifting to a female majority. This transition in roles reflected changes in society (Blount, 2000). Although society did not want women working outside of the home, with the expansion of public schools, women were needed to fill the role of teacher (Blount, 2000). The expectation of women as teachers was they would teach for a few years, then marry and return home (Blount, 2000). Teaching was seen as preparation for motherhood (Blount, 2000). Women who remained single and continued in the role of teacher were viewed with skepticism, as were males who wanted to teach young children (Blount, 2000). These worries about the morals of single women and effeminate men, as the men teachers were seen at the time, prompted society's acceptance of married women as teachers (Blount, 2000). Post WWII,

the roles of men and women in education became more polarized with the role of teacher

becoming primarily associated with women and administration with men (Blount, 2000).

Men went into teaching only as a means of being promoted to administrator, with the

most superior of men becoming superintendents (Blount, 2000). This history has created

a binary within the educational structure. Once this structure is identified, it is time to

disrupt the binary by deconstructing the very structure that created the binary.

The Silencing of Women

Society often views power issues as male/female with male power being

characterized as rational and female power being characterized as emotional (Blackmore,

2013). Blackmore (2013) argues that for researchers to understand the place of gender

within the educational system, what needs to be identified are "the social relations of

gender and how these are reproduced/produced and constituted within globalized school

systems" (Blackmore, 2013, p. 149). Within the system, women are silenced (Freedman,

2002) and the silence starts both in the classroom and home (hooks, 2000). Skrla, et al.

(2000) explains, "this silencing has been effectively accomplished that it is itself invisible

to the vast majority of those who work in educational settings; teachers, administrators,

principals, superintendents, board members, professors, administrative students, etc." (p.

613). Freedman (2002) explains:

> While not all cultures value women's silence, the tradition still influences much
>
> of the English-speaking world. In the United States, for example, boys and men
>
> still speak more often than do girls and women. Scholars who observe and
>
> quantify conversations find that men talk more often than women. Although
>
> women speak more in informal settings, such as with friends or at home, men are

more likely to dominate formal conversations, at school or at work. (p. 307)

Wallin (2001) states, "the unequal treatment of women is structural and is embedded within the system" (p. 39).

The silencing of women advances the social construction of gender roles and defines the language used by society (Zhu, 2011). Language and the way in which we frame images reflect the perceptions of society (Zhu, 2011), such as the term "mentoring." Bona, Rinehart and Volbrecht (1995) argue that mentoring is associated with a relationship between two men, such as a "professor and graduate student" (p. 118). Bona, et al. (1995) further posit that when women move into mentoring roles, they are actually perceived as nurturing, not mentoring. If mentoring is reframed to be "co-mentoring" (p. 119) Bona, et al. (1995) suggest a reconstruction of the relationship to one "as nonhierarchical" (p. 119). They explain adding "co" to the term mentoring does sound awkward and implies a "lack of words that are not hierarchical and dichotomous" (p. 119). Although their research is almost ten years old, one does wonder if the role of gender has changed that much in educational systems.

The Positioning of Power

Gender relationships can create a barrier between administrators and coaches (Blackmore, 1997). Bolman and Deal (2008) discuss the frames of organization, the mental models inherent within an organization, where each member of the organization brings to the organization his/her own frame. Since the majority of coaches have risen from the position of teacher, it is likely they bring their teacher frame with them. The frame may likely be one of the principal (male) as the ultimate authority and the teacher (female) as subservient to the leader. Principals and coaches need to work together;

however, some coaches are not as comfortable working with administration (Fullan & Knight, 2011).

Barkley's (2011) description of a coach as a circus performer spinning plates is illustrated by a male circus performer. This metaphor places the instructional coach in a technical frame, interacting with the spinning plates, not with other humans. There is a lack of relationship in this model. Fullan and Knight (2011) suggest a dance metaphor, implying the coach is part of the systemic change within the educational system, moving between partners, at times leading and other times being led. Do women who are coaching everyday identify with either of these models? Do women see themselves changing dance partners? As a society, women have been taught to follow the lead, not to take the lead. Pankake and Moller (2007) suggest, "To work effectively together, the principal and school-based coach first must acknowledge their different needs. The principal had the formal power and authority inherent in the position. The school coach's resources are less tangible" (p. 33). I would continue this, arguing the school coach's position of power is less defined. However, in all relationships within a school there is power and a movement of power, or influence, between the players at any moment of time. St. Pierre (2000) asserts:

> Once they [feminists] can locate and name tie discourses and practices of patriarchy, they can begin to refuse them. Poststructural theories of discourse, like poststructural theories of language, allow us to understand how knowledge, truth, and subjects are produced in language and cultural practice as well as how they might be reconfigured. (p. 486)

Occupying the majority of coaching positions, as women do, they must be

empowered to push against a system where the authority has a male bias (Blackmore, 1997). For many coaches this may be a difficult task, therefore their beliefs about gender need to be explored.

Research Questions

This study was designed to hear the voices of instructional coaches and their perceptions about the influence they have within a school. The focus is on female coaches who work in an environment where they are neither teachers nor administrators. In this study, I looked at:

How do instructional coaches negotiate the space between administrators and teachers?

- How do instructional coaches position themselves within school improvement efforts?

- What forms of power and influence do instructional coaches perceive they have?

- In what ways do instructional coaches navigate the political structures of the school system?

Significance of Study

By understanding how instructional coaches perceive themselves within the educational system, all parties can become more empowered to influence school improvement. Aguilar (2013) explains, "An essential feature of coaching is that it uses the relationships between coaches, principals, and teachers to create the conversation that leads to behavioral, pedagogical, and content knowledge change" (p. 9). Knight (2007) theorizes that listening and understanding others is critical to a coach's success. He explains:

Coaches who temporarily set aside their own opinions for the sole purpose of

really hearing what their colleagues have to say are powerfully demonstrating that they truly value their colleagues' perspective. In a very real sense, when a coach empathically listens to another person's ideas, thoughts, and concerns, the coach communicates that the other person's life is important and meaningful. This may be important service that a coach can provide. (p. 43)

This study moves the theory of instructional coaching into the day to day working of instructional coaches and how women perceive their own work.

Scope of the Study

This qualitative study focuses on instructional coaches in the central Texas area. The regional service center in this area offers monthly professional development for instructional coaches through the network. This network is open to instructional coaches in the central Texas area. The coaching philosophy of Region XIII's instructional coaching network is Knight's "partnership principles" (S. Durham, Personal Communication, 2013), therefore, I expected to hear these principles voiced by the coaches. The coaching network has also provided professional development in differentiated coaching, so this model was also expected to surface as a driving model. Because there are so many different coaching models, the results of this study cannot be generalized; however, the stories of the coaches are revealed.

Through the analysis of the data collected, the results may be transferable to other situations where coaches work. Merriam (2009) explains, "every study, every case, every situation is theoretically an example of something else, the general lies in the particular; that is, what we learn in a particular situation we can transfer or generalize to similar situations subsequently encountered" (p. 225). In this way, this study adds to our

understanding of how instructional coaches work to influence change.

A purposeful sample was used for this study. Instructional coaches with at least three years of experience, who were female, and worked in the regional instructional coaching network were used in this study. This does not represent the coaching pool according to the pilot study, summarized in Appendix A; I conducted in December 2013 which showed 60% of the coaches in the instructional coaching network have less than three years of experience. A large percent of the coaches (80%) rated their own personal need for professional development as high, but indicated they had had little training in how to be a coach. If they had pursued their own professional development, it was in data analysis, the concept of Professional Learning Communities, behavior management, or content knowledge. They did note the most beneficial professional development they had were ones on strategies they could turn around quickly with their teachers. However, it is important to have coaches who have had time and experience working in the field with both administrators and teachers. Each coach who participated in this study has graciously contributed her story.

Definition of Terms

- Administrator - a person whose job is to manage a company, school, or other organization (Merriam Webster, 2015).

- Cognitive Coaching – "Cognitive coaching is a nonjudgmental, development, reflective model derived from a blend of the psychological orientations of cognitive theorists and interpersonal bonding of humanists" (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 5).

- District Level Coach – an instructional coach who works with multiple schools

within a district, supervised by a district leader (Borman & Feger, 2006).

- Embedded Coach/Campus Based Coach – an instructional coach that works with one school, with office on campus, and may be supervised at the district or campus level (Borman & Feger, 2006).

- High Performing Schools – Schools who show improved test scores across grade levels or subject areas (Center for Public Education, 2015).

- Instructional Coaching – "individuals who are full-time professional developers, on-site in schools, instructional coaches work with teachers to help incorporate research-based instructional practices" (Knight, 2007, p. 12).

- Instructional Coaching Network – A network for instructional coaches in the central Texas area with the purpose of providing professional development for the coaches (S. Durham, Personal Communication, 2013).

- Professional Learning Communities – a group of educators with a "shared mission, vision, and values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; an orientation toward action and a willingness to experiment' commitment to continuous improvement and a focus on results" (Dufour & Eaker, 1998, p. 45).

- Regional Coach – an instructional coach who works with multiple campuses housed at a region service center and supervised by the service center (Borman & Feger, 2006).

- Service Center Instructional Coaching Network – a network of instructional coaches organized by the region services center with the purpose of providing coaching support and professional development.

- Title I School - schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from

low-income families (U. S. Department of Education, 2015).

Summary

Coaching is a "complex innovation to implement because it requires a radical change in relationship among teachers, and between teachers and administrative personnel" (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 16). In order to implement the systemic change necessary to improve instructional coaches, coaches need to understand and access their own professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Working as a group and supporting each other, instructional coaches can influence change within the educational system. But, all cultures need to reframe their beliefs as Fullan (2007) explains, "reform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on. There is much more to educational reform than most people realize" (p. 6). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) further suggest that teachers with professional capital can help the system move forward to true school improvement.

> The movement from *power over* to *power with* is still a struggle. But it is a struggle for a greater social good, not for self-interest or supremacy. It is a struggle that should not be a win-lose battle, but that will still require initial positive pushes and pulls from small groups at both the bottom and the top-pushes and pulls that you can be part of and that you might even start. (p. 9)

Change cannot happen if we do not ask questions, listen, and engage in dialogue. Because of the growing number of instructional coaches, it is time for instructional coaches to claim their place within the educational reform process and move forward to influence systemic change.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I trace the emergence of instructional coaching from its roots in supervision as a way to improve instruction by focusing on the choices teachers make in the classroom. The scholarly literature on the purpose of coaching, and on the effectiveness of coaching will be explained, as well as coaches working as agents of change within school improvement. The barriers to coaching will be examined to illustrate how coaching programs can be ineffective. Lastly, the place of gender within the context of literature on leadership will be explored.

History of Coaching

Many scholars credit Showers and Joyce as the founders of instructional coaching with their work on peer coaching in the 1980s (Barkley, 2011; Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Neubert & McAllister, 1993). However, the roots of instructional coaching are found in the works of Goldhammer and Cogan in the 1960s with their work in supervision (Garman, 1990; Reavis, 1977; Sergiovanni, et al., 2014). Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973) defined supervision as a process where the supervisor works with the teacher to collect and analyze data that reflect his/her instructional practices. Goldhammer (1969) explained the purpose of clinical supervision is to work with teachers to establish relationships between teachers and supervisors and teachers and students to create a place for all students to learn. From these roots, supervision can be aligned with instructional coaching (Barkley, 2011), a process to improve instruction. Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) suggest supervision and evaluation are often confused within schools because the role of the principal is often that of supervisor. In fact Sergiovanni et al. (2014) explain, "because being supervised by an administrator is, within the teaching

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culture of many if not most schools, by definition a threat, it is understandable why

'being evaluated' is considered an undesirable experience" (p. 120). Guskey (2000)

recognized the relationship of peer coaching and instructional supervision as being part of

both professional development and the underpinning of instructional coaching.

Many instructional coaching models explicitly base their models on instructional

supervision, specifically Goldhammer and Cogan's work. Tschannen-Moran and

Tschannen-Moran (2012) contribute their instructional coaching model to the work of

Costa and Garmston (2002) who based their work on Goldhammer and Cogan, as well as

Knight (2007), Kise (2006), and Barkley (2011).

Instructional Supervision

Supervision grew out of an understanding at the time that teaching needed to be

improved (Sergiovanni, et al., 2014). Teachers and supervisors met, discussed the lesson,

and looked for ways to improve instruction (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969). The

focus of supervision is not to evaluate what the teacher is doing in the classroom, but

instead to focus on student engagement (Sergiovanni, et al., 2014).

Supervisors as Evaluators

Pollock and Ford (2009) explain that because supervision places the principal in

an evaluator position it creates a "we/they" (p. 4) condition, causing tension between

teachers and administrators. This dichotomy endows the principal with power and implies

teachers are to be judged, although supervision at its core is non-judgmental

(Sergiovanni, et al., 2014). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) define three purposes of

supervision: bureaucratic, formative, and summative. They argue that often supervision

moves to the bureaucratic, going through the process to check off the supervision has

been completed, but does not implement any real change. Formative supervision can be a role adopted by instructional coaches or teacher leaders who work on a regular basis to improve classroom instruction (Sergiovanni, et al., 2014), whereas, summative supervision is for evaluation purposes (Sergiovanni, et al., 2014).

Supervisors Influence Teachers' Pedagogical Decisions

Supervisors work with teachers to collect and reflect on data with teachers. Through this activity, they can influence the instructional decisions teachers make. Pollock and Ford (2009) assert, "teachers' pedagogical decisions affect students' classroom performance and achievement gains on a daily basis. Effective supervisory work with teachers examines this influence and determines how to use daily progress in student learning to inform teaching decisions" (p. 23). Garman (1990) argues for supervision to influence teacher's pedagogical decisions, the supervision cycle must move beyond the steps of supervision associated with teacher conferences and observations to a place which empowers teachers. Such advancement would enable them to reflect on their teaching and perform their own supervision cycle in order to improve their teaching. Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) suggest the supervision should be focused on student learning and pedagogical strategies that encourage student learning.

Time to Supervise

In order to supervise teachers, time must be allotted to work with teachers (Zepeda, 2012). Instructional coaches can work with teachers in this supervisory position, whereas principals lack the time to work this closely with teachers. Through working closely with the teachers, instructional coaches can implement change within schools (Killion, et al., 2012). Kent (2001) conducted a study where cooperating teachers were

trained in the clinical supervision cycle as a model to work with their student teacher. One of the results of the study was the complaint of the cooperating teachers about the amount of time the cycle takes to be done with fidelity.

Clinical Supervision Cycle

Goldhammer (1969), regarded as a seminal scholar in the field of supervision, died before his book on clinical supervisions was published in 1969. Krajewski and Anderson (1980) imagined what Goldhammer's thoughts on his supervision theory might be a decade after being introduced. According to Krawjeski and Anderson (1980), Goldhammer would say, "when discussing what clinical supervision actually means, we envision a relationship developed between a supervisor and a teacher that is built of mutual trust" (p. 421). This is one of the most basic components of instructional coaching. Goldhammer, in the words of Krawjeski and Anderson (1980), continued with, "I feel that on the whole clinical supervision should be systematic. But there are times when the teacher and supervisor must be flexible and not stick to a systematic pattern day in and day out" (p. 422). Krajewski and Anderson (1980) suggest that as technology changes, the role of the supervisor and teacher may need to change. In their fictional interview, Goldhammer concludes with:

> The aims of clinical supervision will be realized when, largely by virtue of its own existence, everyone inside of the school will know why they are there, will want to be there, and will feel a strong and beautiful awareness of their individual identity and a community of spirit and enterprise with those around them. These are the values that motivate our work and give rise to our ambitions. While we cannot, obviously, make promises, that are as large as our dreams, we can

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proclaim those dreams and let ourselves be guided by them. (p. 423)

Jacobs (2007) laid an equity lens on the supervision cycle where the coach prompted the teachers throughout the traditional supervision cycle to reflect on equity or inequity issues within the school. Fullan and Knight (2011) reiterate this sentiment explaining educational systems can be changed when the people in the school work toward the same purpose, educating the children.

Clinical Supervision Cycle and Instructional Coaching

Barkley (2011) defines the supervision cycle as a three step cycle, of preconference, observation and post conference. He explains that in the preconference, the coach should ask questions to understand the person, as well as the lesson. Through this process both coach and coachee can determine the focus of the coach approaching observation. During the observation period, the coach is observing for the agreed upon focus. The post conference is a time to discuss the data that were observed. This leads to the beginning of the next cycle. This is very similar to the original supervision model with the data analysis sections blended into the observation and post conference stages.

Barkley (2011) explains instructional coaches need to have a clearly defined focus when working with teachers before observing classrooms and time to reflect on the data collected during the observation with the teacher. This approach places coaching within the supervision model. Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) explain instructional coaching and supervision have:

A similar spirit, namely a focus on improving student learning, on exploring together the evidence of the varying impact of some teaching strategies, on taking a mutual responsibility for working to improve the academic success for all

students and on developing and expanding a repertory of instructional protocols

for that purpose. (p. 143)

They continue to argue that although there are similarities, instructional coaches should not limit themselves to just the clinical supervision model, but should expand their work into other areas of the school that may impact student learning.

Effectiveness of Clinical Supervision

Reavis (1977) conducted a study on the effectiveness of clinical supervision. He explained most teachers see the supervisor as "threatening and authoritarian" (p. 311). At the time of his study, there had been a limited amount of research on the effectiveness of clinical supervision. His study looked at teachers who had traditional supervision and those who had clinical supervision. Reavis (1977) found there may be some improvement for teachers who participated in the clinical supervision process over those teachers who had traditional supervision. However, training supervisors to apply the strategies of clinical supervision proved to be problematic, in that two of the nine supervisors were dropped from the study because they did not follow the protocol for the clinical supervision model.

Kirui and Amhed (2012) studied the effectiveness of the clinical supervision model with pre-service teachers and their mentors in Kenya. This study found that often the pre-conference did not lead teachers to understand what the supervisor was looking for in the observation. There was some agreement between the teacher and the supervisor on the fairness of the feedback of the strategies observed in the observation, but overall a lack of understanding of the clinical supervision cycle and how it is to be used was missing. Although there was a lack of understanding of the process, Kirui and Amhed

(2012) suggest the clinical supervision model should continue to be used.

Examining several case studies, Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis (1993) concluded the clinical supervision model can be effective when certain factors are in place. First, a collegial relationship is key for the process to begin to be effective. Second, the teacher always needs to be the final decider on the instruction in the classroom. The supervision needs to be consistent over time with a clear focus on the strategy observed with descriptive notes. Finally, there needs to be time for the teacher and supervisor to reflect on the lesson and observation notes.

Power and Clinical Supervision

Not all were accepting of the clinical supervision model; Davidson (1985) rejects the idea that the clinical supervision model could be used effectively in pre-service student teacher relationships. His main argument is that the power structure that is inherent to the student teaching process would keep the supervisor from working in a "collegial relationship" (p. 96). Davidson argues it is important for the supervisor to have authority over the student teachers.

Davidson's (1985) second argument against clinical supervision is although the goal of the clinical supervision process is to improve instruction; the supervisor for pre-service teachers cannot remain as a supervisor. At some point, they must become an evaluator of the student teachers. The third argument is that in a clinical supervision cycle the teacher would decide on what the supervisor would observe, but supervisors of student teachers must observe and tell the student what they need to observe. Lastly, there are two people as supervisors, the college professor, and the cooperating teacher, and it would be too costly and time consuming for both supervisors to complete two individual

cycles.

Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) argue it is important for supervisors to understand the relationship of the supervisor as being in a more powerful position in the relationship and work to establish a more collegial relationship. They argue supervision "is not about getting rid of 'weak teachers' as it is about changing *weak teaching practices* to practices that support improves quality of learning" (p. 122). If this is the focus of supervision, there is a lesser chance of power being an issue within the relationship of supervisor and teacher.

Pre-Service and Teacher Training

One does have to wonder about choice, flexibility and issues of power that Davidson would think of today with instructional coaching and how that might play into the role of training pre-service teachers. Grimmett (1981) wanted to add another layer to the instructional coaching model, requesting that supervisors learn new researched-based instruction, so that when the supervisor and the teacher were planning lessons, the lessons were more aligned to research and effective strategies. From the literature review, power in supervision relationships is still an issue (Barkley, 2011; Schein, 2011). Knight's (2007) partnership principles are designed to minimize these power issues.

Kent (2001) studied the use of clinical supervision when working with student teachers by first identifying the problem with the implementation of the supervision cycle as lack of training and understanding of the cooperating teacher in the process. In her study, the cooperating teachers took a course with the focus on clinical supervision prior to the teachers working with student teachers. Kent (2001) found that the collaborating

teachers felt they had more skills in communicating what the student teacher needed to do to improve.

Professional Development

Yager, et al. (2011-2012) firmly state that for schools to transform, professional development for staff is essential. Nearly three decades ago, Guskey (1986) stated, "high quality staff development is a central comparison in nearly every proposal for improving education" (p. 5). He could make this same statement today. Guskey's (1986) model moved teachers from a "change in teachers' practices, to change in students' learning outcomes, to change in teachers' beliefs" (p. 7). Key to Guskey's model is the continued support after the initial professional development. Instructional coaching is one response to strategy for providing that support. Instructional coaching provides the ongoing feedback to the teachers through a collaborative partnership (Knight, 2009a).

Historical Effectiveness of Professional Development

Guskey (2000) contends, "every proposal for educational reform and every plan for school improvement emphasize the need for high-quality professional development" (p. 3). However, the traditional model of training teachers as a large group during the days before the beginning of school is ineffective. Guskey (2000) states:

> Harsh lessons from the past have taught educators that fragmented, piecemeal approaches to professional development do not work. Neither do one-shot workshops based on the most current educational fad. One reason for their failure is that, as a rule, they offer no guidance on how the new strategies fit with those advocated in years past. (p. 20)

When we apply this view of professional development, there is a disconnect between

professional development and what happens in the classroom. Guskey (2000) further

concludes there is a relationship between ineffective professional development and

resistance to change. Guskey (2000) explains "educators themselves frequently regard

professional development as having little impact on their day-to-day responsibilities.

Some even consider it a waste of time" (p. 4). When educators perceive professional

development as a waste of time, instruction does not change.

Supervision Drives Professional Development

From the early days of supervision, professional development has been a focus of

the supervision cycle (Glickman, 1985). Through supervision, teachers can develop their

own professional development by choosing what best meets their needs (Glickman,

1985). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) argue that supervision is linked to professional

development needs of a school.

Professional Development to Improve Instruction

Zepeda (2012) explains professional development is one of the "major methods of

improving instruction" (p. 52). However, sending teachers to professional development

throughout the year with limited to little follow-up is not effective to implement the

change (Zepeda, 2012). For professional development to be effective it needs to be

focused on the vision of change for the school (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon,

2013). Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, (2014) argue where a teacher is on the

continuum of developmental stages influences the appropriate professional development.

Professional Development for Differentiation

Zeichner and Liston (1996) argue the top down approach to staff development is

ineffective because teachers' knowledge is often ignored. The one size fits all approach to

professional development is as inappropriate for teachers as it is for students (Guskey &

Yoon, 2009). Instructional coaches can implement the supervision cycle and differentiate

the style and model with individual teacher needs and development (Glickman, et al.,

2014; Lindsey, Martinez, & Lindsey, 2007). When instructional coaches and teachers

work together, their knowledge can be co-constructed allowing for differentiation of the

professional development process. Instructional coaching allows each teacher to get

individualized professional development (Knight, 2009a).

Purpose of Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is growing as a method of bringing professional

development to teachers throughout the country (Barkley, 2011; Denton & Hasbrouck,

2009; Eisenberg & Medrich, 2013; Poglinco, & Bach, 2004; Sweeney, 2013). Neumerski

(2013) explains, "the purposes behind coaching are more squarely focused on

instructional improvement" (318). Instructional coaches who are instructional leaders

help teachers and principals make the connection between being an instructional leader

and improving instruction (Neumerski, 2013). Sweeney (2013) suggests, "it would

benefit us to refrain from thinking of coaching as a silver bullet, it should be thought of as

an important component within a system that is focused on ensuring the success of each

and every student" (p. 15).

Instructional coaching is designed to bring professional development to the

workplace so teachers can implement new learning in their classrooms (Knight, 2009b).

Knight (2009b) explains instead of the traditional one day training for teachers, "a better

tactic is to offer teachers opportunities to experiment with practices so that they can make

up their own minds about their effectiveness" (p. 511). Bickmore (2010) argues, "true

professional development results when teachers have ongoing support as they rehearse new skills and incorporate them into classroom practice" (p. 44). In order for this type of professional development to take place in schools, instructional coaches need to make the implementation of the new learning easy for the teachers (Knight, 2007). Guskey and Yoon (2009) suggest all educators need support when they are implementing new strategies or classroom practices. They explain this just-in-time and job-embedded learning is the goal of instructional coaching. Eisenberg and Medrich (2013) continue this theme with the belief that all teachers should work with instructional coaches to improve instruction.

Types of Coaching

There are a variety of instructional coaching models, including mentoring, peer coaching, content coaching, cognitive coaching, differentiated coaching, and Knight's model of instructional coaching. Each has a different focus on what instructional coaches should work with teachers on, but all of the models have similarities. In the majority of the models, the focus is on the relationship between the instructional coach and the teacher in order for the teacher to implement new instructional strategies.

Mentoring

Mentoring was an early form of instructional coaching that placed a veteran teacher with a new or inexperienced teacher (Barkley, 2011). Mentoring, as defined by Barkley (2011), "offers a nonthreatening and highly successful way for adults to reach young people in programs that can provide stepping stones to more fulfilling lives" (p. 15), such as the veteran teacher who works with new teachers to learn the culture of the school. Usually, the mentor worked on supporting the new teacher in whatever areas

were assigned by the evaluator for a short amount of time (Barkley, 2011). O'Neill and

Marsick (2009) explain traditionally mentors are more experienced than the mentee, and

the purpose of the relationship is to help the mentee learn new skills. Within the

mentoring process, there should be a self-reflective piece to help improve on new skills

that are required. Hansman (2009) argues one of the most critical components of the

mentoring process is open communication. This recurring theme was explored by

Hansman both when it worked in the situations, and more importantly, when it did not.

She suggested that in the mentoring process, the mentor should "do no harm,"

"communicate honestly," and "examine the power and privilege" (61-62).

Peer Coaching

Showers and Joyce (1996) recognized a shift in the formality of coaching that as

they moved into peer coaching, the relationship between coaches and teachers, and

coaches and administrators needed to change. They explain instructional coaching

"requires a radical change in relationships" (p. 16). This change in relationships has to do

with the shift in power structures. Early on in the literature, instructional coaches were

positioned in the middle.

As with instructional coaching, there are a variety of approaches to peer coaching.

Gordon (2004) gives six characteristics of peer coaching: non-evaluative, collegial,

classroom based, uses observable data, nonjudgmental, and based on a trust relationship

among peers. Showers (1987) has three functions of a peer coach: supporting and

encouragement, learning from observing each other, and providing feedback to one

another based on observable data. Neubert and McAllister (1993) focus on the resulting

change of instruction through peer coaching because it deepens the reflection that

teachers have on their instructional choices.

Showers (1987) purports it is difficult for teachers to transfer skills they learn to the practices of their classrooms. She explains one of the barriers is cognition, where the teachers did not understand the new strategies, or when they tried to implement the new strategy, it was unsuccessful and they abandoned it. Showers further suggests, "Coaching occurs at the point where the trainee attempts to implement the new teaching strategy in the classroom. Coaches may be peers, supervisors, principals, college instructors, or others, who are competent in the utilization of the new approach to teaching" (p. 66). Strother (1989) describes instructional coaching, in relation to peer coaching, as "a collaborative process; teachers can learn new ideas while giving and receiving emotional support" (p. 824). Very much as today with instructional coaching, Strother (1989) argues the fidelity of how an instructional coaching program is implemented will have an impact on the effectiveness of the instructional coaching program. The implementation of a peer coaching model will require a shift of thinking among the administrators to allow for the possibility of teacher leaders.

Content Coaching

Content coaching has at its core two prongs, first to influence change within schools by working in partnership with principals and second to improve instruction through planning, assessing and reflecting with teachers on their practices (West & Cameron, 2013). West and Cameron (2013) explain, "Content coaching takes coaching in educational settings further than other forms of coaching. Content coaches center coaching conversations on applications of conceptual content knowledge in ways that give all students access to it" (p. 11), this implies a social justice lens to what West and

Cameron view as the role of the content coach. West and Cameron (2013) see content

coaching as a way to teach all teachers to meet the educational needs of the students.

When the instructional coaching model moves from a focus on strategy to a focus on

student learning, additional issues arise for the instructional coach and teacher.

Cognitive Coaching

Costa and Garmston (2002) introduced their model of Cognitive Coaching in the

early 1980s based on the clinical supervision model of Goldhammer and Cogan. The

Cognitive Coaching model focuses on rapport, dialogue, and conversation maps, such as

planning and reflective maps. Cognitive Coaching is centered on helping people to make

cognitive shifts in their thinking. The underlying assumption of Cognitive Coaching is

that the person has the skills necessary to make change within him/her and it is the

coach's job to ask mediating questions to help facilitate the coachee to uncover his/her

own answers. Cognitive coaching is about the "holomony" (p. 19) of the teacher, the

understanding of the teacher's wholeness. Holomony is achieved when the five states of

mind (efficacy, flexibility, consciousness, interdependence, and craftsmanship) work

together (p. 125).

Lindsey, et al. (2007) expanded on the concepts of Cognitive Coaching with the

understanding that the cultural beliefs of the coach influence the skills of the coach. They

posit that the cultural beliefs of the coach need to be examined in order for the coach to

help teachers to become more culturally proficient.

Differentiated Coaching

Kise's (2006) model focuses on differentiation in instructional coaching by

having the instructional coach determine his/her coaching style, as well as analyzing the

coaching style preference of the coachee. A coach would identify if the teacher was extroverted or introverted, sensing or intuitive, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. She argues that by understanding the differences in one's preferences, the coach can better relate to the coachee. Kise (2009) explains coaches must identify the beliefs of the teacher because these beliefs might block the change process. All of these models bring something to the possibilities of instructional coaching as a method for impacting change in schools. However, these models, although they include teachers reflecting on their own practices, offer little about the teachers reflecting on their beliefs in order to change their beliefs.

Evocative Coaching

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) introduce evocative coaching as a new approach to instructional coaching. Evocative coaching is drawn from previous coaching models such as Costa and Garmston's, Knight's, Kise's, and Barkley's. The basis of evocative coaching is conversation and storytelling. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) blend appreciative inquiry as part of their model. The belief is by focusing on what teachers do well, their instruction will improve. If the coach takes time to listen to the stories of the teachers, the coach can work with the teachers to remind them of their love for teaching.

Instructional Coaching a Partnership Approach

Jim Knight (2009a) developed a model for instructional coaching which he refers to as instructional coaching, a partnership approach. Knight's model of instructional coaching consists of seven principles: equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, praxis, and reciprocity (Knight, 2007). From these principals, Knight argues that instructional

coaching is key to influencing school improvement, creating "unmistakable impact" (Knight, 2011a, p. 11). Knight (2011a) explains the concept of partnership is not only about shared power, but about shared learning.

The partnership philosophy of Knight's (2005) model of instructional coaching acknowledges power, or perceived power, needs to be addressed in any coaching relationship. Further, relationships must be built on trust and respect between the two participants. Anytime there are two people working in a relationship, there are issues of power (Scott, 2004). The partnership principles are a way to be cognizant of power and how power shifts in relationships, understanding these power shifts can be between coaches and teachers, or coaches and administrators. "Partnership is about shared learning as much as it is about shared power" (Knight, 2011a, p. 21). Coaches must "relinquish power" (Knight, 2011a, p. 21) in order to be in partnership. Fullan and Knight (2011) relate these relationships of power to dancing, sometimes the coach leads, and at other times the coach follows.

The first partnership principal is equality. Equality is critical in the coaching relationship, because without equality in the partnership relationship power shifts the relationship out of partnership (Knight, 2011a). If the coach does not see himself/herself as equal in the partnership with teachers or administrators, the conversations that will lead to change cannot happen (Scott, 2004).

The principle of choice can often be misunderstood; choice is not about choosing to work with a coach or not, but the choice of how and what to implement (Knight, 2011a). When a teacher implements a new strategy, this needs to be authentic on the part of the teacher. Coaches explain new techniques, but allow teachers to adapt them to their

practices (Knight, 2011a).

All of the partnership principles are implemented through dialogue. Freire (1998) defines praxis as placing theory into action. Knight (2011a) defines praxis as simply applying new knowledge into action. Voice occurs when the coach lets the teacher express concerns and excitement, as new strategies are implemented. Reflection is necessary for there to be actual learning (Knight, 2011b). If you have not thought about what you have learned, more than likely, you will not implement the learning (Knight, 2011a). "Reciprocity is the inevitable outcome of a true partnership" (Knight, 2011a, p. 21). This view of coaching as a partnership fits within the feminist philosophy where there is a give and take of ideas.

All of the previous attempts for teachers to work and support other teachers has led to the increase of instructional coaches within the educational reform effort (Barkley, 2011; Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Poglinco, & Bach, 2004; Sweeney, 2013). Instructional coaching is the systemic, intentional link between traditional forms of professional development to improvement of classroom instruction. Through instructional coaches, the follow-up of implementation of strategies can become a realistic goal.

<p align="center">**Effectiveness of Instructional Coaching**</p>

Killion, et al. (2012) explain, "done well, coaching works to change teachers' practices and student achievement" (p. 9). They argue the conditions that are present can make or break the effectiveness of instructional coaching. For instructional coaching to be effective, it must be part of the everyday life of the school, and provided to all teachers. Their conclusion is "coaching matters" (p. 9). However, the research on its

effectiveness is not quite so clear. Boehle (2013) asserts, "It is challenging to measure a coach's individual impact on student learning" (p. 32). One of the underlying assumptions for the effectiveness of instructional coaching is if teachers were more effective, student achievement would improve (Lemon & Helsing, 2010).

Implementing New Instructional Strategies

The majority of the literature written about instructional coaching has to do with the instructional coach impacting change within the teacher's classroom as it relates to strategies the teacher implements (Killion et al., 2012). The original purpose for instructional coaches was embedded in professional development for schools. Traditional forms of professional development, where there is one day of training and the teachers are expected to return to class and implement the change, have proven ineffective. Instructional coaching was designed to assist with modeling in the classroom and follow-up on implementation.

Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) completed a "comprehensive review of research" (p. 279) on the impact of instructional coaching. They reviewed 13 studies that had been conducted over the last 20 years and analyzed the findings of these studies. Several observations were made from these studies. When instructional coaching followed small group training with observation and feedback, there was a connection to high engagement of students. There were some data to suggest there was an increase in student achievement based on the instructional coaching model. In these studies, reflection was designed on the strategies the teachers were implementing and whether or not the teachers were implementing the strategies or programs with fidelity. Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) concluded teachers are more likely to implement strategies when

they see that it impacts student achievement.

Marsh, et al. (2012) examined Florida's state-wide implementation of reading coaches. The main focus of their research was in who makes a good coach and how do you retain them, but their findings reflected the power of the coaches was in changing the strategies of the teachers. This quantitative study surveyed teachers who worked with the reading coach and found, "47% of all the reading teachers and 40% of all the social studies teachers reported that the reading coach influenced them to make changes in their instruction to a moderate or great extent" (p. 19). A minority of the teachers reported no change in strategies.

Rock and Young (2011) examined the statewide implementation of a coaching model in Wyoming. Again, the research was focused on the change in action of the teachers, did their strategies for teaching change because of coaching? This quantitative study found coaching did not improve the strategies. Part of the explanation for this was the geography of the state, with so many rural communities making it hard for coaches to support all of the teachers. The researchers felt that if the state was committed to this model, additional resources would be needed.

Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) interviewed thirty-five teachers who worked with literacy coaches. These teachers worked with the coaches for three years, with the coaches in their classrooms four days a week. Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) heard from the teachers that they "valued how the coaches created a space for collaboration, provided ongoing support, and taught them about research-based instructional strategies" (p. 141).

Bean (2009), in a self-reflective article, shared five lessons he learned as a literacy

coach: First is to expect the unexpected; second, effective coaching requires a qualified coach; third, coaching must be intentional and opportunistic; fourth, coaches should make haste slowly and finally, teachers are both targets and agents of change.

Martin and Taylor (2009) used data to drive their work with changing the strategies of the teachers they coached. The focus of their work was not on the underlying beliefs of the teachers, so issues of culture were never discussed. Resources and professional development were provided with the focus on creating a community of learners on the campus.

Self-Reflection to Change Instructional Practices

Zeichner and Liston (1996) traced educational theorist examination of the use of reflection in teaching from Dewey, to Schon, to Norwegian researchers Handal and Lauvas. Additionally, Ostorga (2006) based her thinking of reflection in teaching on Dewey where teachers are open-minded, responsible, and wholehearted. Ostorga (2006) posits it is the teachers' epistemological beliefs that drive why teachers teach and these beliefs drive the decisions teachers make in the classroom.

Teachers use reflection for personal growth to help clarify why they make instructional decisions in the classroom. Dialogue between educators helps teachers and administrators reflect on the learning of students and the effectiveness of instructional strategies. As technology has advanced, teachers and administrators have more tools to collect data and reflect on teacher practices.

Reflection for personal growth. Zeichner and Liston (1996) extend the importance of reflection as a teacher to not just reflect on *what* they did as teachers to *why* they made the choices that they did. It is in extending reflection to the *why*, the

actual beliefs and experiences that a teacher brings to the classroom, that Zeichner and Liston (1996) believe a teacher's belief can change. Jacobs (2006) suggests teachers can be coached to self-reflection by helping teachers question the structure of the schools and the beliefs of society.

Goodwin (2009) writes on the concept of "self-study" (p.144). After assessing twelve teacher education programs, Goodwin (2009) concluded teachers were overwhelmed with too many mandates and standards to do adequate self-reflection. In essence, teachers are too busy for self-reflection, creating a barrier for teachers, so even when teachers want to be self-reflective, they do not have the time to be.

Reflection through conversations. Conversation and dialogue are essential to the coaching models leading to research on "collaborative conversations" (Peterson, Taylor, Burnham & Schock, 2009; Teemant, Wink & Tyra, 2011) and how this leads teachers to self-reflection. Peterson, et al. (2009) concluded the decisions made through these conversations led to more effective choices about classroom instruction. Teemant, et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study of 21 classroom teachers where they assessed "five researched-based instructional practices" (p. 683) and concluded that the reflective conversations showed the most growth. However, they also concluded it was the "least implemented" (p. 690). O'Neill and Marsick (2009) would concur "how to bring about critical reflection isn't always clear, however, questioning, reflection, and critical reflection don't necessarily come naturally to people who hold strong views and may believe there is only one 'right' way" (p. 23).

Reflection as a catalyst for change. Stover, Kissel, Haag, and Schoniker (2011) view teacher reflection as a "catalyst for change" (p. 498). They worked with literacy

coaches and implemented three strategies for teachers and self-reflection. Through journals, surveys and video tape, they worked with the teachers in conversation to implement new strategies in their classrooms. Stover, et al. (2011) explain the instructional coaches' job is "to foster reflection so that teachers acknowledge the realities of their classroom practice" (p. 500). Killion, et al. (2012) suggest coaches must reflect on their own practices and model reflection with their teachers to help them also develop the skill of reflection.

Technology as a method of reflection. Technology can be used as a method to help teachers become more self-reflective. Saphier (2011) found coaching is a method of professional development for teachers where teachers can focus on the standards that are proven successful, such as feedback and making student thinking visible. One method used to provide feedback for the teacher was video technology. Saphier (2011) explained, that "Video technology makes it possible for teachers to video their experiments with new instructional strategies without another person in the room" (p. 61) and be self-reflective about their practices later. This allows time for the self-reflection.

The advancement of technology has influenced coaching. Rock & Young (2009) conducted a qualitative study of using *bug-in-ear* technology to implement coaching as an immediate professional development. They wired teachers with blue tooth technology allowing the coach to observe the class via live video feed; the coach was able to talk directly to the teacher during instruction. They claim this process was more immediate than a coach observing a classroom and dialoguing with the teacher after the lesson. Because of the virtual technology, and the observer not present in the room, the researchers concluded the interaction between coach and teacher was less obtrusive. The

final conclusion was that this use of technology benefited both the teacher and the students.

Knight et al. (2012), suggest videotaping can be used effectively to coach teachers to improve instruction. Several decisions are critical to the implementation of the use of video tapes, such as, what will be the focus of the video, what the students are doing, or what the teacher is doing. Video tapes can be used to guide the coaching conversation, particularly when it is clear what the teacher and coach are looking for in the video. Videos allow for teachers to look at the video for their own individual learning, or with the coach, or even with the entire team of teachers who are working together to analyze the effectiveness of new strategies. Videos can reveal a clearer picture of what is happening in the classroom (Knight, et al, 2012).

Instructional Coaches as System Leaders

Gordon (2004) believes part of professional development for educators is to build capacity among the professionals of a school. He explains, "capacity building does not directly affect student learning but increases the ability of individuals, groups, and schools to affect student learning" (p. 5). Fullan and Knight (2011) argue it is time for coaches to step up from working with just teachers to becoming true system leaders. Guiney (2001) explains that, "to succeed, a coach must be a leader who is willing not to recognize as such and who can foster teacher leadership" (p. 741).

Fullan and Knight (2011) encourage coaches to move from one-on-one coaching to becoming system leaders. Saphier and West (2010) argue for coaches to become change agents, they must work together with a focus on creating a culture of learners for all the adults. Psencik (2011) explains the theory of change as goals are identified,

coaching happens, leading to an increase in staff learning, which in turn, leads to an increase in student learning.

Change Process

Coaches need to make the implementation of any new strategy as easy as possible, so the teacher is willing to risk trying something new and different (Knight, 2005). Knight (2009a) argues teachers will not implement change unless it is easier and more effective than the current way they are working. He suggests, "change leaders should propose new ways of teaching only if they're confident they will have a positive impact on student achievement" (p. 509). He continues, explaining that, "personal change is complex. Few of us adopt new habits of practices without some struggle" (p. 509).

For schools to change and improve, the players in the school can no longer work in isolation (Fullan and Knight, 2011). As coaches work to influence change, they must acknowledge themselves as change agents. Fullan and Knight (2011) explain, "the work of coaches is crucial because they change the culture of the school as it relates to instructional practice" (p. 53). They further contend

> School improvement will fail if the work of coaches remains at the one-to-one
> level. Coaches are system leaders. They need development as change agents at
> both the instructional level and the level of organizational and system change. It's
> time to recast their role as integral to whole-system reform. (p. 53)

Principals and coaches need to work together and part of this includes the need to communicate regularly. This communication is necessary for vision to be shared between the principal and coach (Pankake & Moller, 2007). Coaches are necessary for the implementation of many of the new reforms, but it is important that it is good coaching

(Fullan & Knight, 2011). Quality coaches are concerned with "capacity building, teamwork, pedagogy, and systemic reform" (Fullan & Knight, 2011, p. 50). DuFour and Eaker (1998) posit school reform is very complex and making change within the system is difficult. As the change process is implemented, it is normal for there to be resistance to the change (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Knight (2007) suggests it is not necessarily change that teachers resist as much as "poorly defined change initiatives" (p. 3). Part of the role of the instructional coach is to help teachers understand new initiatives, as well as to help administrators define the initiatives being implemented.

When schools showed improvement with coaching, coaches worked closely with principals and teachers (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Coaches need to be able to work within the system of both campus and district strategies (Fullan & Knight, 2011). It is not just enough to want to change the system, it is important to talk about what the specific change you want to make within the system (Hull, et al., 2010; Poglinco & Bach, 2004) in order to create a vision for change. Coaches can implement change when the conditions are right (Knight, 2005) and they are aligned with administration. Coaches can implement change when they work with teachers to implement proven teaching strategies (Knight, 2005).

Reeves (2009) explains when coaches focus on the change for the system and not the individual, change is more likely to happen. "When change is reframed from a personal attack to a new, meaningful, and exciting opportunity, then the odds in favor of successful change can be altered dramatically" (p. 13). According to Aguilar (2013), our mental models are the mindset we bring to our world so we can make sense of the world. Bolman and Deal (2008) describe mental models as a frame "– a set of ideas and

assumptions – that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular 'territory'." (p. 11).

By not understanding change theory, educators are frequently ineffective in the change process. According to Dufour and Eaker (1998), educators are not trained in change theory, so they move too fast, do not persevere through setbacks, and do not appreciate the culture of the schools that are changing. Knight (2007) refers to this approach to change as the "attempt, attack, abandon" (p. 200) cycle. Educators attempt a systemic change, work hard to implement it, which may or may not be with fidelity, then abandon the change because improvements did not result soon enough, or another educational reform is enacted. DuFour and Eaker (1998) observe "changing any organization is difficult, but changing something as complex as the American system of education is an absolutely daunting task" (p. 13).

Shared Vision

Coaches need to understand the change process because it is critical to align work with the vision of the district and campus administrators. Sergiovanni (2007) observed, "in many schools, we have too much vision and not enough people who can build strategies, develop programs, and marshal human resources to get the job done" (p. 168). Coaches have the potential to help to implement the strategies when coaches model how to work in groups and how it impacts instruction. Coaches take a non-evaluative approach to working with teachers (Herll & O'Drobinak, 2004). Berg, et al. (2013) argue, "in schools where teacher leaders and their administrators share a common vision for shared leadership, teacher leaders feel they have more traction for making a difference through their roles" (p. 27). Sweeny (2013) explains it is critical to focus the work of

coaches on student learning which needs to be embedded within the vision of the principal, coach and school staff.

DuFour and Eaker (1998) promote the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model to help implement the change process in schools. They claim, "this model [PLC] requires schools to function as professional learning communities is characterized by a shared mission, vision, and values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; an orientation toward action and a willingness to experiment; commitment to continuous improvement; and a focus on results" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 45). Bickmore (2010) argues you cannot expect teachers to just work together if they are placed in the same room, they need a purpose and a focus, and coaches can help to work with the teachers to be productive.

Understanding School Cultures

Sergiovanni (2007) suggests, "all schools have culture: strong or weak, functional or dysfunctional" (p. 11). He continues to observe, "these days most schools refer to themselves as learning communities but few really are. Becoming an authentic, learner-centered community requires deep changes in a school's basic theory and culture" (p. 97). Sergiovanni (2007) defines culture as:

> Culture is generally thought of as the normative glue that holds a particular school together. With shared visions, values, and beliefs at its heart. Culture serves as a compass setting, steering people in a common direction. It provides norms that govern the way people interact with each other. It provides a framework for deciding what does and does not make sense. (p. 145)

Jacobs, Beck, and Crowell (2014) suggest the culture of the school can allow, or stifle,

change within the school. Schools need to be collaborative throughout for effective

change to happen (Barkley, 2011). Knight (2004) explains a coach, "is part coach and

part anthropologist, advising teachers on how to contend with the challenges and

opportunities they face while recognizing each school's unique culture" (p. 33). By

understanding the culture of the schools, coaches can work to help implement change and

educate all on the campus toward the change model (Knight, 2011a).

Understanding Roles

Coaches and principals must work together (Hull, Balka, & Miles, 2010). Hull, et

al. (2010) continue to contend principals show their respect for coaching by not assigning

different tasks to the coach, and allowing the coach the time he/she needs to do the work

of a coach. Duff and Islas (2013) add the concept that teacher leaders can help align the

vision of the district, and when there is alignment in vision, student learning can become

the focus on improving instruction. They continue to explain, "by identifying and

leveraging the contributions of high performing teachers as instructional leaders, problem

solvers, and decision-makers to lead improvement at the classroom level, the system

builds capacity for quality practice at all levels and builds internal expertise" (p. 10).

Simkins, Coldwell, Caillau, Finlayson, and Morgan (2006) conducted a study in England

examining the perspectives of the coach and the coachee in the coaching relationship.

They found the effectiveness of coaching was related to the quality of the coach. There,

coaches were part of the administrative team and many teachers thought power was an

issue when working with the coaches.

Schein (2011) argues there are two fundamental cultural principles we learn from

an early age. First, communications should be reciprocal, and second, most of the

relationships we engage in have scripted roles. This led to his metaphor of people in relationships being actors on the stage. He suggests in any relationship there are two roles being played, the role of the actor (talker) and that of the audience (listener). In everyday life, people move fluidly between the roles. However, power is implicit within these relationships, as Schein (2011) explains, "we learn that when a person of higher status appears on the scene, deference is required" (p. 12). The instructional coach changes status as he/she has perceived power over teachers and is subordinate when working with principals. It is important for coaches to understand their roles as they interact with others within the educational system.

Coaching for Social Justice

Much has been made of preparing students for the 21st century, but in truth we are now 15 years into that century and little has changed in how we prepare teachers for a changing society. Jacobs (2006) explains, "there needs to be a leveling of the playing field so that equitable practices provide all people an equal chance for success" (p. 24). It is through using this social justice lens, the needs of all students can be meet (Jacobs, 2006). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) explain, "schools more than ever now serve children from diverse communities" (p. 76). Delpit (2006) argues:

> We say we believe that all children can learn, but few of us really believe it.
> Teacher education usually focuses on research that links failure and
> socioeconomic status, failure and cultural difference, and failure and single-parent
> households… When teachers receive that kind of education, there is a tendency to
> assume deficits in students rather than to locate and teach to strengths. (p. 172)

Voltz, Sims, and Nelson (2010) argue for the need to address the "soft bigotry associated

with lower expectations for poor and minority students" (xii). It is important that instructional coaches work with teachers to help understand the importance of having high expectations for all students. For these conversations to begin, coaches need to examine their own beliefs. These beliefs can be examined in conjunction with the teachers through partnership. Conversations on our belief systems can be difficult. However, when trust is established, hard conversations become possible.

Lindsey, et al. (2007) share, "the assumptions, values and beliefs that educators hold about students and their parents are manifested in our actions, interactions and nonactions" (p. 29). Knight (2011b) declares, "every student receives excellent instruction every day in every class" (p. xii), but for every student to receive this instruction, educators need to be aware of every student and their needs. Lindsey, et al. (2007) posit, "culture is a predominant force – culture is not a matter of choice; it is ever present. It is so much a part of some people, that they don't see it. This is particularly evident within dominant groups" (Lindsey, et al., 2007, p. 35). Reeves (2009) explains, "Culture is reflected in the behavior, attitudes and beliefs of individuals groups" (p. 37).

Aguilar (2013) explains there are two lenses to examine coaching models. One is the support of teachers and how they change their behavior and the second is the coach who is focused on changing the beliefs of the teachers/principals. Lindsey, et al. (2007) state, "coaches should be aware of the use of stereotypes in the language that teachers use. It is important to understand the power issues that are involved with stereotypes" (p. 134). They continue to argue:

> For too long, conversations in the teachers' lounges and workrooms have been about what students can't do, won't do, don't know, or don't care about.

Educators' say, 'We're just venting,' as a way to exonerate themselves from talking about students in an informal, non-professional manner. Now is the time for educators to confront our colleagues' negative comments about our students by asking courageous questions that help surface the long-held belief about who can and will learn. (p. 9)

These underlying assumptions of how coaches use language can affect how decisions are made on campuses, leading to students being removed from classes for remediation, yet they are then denied the opportunity to learn any content deeply. Lindsey, et al. (2007) believe through the coaching model, coaches "can be instrumental in guiding teachers to examine their instructional decisions in light of how individual students or groups of students are being served" p. 13).

Killion (2009) examined two types of coaching – "coaching heavy and coaching light" (p. 22). "The difference essentially is in the coaches' perspective, beliefs, role decisions, and goals, rather than in what the coaches do" (p. 22). Coaching light positions the coach where they are concerned with being liked and accepted by those they coach. When coaches are coaching light, they do not push teachers to deep reflective thinking. Coaching heavy "includes high-stakes interactions between coaches and teachers" (p. 23). This can include challenging personal beliefs of the teachers. Killion (2009) argues all teachers should be coached and that the coaching they receive should be heavy coaching.

Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) suggest supervision (or coaching) can prompt the growth of learning for all professionals in a school, but the focus is often on content, assessment, and instruction. They argue this focus is not sufficient since, "there is a

process of growth, however, always going on beneath that professional growth and that involves the human development of teachers as they stretch into fuller, more mature human beings" (p. 53). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) suggest coaching needs to be implemented in a systematic way for all players to understand the purpose of coaching and implement change.

Skills for Instructional Coaching

West and Cameron (2013) warn just because someone is a great teacher or administrator, he/she may not be a great coach because the set of skills for coaches is different from teaching children or working in administration. Psencik (2011) says, "Great coaching is an art. It involves skillfully asking questions and challenging assumptions. Coaching opens participants to changing the way they think about themselves, their leadership, and the opportunities they have to shape their own futures and the futures of their schools" (p. 3). West and Cameron (2013) argue it is essential for coaches to be trained, "to develop the skill set of coaching, understanding how to influence change and build relationships with colleagues, principals, and supervisors" (p. 21). Psencik (2011) provides a list of the emotional intelligences that are essential to an effective coach: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills. She continues with six roots a coach needs: self-awareness, honesty, sincerity, competence, reliability, and intentions. Gallucci, et al. (2010) suggest

> The literature tends to treat coaches as static entities that enter the position with expertise and skill. Coaches' content and pedagogical expertise are assumed as preconditions for the job. There is an emphasis in the research on interpersonal skills, but there are few studies of structural supports that might assist coaches, for

example, in overcoming cultural norms that work against peer critique. Coaches are often left to overcome such obstacles on their own and to define their role as they learn to do it. (p. 924)

Marsh, McCombs and Martorell (2012) found little research on how coaches become effective and learn the knowledge they need to coach. Aguilar (2013) observed most coaches were master teachers and expected to be natural coaches with little or no training. To help coaches develop their skills, coaches need to work together and learn from each other (Aguilar, 2013; Brady, 2007).

Understanding Self

Lindsey, et al. (2007) explain, "the coach's understanding of self and others enhances the relationship and deepens the conversation below the surface level to help reveal long held assumptions and beliefs about student achievement" (p. 14). Coaches need to understand the mental models that are brought to the table (Aguilar, 2013). Wheatley (2009) reveals, "I've found that I can only change how I act if I stay aware of my beliefs and assumptions. Thoughts always reveal themselves in behaviors" (p. 22). Senge (1990) defines mental models:

Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior. (p. 8)

Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) suggest, "supervisors' cultural awareness must also be aimed at becoming versed in the cultural perspectives of both students and teachers. Just as teachers must find ways to help students transfer competencies into learning,

supervisors must help faculties acknowledge their own cultural frames" (p. 47). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) explain supervisors must understand self as well as understand that the teachers need to change the way they are teaching, when what they have done for years is no longer working (p. 60). Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) conclude it is imperative for teachers and supervisors to learn new ways of working within the school to best support the changing diversity of students. They argue that many acknowledge students are diverse, but we have a system that still applies a one size fits all approach to teaching.

When people enter into a coaching relationship, they become vulnerable (Aguilar, 2013 Murphy, 2009). Sergiovanni (2007) would suggest this raises the relationship to a moral level. Murphy (2009) argues coaching is personal, and we need to understand our beliefs. Coaches listen, ask questions, and learn so they can understand the people they are working with (Knight, 2011a; Murphy, 2009), but coaches also need to be reflective, so they must understand their own beliefs.

Understanding Adult Learning

Many coaches are teachers one day and coach the next (Barkley, 2011; Murphy, 2009). This may leave many coaches without the skills necessary to work with adult learners (Brady, 2007). West and Cameron (2013) believe coaches need help to develop a culture of learning on the part of the adults in the schools. Hull, Balka, Miles (2010) argue coaches must understand the dynamics of working with adult learners to be skillful at their craft of coaching. Brady (2007) suggests, "coaches must demonstrate how adults learn, give colleagues time to process new information, and resist sending the message that someone is trying to 'fix' them" (p. 47).

If coaches view their role a dictator or change to other adults, this does not work,

the coach needs to have a positive presupposition that the teacher is capable and willing to grow in his/her learning (Brady, 2007; Murphy, 2009; Psencik, 2011). Every teacher brings knowledge to the table and needs to be recognized for that. This understanding is part of the reciprocity principle, which states we can learn from each other (Knight, 2007). Psencik (2011) explains, "because all adults are social learners, they learn best when they collaborate with others" (p. 2). Knight warns (2011a), "when professionals are told what to do – when and how to do it, with no room for their own individual thought – there is a good chance they're not learning at all" (p. 20). It is important for coaches to understand teachers come to coaching with experience and coaches need to respect those experiences (Knight 2009b).

Pink (2009) found autonomy is one of the most important factors for motivating people. When autonomy is ignored during change implementation, there is a risk of teachers resisting that change (Knight 2009b). Holloway (2006) suggests for teachers to benefit the most from professional development, they need to be included in planning the professional development and how it will be presented. Killion, et al (2012) suggest adult learners need to have the choice to learn or not to learn, and coaches must respect their choice. Nonetheless, coaches also have the responsibility to find other ways to influence the teachers.

Gould, Brimijoin, Alouf and Mayhew (2010) studied collaboration between a university and school district with the focus on improving instruction. They concluded, "school-college partnerships dedicated to adult learning communities have the potential to model lifelong learning and build reflective, autonomous teachers who challenge themselves to prove the best education possible for every student" (p. 65). This study

implies that when adult learning is validated in collaboration or partnership, instruction can improve for students.

Psencik (2011) suggests when working with principals, the coach not only needs to remember that they are also adult learners, but they want to learn, when they have a need for the knowledge.

> Principals, like all adult learners, learn best when the work matters to them at the
> moment. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing and learn best when they
> can set goals for themselves. Their readiness for learning increases when they
> have a specific need to know. (p. 2)

Using the analogy of the coach and principals as dancers, Psencik (2011) explains, "by engaging the leader in the dance, the coach guides the individual being coached to create a pathway to achieve the learner's own goal" (Psencik, 2011, p. 145).

Establishing Trust

Of all the skills a coach needs, trust may be the most important. Coaches cannot do their work until they build trust with teachers (Killion, 2012; Murphy, 2009). Guiney (2001) explains the characteristics of a coach:

> This work [coaching] is not for the faint-hearted. To do it well requires a calm
> disposition and the trust-building skills of a mediator combined with the steely
> determination and perseverance of an innovator. Add to this mix the ability to
> know when to push and when to stand back and regroup in the long-term process
> of adopting new approaches to galvanize a school to function differently. (p. 741)

It is critical for coaches to establish relationships in order to be effective in implementing change (Knight, 2004). One of the fundamental skills taught in the

Cognitive Coaching model is the establishment of rapport (Costa & Garmston, 2002).

Berg, et al. (2013) claim, "trust is a key tool for teamwork that allows teams to get more

done in the long run" (Berg, et al., 2013, p.28). Lindsey, et al. (2007) explains, "Coaching

is based on rapport and relational trust between the coach and person being coached. The

trust level is enhanced when the coach is conscious of how culture influences the

coaching conversations" (p.14). Aguilar (2009) suggests a need to establish trust, listen,

ask questions, connect, and validate to be effective as a coach. Killion, et al. (2012)

explain:

> Effective coaches understand the importance of establishing trust in their
>
> relationships and the importance of fostering trusting relationships across the
>
> school community, enabling them to work effectively with administrators and
>
> teachers. When trust exists between the coach and staff and between the principal
>
> and coach, the coach is more credible and more likely to have a positive influence
>
> on teachers practice and have peers' respect. (p. 31)

Barkley (2011) observes trust takes time, it is hard to identify when there is trust in a

relationship, but also warns, "the coaching relationship may not always have the luxury

of time in the process for developing trust and respect" (p. 24). Barkley (2011) appears to

be the only writer on coaching who believes coaches can work without establishing trust.

Building Relationships

Comer (2009) explains in the implementation of school reform his school became

so focused on what to change, they lost focus of the need for the relational aspect of

education. "Unwittingly, separating relationships, behavioral, and instructional issues as

we did quickly led us to one of the central problems in education: a very strong focus on

curriculum, instruction, and assessment without adequate focus on relationships" (p, 60).

Establishing relationships is the central focus of effective coaching (Killion, et al, 2012).

For a coach to be effective, they must first understand self, have good communication

skills, and understand the adult learner with whom they are working (Murphy, 2009).

Sweeney (2013) posits it is important how coaches view themselves with in the

coaching relationship. She explains:

> Coaching also requires an incredible amount of poise and professionalism. As
>
> coaches, we have to resist the temptation to judge teachers. Instead, we must take
>
> a progress-minded approach that celebrates growth from both students and
>
> teachers. Coaches who believe they know more than the teachers, are better
>
> trained, or care more about the students will always struggle to build
>
> relationships. (p. 24)

Often coaches view teachers as machines, something that can, and needs to, be *fixed*, but

perhaps coaches should view themselves as gardeners, and place themselves in

relationships to tend and grow the garden. Sweeny (2013) argues often it is the principals

who place the coaches in positions to *fix* the teachers by placing the struggling teachers

with the coaches and not expecting all teachers to be coached. For the coaches to have

impact and positive relationships with all stakeholders, coaches need to be part of the

entire school culture.

Communication Skills

Questioning. Every coaching model has different steps, but the importance of

communication skills is essential to all of them. Barkley (2011) declares questioning is,

"the most critical of all the coaching skills" (p. xiii). The entire premise to Cognitive

Coaching is that the teacher has the answers already to change his/her teaching instruction, and it is through questioning that teacher transformation is achieved (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Knight (2007) details questioning as one of the key skills of a coach, questioning is important because it allows the coach to uncover the needs of the teacher or principal. As coaches ask questions, they are able to construct and deconstruct knowledge (Allen & Baber, 1992). It is through questions the coachee is able to tell his/her story. If teachers changed instruction because a coach told them what to do, we would have better instruction in the classroom, but it is not that easy to change instruction, so coaches need to ask questions.

Listening. Asking questions is not enough for a coach, the coach must also listen. Scott (2004) explains the most important part of the conversation is to be present in the conversation, and in order to be present, you must listen. She says there can be no relationship between people without conversation, in fact, if people are not talking to each other, they are not in relationship. Aguilar (2013) equates coaching to a dance in three parts – listening, questioning, and making suggestions. Coaches listen, ask questions, and learn so they can understand the people they are working with (Knight, 2011a). Killion, et al. (2012) explain, "perhaps the most challenging and important communication skill that a coach can apply in order to be effective in his or her work is to listen with respect" (p. 31).

Aguilar (2013) creates a six step arc of a coaching conversation: 1) check in and chat, 2) create a plan for the conversation, 3) check on previous commitments, 4) engage in coaching stance and approaches, 5) determine next steps, and 6) reflect on conversation and ask for feedback (p. 238). Aguilar's process gives the technical aspects

of a coaching conversation, but it is essential that through the conversation relationships and trust are established. Psencik (2011) explains the coaching conversation as developing trust, using observations, employing "laser-like listening and questioning skills, and sharing the benefit of their experiences and wisdom, coaches guide those they coach to discover strengths, establish goals, and design strategies to achieve those goals" (p. 5).

      Dialogue. Coaching is reflective, relationship-based and requires dialogue (Knight, 2011a, Murphy, 2009). As we have conversations with others, our realities shift (Allen & Baber, 1992). Shifting our realities through conversations is an underpinning of coaching, according to Costa and Garmston (2002). Isaacs (1999) suggests, "dialogue has promise in education because it challenges traditional, hierarchical models and proposes a method for sustaining 'partnership' – between teachers and staff, teachers and students, and students with each other. Dialogue can empower people to learn with and from each other" (p. 12). Jacobs, Yamamura, Guerra, and Nelson (2013) conclude that leaders within the school need relationships with teachers in order to have the dialogues that allow for beliefs to be challenged and examined.

      Psencik (2011) suggests, "effective coaching requires that coaches be aware of their language and listen carefully to the way those they coach use language to get work done or coordinate actions" (p. 130). Through our language, we communicate our beliefs about how students learn. Scott (2004) explains the importance of the coaching conversation because individuals "increase clarity, improve understanding and provide impetus for change, resulting in professional development, the advancement of projects and accelerated results" (p. xx).

Barriers to Effective Instructional Coaching

When instructional coaching models were implemented and there was no plan or focus for the coaches, they have proven not to be effective models for school improvement (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). How school districts and schools establish an environment of coaching can make or break a coaching program (Knight, 2011a). Denton and Kasbrouck (2009) share:

There appears to be a general assumption that 'everyone knows' what coaching consists of, with vague notions of observing teachers in classrooms and providing them with feedback about their teaching. Unfortunately, the rush to implement coaching before strong theoretical models, or even well-defined job descriptions, were in place has caused a good deal of confusion. (p. 155)

When coaches are placed on campuses with little understanding of the function of coaches, districts and schools may see little or no effect on instruction or student achievement (Knight, 2011a). For coaches to be effective, it is important for administrators to honor the work of coaches and to not demand coaches take responsibility for non-coaching tasks (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Additionally, coaches need training in order to develop their own craftsmanship and skills as coaches (Poglinco & Bach, 2004) and for a coaching program to be effective training must be provided (Killion, et al., 2012).

Many times when coaches work in PLCs to introduce new strategies the strategies do no transfer to the classroom, because teachers have not had time to process the strategy (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Guskey (1998) argues just putting teachers together to learn strategies is insufficient; they not only need the time to work together, but they need

to understand the purpose and results expected from the time together. He continues to explain implementation of new strategies is complex and teachers need time to explore, reflect, and implement new strategies. Yager, et al. (2011-2012) argue it is the responsibility of administration to provide time for coaches and teachers to work together, if administrators do not provide time for the collaborations, coaching will be ineffective. Joyce (2004) suggests it is the central office that needs to be involved with the implementation of programs designed to allow time for teachers to collaborate.

Cost can be a barrier for the effective implementation of instructional coaches (Killion, 2012). Knight (2012) did a study trying to identify the cost of instructional coaching and the effectiveness of the cost. One of his findings was coaches spent a great deal of their time on non-coaching tasks, so it was hard to evaluate the actual cost. He did conclude if coaches were working one on one with teachers, you needed about one coach to every ten teachers, but if the coaches were working with larger groups of teachers, such as PLCs, the coaches could work with a higher ratio of teachers. Knight (2012) suggested a larger in-depth study of how coaches spend their time and the tasks they are asked to perform that do not involve coaching teachers.

Gender and Leadership

In examining the research on gender and leadership in the traditional books used in educational leadership programs, there appears to be a lack of information on the topic. Fullan (2007) explains that reform in school is complex and must result in a change of school culture, but does not address the issue of gender or the role it plays in the change process. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue teachers must develop their professional capital to influence change in schools, but again, there is no mention of gender issues or

how gender works in establishing professional capital. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) suggest there is a fourth way to reform schools, but gender is not present in their fourth way. Anderson (2009) offers the vision of an educational leader as one who listens to all voices, however, there is no process provided to include all the voices, or to explore how gender may influence how these voices can be included. Senge (1990) describes the mental models we have as influencing the way we see the world. He explains it is important to "turn the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny" (p. 9). However, gender and our beliefs about gender are absent from his book.

Bolman and Deal (2008) address gender in their book from a variety of perspectives. They devote space to discuss culture, discrimination, stereotypes, and interpersonal dynamics. They also address gender as it relates to leadership and power. They argue that we live with certain frames, scripts that we play out in our relationships and our gender influences these frames. From their research, they conclude that both women and men identify leadership with being male.

Pink (2009) asserts we can understand what motivates people, but his work essentializes this concept by suggesting all people are motivated by the same stimuli regardless of gender or culture. According to Pink (2009) if we are given autonomy we will be motivated in our work. He explains, "The opposite of autonomy is control… Control leads to compliance; autonomy leads to engagement" (p. 108). Women live in a society where they are socialized to be compliant. This leads to the question, are women motivated the same as men?

In his book *Helping*, Schein (2011) examines the different ways help is offered

within society. Schein (2011) examines a variety of relationships; however he never directly examines the issue of gender in the relationships. There is an implication that when roles are inequitable, it is the one without power to balance the inequity when Schein (2011) asserts:

> The first and most critical role relationship is parent and child. Learning how to be subordinate, how to get things without authority or power, and, most important, how to give persons in authority what they need to make the relationship feel equitable, occurs early but has to be practiced throughout life. (p. 23)

Therefore, one can assume it is the role of women to give those in authority (male) the feeling that the relationship is balanced.

Although the previous books reviewed did not look at gender and leadership, there is research in the area. Mawson (2010) examined leadership styles in child's play by studying children in kindergarten and day long child care. The findings revealed boys were more hierarchical, dominate and dictatorial in their approach to leadership, whereas girls appeared to be more collaborative, benign and directorial it their approach (Mawson, 2010). The groups that formed were strong in both groups of children where outsiders had a hard time entering into the group (Mawson, 2010). Some mixed groups did emerge, but they were more likely to form within the day long setting (Mawson, 2010). In all groups formed, the play was scenario driven. The study also revealed both boys and girls were able to move into the mixed groups and take the lead of the group. When girls did take the lead in the mixed group, they were more like to move to a dictatorial leadership style (Mawson, 2010).

Ciolac (2012) asserts women leaders are more demanding of their employees, with the role and task of job being more important than the gender of the leader (Ciolac, 2012). Rosch, Boyd, and Duran's (2014) study revealed a significant difference between genders in what female and male students were trying to develop as in a leadership program. Their findings show women viewed leadership as leaders having specific traits for leadership and their focus was on developing the traits. The men in the study were more interested in developing the skills for leadership (Rosch, et al., 2014). Whereas the study found differences between genders, it did not find differences in ethnic groups.

Kharis (2013) explains, "differences in the leadership behaviors of men and women are equally based on stereotypes and expectations imposed by society and organizational structures" (p. 6). Women are in a unique position of managing their role in the workplace as well as "their obligation to perform unpaid labor at home" (p. 7). Kharis (2013) concludes, "repeatedly, women find themselves involved in an endless strife to prove themselves different from a negative stereotype. Women, unfortunately still have to deal with a unique set of difficulties because they are females in a traditionally male position" (p. 7).

Reynolds (2011) examined servant leadership from a feminist perspective by disrupting the duality of servant and leader. Servant leaders are often seen as needs focused, whereas, leaders are results focused (Reynolds, 2011), setting up a binary. Although gender is missing from the traditional literature on organizational leadership, servant leadership, with its more feminine tendencies, provides a space to move gender into organization leadership (Reynold. 2011). Bringing gender into the conversation of leadership allows for post-structural feminists to begin deconstructing the language

associated with leadership and male dominance in the literature on organizational

leadership (Reynolds, 2011).

Conclusion

This literature review examined coaching from its roots in supervision as a way to

improve professional development for teachers, explored the purpose and types of

coaching, as well as the effectiveness of coaching. The literature was examined for how

coaches can be agents of change and the barriers that make the job of coaching more

difficult. Finally, the place of gender was examined in leaderships and reform literature.

A gap in the literature exists on how the instructional coaches view themselves

within the political structure of school. Do instructional coaches see their positions as

political? Do instructional coaches believe they can influence change within the political

space they occupy? How do instructional coaches negotiate the space between? How

does gender play into the relationships of instructional coaches and how they perform

their work.

III. METHODOLOGY

On time to think Wheatley (2009) warns:

No one will give it to you because thinking is always dangerous to the status quo.

Those benefiting from the present system have no interest in new ideas. In fact,

thinking is a threat to them. The moment we start thinking, we'll change

something. (p. 102)

Drawing from Wheatley's words, this qualitative study of instructional coaches in the

Central Texas area gives participants time to think, to wonder if the status quo works;

maybe even to change. The coaches will be asked to reflect on their practices, how they

influence change within a school working with both teachers and administrators. Through

this self-reflection, the coaches will have time to evaluate their self-positioning in

schools.

Listening to the stories of instructional coaches and the language they use will be

critical to this study; Zhu (2011) defines the language of women as a subculture, unique

to women and permeating all aspects of the lives of women. This subculture is a socially

constructed voice of women. Wallin (2001) explains, "the unequal treatment of women is

structural and is embedded with the system" (p. 39). Freedman (2002) warns language

can make women "seem dependent and invisible" (p. 307). A feminist approach is useful

in analyzing the stories of the women, to hear in their own words how they negotiate the

space between administration and classroom teachers. Psencik (2011) claims, "effective

coaching requires that coaches be aware of their language and listen carefully to the way

those they coach use language to get work done or coordinate actions" (p. 130). If

coaches in practice need to be aware of their language, will I see them be purposeful in

their language choices in the telling of their stories?

Research Questions

In order to explore how female instructional coaches understand their role within the school improvement efforts, the study was framed by the following questions: How do instructional coaches negotiate the space between administrators and teachers?

- How do instructional coaches position themselves within school improvement efforts?

- What forms of power and influence do instructional coaches perceive they have?

- In what ways do instructional coaches navigate the political structures of the school system?

Methodology

Society has created a metanarrative which positions men as rational and women as irrational (Blackmore, 2000). St. Pierre (2000) observes, "women are usually on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies" (p. 481). St. Pierre (2000) continues to explain the first term in the binary is usually dominant over the second term. Such is the case with the binary of power. The binary that power is all male and all women are voiceless is a deeply held belief in Western society, to a level where it goes unnoticed and unchallenged. The binary is often expressed with sayings such as *boys will be boys* and girls are expected to be *good girls*. This binary needs to be challenged. Instead, we must listen for the language of power within the women's stories (Blackmore, 2013). It is important to challenge the language society uses as absolutes such as, "that is the way it is" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 484) in order to reframe realities. Within the educational system, there are inherent power structures that often go

unquestioned, accepted as the way it is. These power structures were created and based on the binary of male and female relationships and placement of who has power and who should be silent. This places the principal as the sole authority of the school and teachers as the silent followers.

   Breaking the binary of gender is difficult because it is such an accepted binary. Pagano (1990) asserts, "there are two kinds of people in the world – those who speak and those who are silent" (p. 138). Schein (2011) talks of the roles of conversation as the actor on the stage talking and the other, the audience, listening to the words. Both of these images establish binaries within society, and I assert binaries about gender in society. St. Pierre (2000) suggests by looking at dialogues and interactions in a conversation from a post structural view, the binary is disrupted and power is in constant motion.

   Pagano (1990) also declares it is through sharing our stories that connections are made and it is through these connections that learning takes place. Post structural feminist researchers utilize interviews as a primary way to collect data from their participants in order to tell their stories. Post structural feminist research must accept that these are only partial telling of the women's stories because the lives of the women are "complex webs of social relations" (Lyons, 2000, p. 34) that cannot be fully captured. In making sense of the stories of the women, "feminist researchers pay particularly close attention to issues of dominance and submission, especially when gender is involved" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 20).

   Post structural feminist researchers do not focus on why women are not privileged, but, "instead, the focus should be on how privilege is gained and retained by

dominant perspective and groups" (Blackmore, 2013, p. 149). Relationships will need to be deconstructed and then reconstructed to look at the relationships anew, to find deeper meaning within the structure (St. Pierre, 2000). For this study, then, I listened for ways in which the coaches represent dominant perspectives, as well as ways in which they are positioned in non-privileged groups. Further, I worked to understand how coaches' power and influence takes on different forms as they move between spaces.

Methods

Each woman has different experiences and different realities (St. Pierre, 2006; Wallin, 2001). Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) suggest coaches should start the coaching relationship by listening to the story of the people they are working with. As with this coaching model, in this study it was important to hear the stories of each coach because there is no one truth to the women who are coaching. For this reason, the unit of analysis was the individual participant. Through in-depth interviewing (Hesse-Biber, 2014), I tried to hear their stories, to learn about their views of coaching as they worked in the space between. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain, "in-depth interviewing allows the researcher to explore complex, contradictory, or counterintuitive matters" (p. 4). Because of the ambiguity of the role of an instructional coach, this method of interviewing helped me to understand the work and self-positioning of the coaches. Rubin and Rubin (2012) share that when what is being studied is "nearly invisible" (p. 5), in-depth interviewing may be one of the few ways to get to the importance of the story.

I created an online document containing scenarios for the participants to respond to and expand on what the other coaches shared. I decided to add this piece to the data collection study because I was hearing form the instructional coaches that they were very

busy and finding the common time for the focus group would be difficult for them. I thought by allowing for the instructional coaches to respond when they had time might generate more discussion and collaboration from the instructional coaches, honoring their time and making this convenient.

After conducting the interviews and reviewing the online discussion, I facilitated a focus group of the coaches. As a feminist researcher, it was important to allow the women in the study to share their experience so the women can see their stories as, "not just individual but collective" (Munday, 2014, p. 243). Through the sharing of stories it allowed the women to move from being marginalized within the system and placed importance on their stories (Munday, 2014).

Participant Selection

According to S. Durham (Personal Communication, 2013), Project Coordinator Curriculum & Instruction at the central Texas regional service center, in early 2000 the service center started an instructional coaching network for instructional coaches in the central Texas area. The purpose of the instructional coaching network is to provide ongoing professional development to the coaches working in schools the service center supports, as well as providing a space where coaches can network with each other. The coaching network offers a half day professional development each month throughout the school year. School districts can purchase a district license where all the instructional coaches in the district may attend, or a coach can attend for a per session fee.

In an earlier pilot phase of this study, a survey was conducted at an instructional coaching network meeting held at a regional education service center. The purpose of this survey was to develop a profile of instructional coaches in the central Texas area. One

hundred twenty-eight (128) coaches responded to the survey. Appendix B shows the results of the survey. One of the limitations in this data was the survey was printed front and back and 8% of the participants did not complete the back of the survey, which contained the demographic data. The survey results show 85% of the responding participants were women (10% did not respond to the question). Additionally the survey revealed 62% self-identified as White, 9% as Hispanic, 2% as African American, 2% as other, 8% did not respond, and 17% identified their sex, but not ethnicity.

The survey also revealed the majority of the coaches are new to coaching, believe in their own professional development, but have little training in coaching. This profile helped guide the selection of participants in the study.

For this study, I was concerned with exploring a typical instructional coach, so I needed to examine the typical coach, which is female. The ethnicity of the instructional coaches chosen for the study was not used in the selection criteria to include or exclude an instructional coach from the study. Through the use of purposeful sampling (Bazeley, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2011) I hoped to hear the stories of typical instructional coaches.

Using a maximum variation sampling method to select participants (Merriam, 2009) I selected a variety of participants. Participants from the different levels of the educational system brought different perspectives on issues of power. The vast majority of instructional coaching literature examines the success of elementary coaches, with a few studies on the work of middle schools. There is very little research on coaching in high school environments; therefore, I wanted to hear the stories of the coaches from all three leveled of K-12 education.

At the May 2014 Region XIII instructional coaching network meeting, I recruited participants for the study. The meeting was a cruising meeting, with multiple tables placed around the room for the members to stop by and get information. I had a table where I explained my study and the time requirement of the participants. I asked for participants to volunteer by completing a contact information form. The contact form included a description of where they coach, how long they have coached, as well as information on how to contact them if they were interested in participating in the research. The form also included the expectation of the study, including an hour long interview and participation in a focus group. I did not exclude anyone from completing a form with their contact information in case I needed to change the criteria for selection, such as two years of experience. From this meeting, I had 16 instructional coaches interested in participating in the study, with eight meeting the basic criteria of three years of experience. West and Cameron (2013) concluded coaches need about three years to understand their role and responsibilities as coaches. I believed it was necessary to interview experienced coaches in order for the coaches to have developed their own coaching identity (West & Cameron, 2013) and to have had a chance to experience different opportunities of issues of power within their coaching career.

In October, nine instructional coaches who met the criteria I established were emailed and asked if they were still interested in participating in the study. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain it is not necessary to have a large number of people to interview, but to have a thoroughness of participants.

Four of the nine instructional coaches responded that they were still interested. Two of these coaches were elementary coaches, one a campus based coach and one a

district level coach. Two of the instructional coaches were middle school coaches, again, one a campus based coach and one a district level coach. Two school districts were represented by these four instructional coaches. However, there were no volunteers from the coaching network who were high school coaches, so I used snowball sampling (Merriam, 2009) to locate the high school participants. This occurred by talking to other doctoral students about my study and them telling me about great high school coaches that they knew.

All the participants in the study were white females with at least 3 years of coaching experience. Three of the coaches currently work at Title I schools fulltime with one who works occasionally at a Title I campus. The majority of the women work with math or science as their primary field. Because I wanted coaches who represented the coaches in the network, it was not a surprise that the coaches that participated did not represent diversity according to the pilot study data.

Table 5 (Appendix C) summarizes each of the six instructional coaches who participated in the study including their pseudonyms, types of school, years teaching, years coaching, and gender of administrators. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the coaches and the work they are doing. Each instructional coach came with a different background, different school environment, and different vision of coaching.

Data Collection

In this study I contacted the selected participants, scheduled, and conducted two interviews. The majority of the interviews took place in coffee houses or cafes of the participants choosing. The first interview was designed to establish rapport with the instructional coach, with the focus of the second interview to achieve the rich, deep

stories of the coaches. An online discussion focused on coaching scenarios was used to attempt to get the coaches sharing coaching strategies and begin a method of collaboration. Lastly a focus group was conducted to ask intentional questions, to fill in gaps in the data, and to clarify the data. This discussion took place around my dining room table.

In-depth Interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain when using an in-depth interview method, the researcher wants to talk to people who have experience and knowledge with the topic being researched. I set up appointments to conduct interviews with each of the participants at a time and place of their choosing. Lyons (2000) explains feminist interviewers should create a comfortable environment to conduct the interview as a way to establish rapport with the participant. I interviewed the participants in an informal setting, such as coffee shops, cafés, or another setting where the participants were comfortable in order to establish the *kitchen table* environment where women commonly share their knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2006). The phrase kitchen table refers to the epistemological learning of women, accepting that women share their knowledge in informal settings (Delgado-Bernal, 2006). Although this phrase may appear to perpetuate a stereotype of women's learning, stereotypes are not necessarily negative (Ciolac, 2013). Using this kitchen table approach validates the learning of women in informal settings, disrupting the patriarchy of learning taking place in formal settings having more importance than the learning of women.

Using a digital recorder, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain, "in a semi-structured interview, the

researcher has a specific topic to learn about, prepares a limited number of questions in advance and plans to ask follow-up questions" (p. 31). The development of rapport with the participants was important to establish early in the conversation, since it was possible the coaches were nervous about talking about their work with another instructional coach. Meredith was the only interviewee who did not want to meet in person and her interviews took place over the phone with the researcher in her home and Meredith in her classroom. A semi-structure interview protocol (Appendix D and E) was used to conduct the interviews allowing for flexibility for the researcher to delve deeper into the stories of the instructional coaches. Each interview was approximately one hour in length. I assured the instructional coaches I would change all names of schools and teachers to help maintain confidentiality.

Through the semi-structured interview model, I created a flow of questions to help the participants feel comfortable in telling their stories by asking descriptive questions to allow the coaches to discuss their work (Hesse-Biber, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Using the in-depth interview protocol of Rubin and Rubin (2012), I looked for the "rich and detailed information" (p. 29) and asked questions that were open-ended, allowing the interviewee to "respond any way he or she chooses, elaborating upon answers, disagreeing with the question, or raising new issues" (p. 21). Lastly, questions were asked in any order to solicit the rich and deep data, allowing for flexibility in the interview process.

Memoing

After each interview, I memoed my initial thoughts on the interview making special notice of issues of power that I heard (Hesse-Bieber, 2014). By memoing, I was

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able to capture my initial thoughts on the data that I might find helpful from the interview. Because of this technique, I was about to go back to Lindsey and probe deeper into her feelings on social justice. Memoing allowed me to reflect on the interview and examine my own position within the study, keeping my own feminism in check. As I reflected on the interview, it was also important to track comments that contradict my own perspectives of power and gender within the coaching relationships. It was through this memoing I began to realize the coaches were sharing stories or characteristics reinforcing the metanarrative. After all of the interviews were conducted, I listened to the interviews again, making additional notes about my thoughts of the interviews and added to my memos.

Online Scenario

These scenarios (Appendix F) were designed from experiences I have had as an instructional coach or that had been shared with me by my colleagues. This document also included three general reflection questions. Three of the coaches participated in reflecting in the online discussion: Maggie, Lindsey and Katy. These three represented instructional coaches from all three levels of the educational setting, elementary, middle, and high school. All three responded to the prompts, but the dialog I had hoped for between the coaches did not happen with this method of data collection so I decided that I needed to conduct the focus group after all.

Focus Group

After I conducted the interviews and online discussion, I facilitated a focus group of the coaches. As a feminist researcher, it was important to allow the women in the study to share their experience so they can see their stories as "not just individual but

collective" (Munday, 2014, p. 243). Through sharing stories, the women moved from being marginalized within the system and placed importance on their stories (Munday, 2014).

The focus group allowed me to develop a set of questions that drove the conversation, allowing for the participants to engage in dialogue with each other (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The questions I prepared for the focus group were created once the initial interview data had been analyzed. The questions reflected areas of the themes that emerged from the data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the themes of the data. This also allowed for me to use member's check (Merriman, 2009) of the initial themes with the participants of the study, allowing for the participants to clarify any of their stories.

Only two of the six instructional coaches, Maggie and Lindsey, participated in the focus group. The focus group was held early evening at my house, where we sat around the kitchen table and shared our stories. I explained to the instructional coaches we were using a kitchen table format for the data collection, so we were going to have our conversation around the table to honor how women learn. The conversation focused on the day to day work of the coaches including why they make the coaching choices they make when working with teachers and administrators. We started the focus group by sharing our best coaching story that happened that day.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and I did not start the coding until all the interviews had been transcribed, so that I could be consistent with my coding. I kept a record of the codes and the pseudonyms I used to protect my participants (Bell, 2014).

Rubin and Rubin (2012) explain in the data analysis, the researcher must listen to the

"ordinary events and deduce the underlying rules or definitions from these descriptions,

paying particular attention to the way words are used and to the stories that convey

cultural assumptions" (p. 20). Therefore, I used Hatch's (2002) semantic induction

method for analyzing the data. There are nine steps to the method: 1) read the data for

frames of analysis, 2) create domains within the frames, 3) identify salient domains and

assign codes, 4) reread the data and refine domains, 5) decide which domains are

supported by the data and look for data that is counter to the domains, 6) complete an

analysis within domains, 7) look for themes across domains, 8) create a master outline of

the relationships between and among domains, and 9) select the data to support the

outline (Hatch 2002, p. 162).

The data were analyzed using a two level approach: first, the analysis of the

instructional coaches' responses to the interview questions, and on a second level, my

own perspective of interpreting their stories as I analyze from a post-structural feminist

lens (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The way language and silences were used in the interviews

gave insight to the underlying beliefs of the participants (Freedman, 2002). Although the

participants did not use the word *power* in the responses to the questions, I listened for

the subculture language (Zhu, 2011) of the women that revealed the position of power in

the coaches' stories.

Using a feminist post-structuralist lens to complete this analysis at each step of

the way I implemented post-structural techniques of deconstruction, such as,

problematizing, contextualizing, and challenging the data (Slattery, 2006). By

deconstruction I am referring to a critical examination of the data, not a destructive

analysis, rather breaking apart the language that is used (Slattery, 2006). Problematizing the data allowed me to expose, "internal contradictions, omissions, exclusions, ambiguities, and injustices" (Slattery, 2006, p. 3). Slattery (2006) explains contextualizing is to critically evaluate from the perspectives of race, class, gender, etc., allowing for the appreciation of how these forces all shape the stories of the participants. Challenging provides a method of critically examining the "hidden and overt assumptions" (Slattery, 2006, p. 3) formed by the metanarrative of society.

This chapter focuses on using Hatch (2002) semantic analysis to create the frames or lenses of data analysis and to create domains. Chapter V continues the analysis with a focus on the deconstruction of the domains using Slattery's (2006) post structural analysis.

My first step was to determine the initial frames of analysis (Hatch, 2002). According to Hatch (2002), "frames of analysis are essentially levels of specificity within which data will be examined" (p. 163). In order to do this, I listened to the interviews making note of my initial impressions of the instructional coaches. I chose to start by listening to the taped interviews to hear each of the voices of the instructional coach as she explained her work.

As I was listening I was also thinking about how to deconstruct the stories I was hearing. I made notes of the impressions the stories were making for me, such as, why did it matter who was asking the coach about their work framed how they would respond. Lindsey is a perfect example of this when she asked, "People in education or just people?" This process of deconstruction helped to establish the initial domains of analysis by making me think differently about how to frame the coaches' stories.

To help me further deconstruct, I started making themes and posting the themes so I could play with the interaction between the themes. For example, I had posted *power*, *gender*, *coaching identity*, *relationships*, *gender* and I wondered how these were related to one another. What was the overall domain encapsulating these themes under a single domain. When applying this post-structural analysis to the stories, it dawned on me that the metanarrative of administrator having power was beginning to emerge, as well as the metanarrative of women wanted to please the person with the perceived power. In this case, the person with the perceived power was me, the interviewer; they continually asked if they were answering the questions correctly. I was surprised by the constant need for reassurance from the coaches throughout the interviewing process.

I knew I would be interested in the relationship between the coaches and administrators, and the coaches and teachers. However, by problematizing (Slattery, 2006), the data of how instructional coaches self-identify emerged as a frame. I problematized the data by examining the data from a variety of ways; wondering if there was a different way to explain the data or the underlying reason why coaches describe their work as they do. I kept asking why are the coaches using certain words, such as Lindsey referring to an all-male team she worked with as her "dude team." From this initial analysis four frames emerged: 1) coaches identity, 2) working with teachers, 3) working with principals, and 4) gender and coaching. These frames were lenses that I used to start the analysis of the data.

Once I had these frames established, I read the written transcripts looking for domains within each frame, approaching the data with a mindset of deconstruction, looking for the inner meanings or contradictions within each of the stories. Hatch

explains, "creating the domains is the key inductive element in this model; the data are read searching for particulars that can be put into categories because of their relation to other particulars" (p. 164). After rereading the transcript, I placed the identified domains on color coded notecards with references to the frames. I sorted the cards into categories; I went back to the transcripts and wrote comments on each of the transcripts, scenario responses and focus group transcript in an attempt to deconstruct the underlying meanings of the stories of the instructional coaches by digging deeper into the data. I was always wondering what the coach was trying to say through the story they were sharing with me. Once the transcripts, scenarios, and focus group were coded, I looked at the data to see what supported the domains (Appendix G). From this analysis, I settled on four domains, coaches on coaching, power and coaching, coaches as leaders, and gender and coaching.

I searched for themes between the domains and created a master outline of the relationships that I saw develop (Hatch, 2002). Eventually, I selected the data that I would share to explain the themes which had emerged in response to the questions I am researching and completed the master outline (Hatch, 2002). Using this outline and the methods of deconstruction, I wrote the analysis of the data. Figure 1 represents the relationships between these themes.
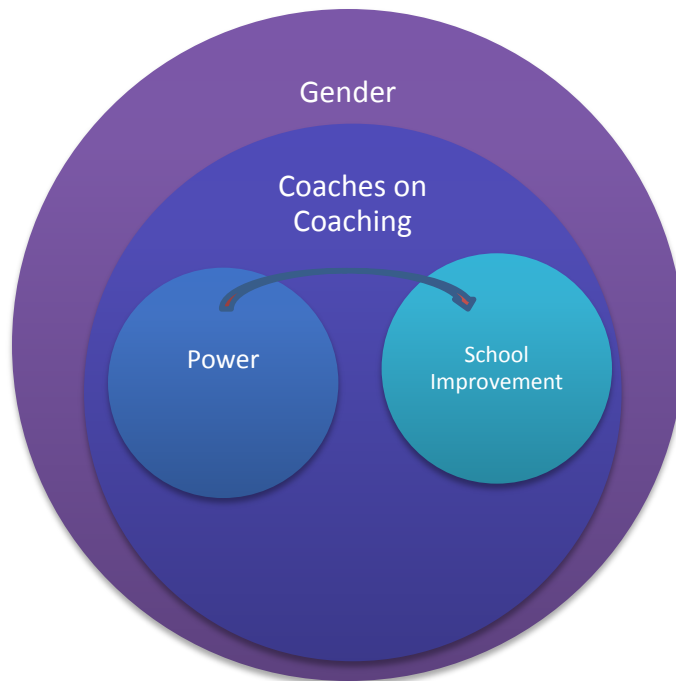
Figure 1. Relationships between the Frames and Themes.

Gender runs implicitly throughout each theme as well as being an overt theme in this study. Because gender is a part of any relationship (Blackmore, 1997; Binns, 2008) and is particularly inherent in schools because of the structures of the school that were historically established for the men in the school to be the leaders of the school (Blount, 2000). Therefore how the coaches conceptualize their work is in relationship to their own identity as women working within a school.

The section of coaches on coaching describes the way the participants conceptualize this work. This conceptualization influences the way they see the power relationships. Because they see their work primarily as helping teachers, they focus on reducing the power they perceive they have 'over' teachers. The coaches view power as inherent in the educational systems from the historical view of the hierarchical structure of schools (Blount, 2000). This notion of power implies the coaches' own conception of principals having power over them when they were teachers. This understanding of power and position within the school may contribute to the coaches' reluctance to become principals.

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Because coaches want to minimize power over teachers, the way they contribute to school improvement is by light coaching. Light coaching allows the coach to be seen as a giver of resources, not someone who is going to challenge the beliefs of the teachers. When coaches positions themsselves as resource providers rather than challengers, they can continue to feel they are being helpful without risking being disliked by the teachers. Heavy coaching requires pushing people out of their comfort zones (Killion, 2009). The heavy coaching can cause a cognizant dissonance, which allows for the teachers to grow (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Although the coaches in this study state that their job is to help teachers grow and improve their practice, the coaches seem reluctant to do the heavy coaching necessary for this. Their approach to school improvement seems to be highly dependent on their view of power.as something to be minimized.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In order to establish credibility and trustworthiness, there needs to be transparency within the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2014). However, as a post-structuralist,

> Neutrality is impossible because everyone has interests and attitudes that influence how topics are selected, what questions are asked and what means of analysis are considered appropriate. Like snowflakes, no two researchers are exactly alike, so the conclusions reached by different researchers are unlikely to match. (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 21)

I made sure the description I gave of my process was clear so that it is understandable to other researchers. I was "methodic" as Yin (2011) describes by having a clear method, process, complete and "avoid unexplained biases" (p.20), by looking at my data, by acknowledging my own feminist frame, and also by looking for alternative ways to explain the data (Bazeley, 2013). I conducted member checks with the participants as a

way to validate my findings (Merriam, 2009). I used data as evidence of my findings. I used triangulation as a way to ensure my findings were consistent with the literature or to see if there was another possible explanation for the data (Bazeley, 2013). Although there is limited research on how instructional coaches perceive their roles as they impact change, there is literature on how others perceive their roles. By comparing the stories of the coaches with the literature, I triangulated the data (Bazeley, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

There are many ethical considerations of feminist researchers that may be unique to traditional research methods and epistemology (Bell, 2014). The first is positioning the researcher within the research; this implies issues of power (Bell, 2014). Bell (2014) argues feminist research cannot be value-free because the focus of the research is to give voice to the women who have been silenced.

Edwards and Mauthner (2012) suggests four ethical models: Deontological or Universalist, utilitarian or consequentialist, virtue ethics, and a feminist ethic of care. Working from these models, I used virtue ethics. This model allowed me to focus on my own moral base of feminism, even though the coaches I worked with may not see the world as I see it; they may not share my values.

Bell (2014) explains, "what characterizes an overall feminist approach to ethics seems to involve paying more attention to context, relationships, and power issues" (p. 84). I think by doing my research in informal settings selected by the participant, I was able to provide a safe place for my participants and develop a relationship with them. This was also true in allowing Meredith to do only phone interviews and not pushing her to meet outside of her school.

Bell (2014) identifies eight ethical practices that feminist researchers must focus on when conducting research:

> (1) do no harm (beneficence); (2) confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity; (3) informed consent; (4) disclose and potential for deception (e.g. relating to overt or covert research practices); (5) power between the researcher and the subject; (6) representation or ownership of research findings; (7) ensuring respect for human dignity, self-determination, and justice, including safeguards to protect the rights of venerable subject, (8) demonstrating that the research is engaged with the above six issues, in order to obtain required formal ethics approval and/or adherence to professional codes/guidelines (p 85).

I made sure to follow each of the eight key steps by obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and conducting members' checks (Merriman, 2009).

Positionality

I am currently in my eighth year as a district instructional coach. As a district coach, I work on many campuses and with many grade levels. For me, the role of the instructional coach is more than just helping teachers learn and implement new strategies. I see the role of an instructional coach as a change agent. I believe the instructional coach holds a unique position where she can influence change with both teachers and administrators. To me the instructional coach's role is to analyze decisions for unintended consequences, push for change where it is needed, and always ask if the decision is best for children or just the easier choice for the adults. In order for the instructional coach to be this kind of change agent, relationships must be built with both teachers and administrators to create a collaborative team.

It was important to me to come from a feminist position when conducting this study. I have questioned the authority of males most of my life. Time and time again, I have been told that I could not do something because I was a woman. I have also had opportunities to enter fields because I am a woman, such as, when I was in high school and learned photography because they needed a female photographer. I know not all women have felt this in their lives, but it is part of my history. As hooks (2000) explains, discrimination based on sex is the one discrimination that can occur within a family, and this has been my reality. Because of my strong feminist beliefs, I felt it was appropriate to embrace this frame and apply the post-structural feminist frame to the study.

Limitations

This study only looked at instructional coaches in the Central Texas region; therefore, the finding of this study may not be transferable to other regions of the country. The instructional coaches involved in this study were all white females which may be why the metanarrative of the binary of men and women was so strong for these women. For this study to be more comprehensive, it would be important for instructional coaches with more diversity to be interviewed. Although instructional coaches from a variety of grade levels were included in the study, they did not represent a diversity of content with most focusing on math and science. Instructional coaches from other content areas may have different views of the work that they do. I think a focus group where there are more participants than two would also strengthen the findings by allowing more voices to be heard.

Conclusion

While there is a growing body of research on instructional coaching in schools,

the majority of this research focuses on how teachers perceive coaching support and how coaching affects the instructional practice of teachers. This study will contribute to the discourse by examining instructional coaching from the perspective of women who are doing the work of coaching for the purpose of creating a conceptual model based on this perspective. Such a perspective is needed not only because the majority of research on coaching privileges the teacher perspective, but also because the most prominent voices in instructional coaching are voices of men. However, the reality is that most instructional coaches are women, and gender matters (Binns, 2008). The many layers and complexity of the instructional coaches were important to the findings of this study. This study sought to reveal the lens through which instructional coaches view themselves and contributes to an expanded understanding of instructional coaching by giving voice to the women who actually do the work.

IV. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to allow instructional coaches to reflect on their roles within schools and how they work to implement change. Giving voice to the coaches and their stories allows for a deeper understanding of how instructional coaches negotiate the space between administrators and teachers.

Introducing the Instructional Coaches

In order to understand the work of the coaches, it is important to understand why the women became instructional coaches as well as the context of the schools where they do their work. Each instructional coach is profiled looking at their teaching experiences, the transition to instructional coach, a description of the school or schools were they work, and lastly, their coaching philosophy. The elementary coaches are introduced first, followed by the middle school coaches and lastly the high school coaches. Each of these women is exceptional and I have great admiration for the work they do to improve instruction on their campuses. My intent was to convey the journey each coach had taken to becoming an instructional coach, their school context, and beliefs of these women in these profiles. I hope I have succeeded.

Meredith

Educational background. Meredith is an experienced teacher who aspired to be an instructional coach early in her career. Meredith was a classroom teacher for fourteen years prior to becoming an instructional coach. During her teaching career she taught primarily fourth and fifth grade. At the end of her classroom teaching career, she specialized in teaching science K-5 at the school. During her last year in the classroom, Meredith worked with an instructional coach. Meredith shared that she told the

instructional coach, "When I am ready, I want your job." When an instructional position opened in the district, Meredith actively campaigned for the position. She credits her reputation as an effective teacher to explain why the principal of one of the elementary schools contacted her offering her the position of instructional coach.

School context. Meredith is in her sixth year as an instructional coach for a Title I school with 50% of the school on free and reduced lunch. There are approximately 500 students in grades three to five at the campus where Meredith is an instructional coach. Meredith explained there is a sister school next door that serves grades K-2. The sister school originally served grades K-5, but due to overcrowding, a second campus was built. There are three female administrators at Meredith's school, a principal, an assistant principal, and an assistant principal intern. There are approximately 22 teachers. Meredith explained she works with each of the administrators at different times depending on the work she is doing.

In the Texas school accountability system, schools can earn special distinction for students performing above the expected level of achievement. Meredith's school earned a distinction last year in their reading scores, but not in their math scores. This would indicate that the reading program at Meredith's school is on track for the majority of the students. Meredith, however, explained, "right now, for fifth grade, actually, I'm rolling out a fluency program." Meredith shared she was not sure that this was how she should be spending her time. When asked who she thought she should be working with she shared, "I would say for third grade is math."

Meredith seemed to think that having new administration at her campus was influencing how she was spending her time. "We have a new administration, everybody

at admin is new, but I mean everybody's gone." I asked if she meant the central office people because I knew there was a new superintendent, but she said no, "it's an all new campus administration." This led me to believe she was unsure of her relationship with the principal. At this point in the conversation she asked, "This is confidential right?"

> No. You know what? Today, honestly, I spent a good chunk of time trying to help people get on the new textbooks and how use the assessment program. The way to create an assessment online and it was not user-friendly.

The new technology and professional development seems to dominate Meredith's time taking her off of her campus.

> So for some reason, we have had tremendous amount of training. I've been off my campus, so I've been in a lot of different trainings here at three different series of teaching. So we've been off – the coaches have been off campus a lot. Um, when I was on campus before, you know, the training, a lot of assessment, are you familiar with iStation? Okay, so I was just supporting my teachers getting their kids, getting their data on iStation. So I am doing a lot computer support.

This change in the resources for her teachers was an issue the Meredith continued to bring into the conversation.

Coaching philosophy. Meredith describes being a coach as being a "helper." She explained, "I'll get the teacher through the day." Meredith desires to be a transformational coach. She demonstrated this desire with a story of talking with other instructional coaches in the district, "you know we read the book, *The Art of Coaching*, we're supposed to be transforming, be transformational, and right now we're therapy coaches, all of us. Our teachers are so overwhelmed." She shared her frustration with

what she says is the role of an instructional coach and what she does on a daily basis as not being in alignment. Meredith does not see herself as being a transformational coach when she spends so much of her time trying to get teachers and students login to a textbook or online assessment.

Maggie

　　Educational background. With 36 years in the classroom, Maggie had the most classroom experience of the six participating coaches. Maggie is in her sixth year as an instructional coach and describes herself as a professional educator rather than a teacher. She feels this description deepens the meaning of teacher to one who continues to grow in the profession of education. Maggie explained if you identify yourself as an educator, it moves the teacher beyond a person who has all her lessons preplanned in the filing cabinet to be used year after year. She sees her experience in education as an important quality she brings to her coaching, especially since she is constantly learning with the teachers.

　　School context. Maggie works at two different campuses, both of which have female principals. Her primary campus has approximately 800 students and is a Title I school.　Maggie refers to her second campus as "her on-call campus" this campus consistently scores well on the state assessment. Maggie explains the campus administrator does not want her teachers to be "messed with" by which she means changed or encouraged to use different instructional strategies because "everything is just fine." Within both the schools, Maggie talked about how important it is to "enroll the teachers" to work with an instructional coach. Maggie uses the terms "enrolling teachers" from Knight's (2005) coaching model. The purpose of enrolling teachers is to have

teachers agree to work with an instructional coach because the teachers choose to work with the instructional coach. She is aware that this process of enrolling teachers is different at each of the campuses.

Coaching philosophy. Maggie explained her coaching philosophy was grounded in the model of Steven Barkley (2011) and Dianne Sweeny (2013). Both of these authors on instructional coaching focus on student outcomes. Maggie expounded that she worked with teachers at different levels. Some she worked with one on one, others through the PLC, and a third group in a coaching cycle. She clarified that she used the forms from Sweeny (2013) to help the teachers focus on student data and the coaching cycle. Maggie indicated that she became familiar with Barkley and Sweeney's work through district training. Maggie frequently referenced this work, which seemingly suggests she uses the district training.

Lindsey

Educational background. Lindsey is in her fifth year as an instructional coach. Before becoming a coach, Lindsey was a middle school science classroom teacher for 13 years. Lindsey was working on her administrator certification when she became an instructional coach. Lindsey shared the more she worked on her certification, the more she realized she loved the instructional side of administration and not the administrative side. This led her to a position as an instructional coach. Lindsey was the only participant who had experience as both a campus based instructional coach and a district level instructional coach. This allowed Lindsey to bring a unique perspective to the study.

School context. Lindsey has worked as an instructional coach at a variety of middle schools. Lindsey indicated she sees more commonality between the middle schools she works with than differences. She shared one of the commonalities is how busy the administrators are on all the campuses. The middle schools have about 1,000 students, with one principal and two or three assistant principals. She usually works directly with one of the assistant principals. Lindsey explained the administrators she works with are both male and female with two of each gender at her four schools. Her schools have ranged from Title I schools to high performing schools.

Coaching philosophy. Lindsey clarified that instructional coaching was the place in education where she believed she could focus on instruction. She shared, "The purpose of instructional coaching would be to improve instruction in the classroom by encouraging teachers to self-reflect, to sell-improve, to buy into the process of self-improvement. A coach is to lead and guide." Throughout the conversations with Lindsey, she shared stories of how she worked with teacher to see the entire child. By helping teachers see student differently, such as it is not the child's fault that he is homeless, so maybe the teacher should not treat him differently, making it clear her focus was teacher improvement.

Candace

Educational background. Candace was a classroom science teacher for 24 years before becoming an instructional coach. Ten years of her teaching was at middle school and the remaining 14 at high school. She taught many of those years at what she described as an "inner city school." Candace explained that she became an instructional coach somewhat by accident. Candace had retired from teaching, but because she

believed the economy was not strong, she returned to the education profession. She shared when she was applying for a teaching job, she must have inadvertently checked a box for instructional coach. Candace thought the instructional coaching position was an afterschool program and was surprised when she interviewed for the position that she would be working with teachers and more surprised she actually got the job. She laughed and thought perhaps they had made a mistake. She is now in her fifth year as an instructional coach.

School context. The campus where Candace is an instructional coach has around 1,100 students whom she describes as "multicultural." She works directly with the principal of the school who is male. The principal is in his first year in the post, having previously been an assistant principal at the school. Candace worked with the principal when he was an assistant principal. She works with 10 teachers, nine who teach the core science classes, and one who teaches gifted and talented students. There is no science department chair and Candace disclosed she has taken on the role of department chair. Candace explained that even though she knows that is not her job, "I do it because it is needed."

Coaching philosophy. Candace appeared reflective in all of her answers during the interview taking several seconds between the question and the answer. She shared, "for a long time I didn't really know what I did. There is an awful lot about this job that is 'you figure it out' and 'you supply what you can.'" Candace was very clear that she sees herself as supporting teachers and not teaching teachers. The role of being an administrator or evaluator makes Candace very uncomfortable. She explained that there is a push in her district for the instructional coaches to do official classroom observations

that would be included in the teacher's evaluation. This pressure to become more of an evaluator is causing Candace to rethink her position as an instructional coach.

Caitlyn

Educational background. Caitlyn started as a middle school math teacher for two years before moving to the high school where she taught for 10 years, seven years as the department chair. Caitlyn came to the role of instructional coach because the principal of the school decided to make the math and science department chairs into part time coaching positions. Caitlyn tried to balance being a classroom teacher, department chair, and instructional coach, as well as, a mother and wife. After one year she realized that it was "too many hats" and after talking with her principal, she decided to leave the classroom and become a full time instructional coach. Although Caitlyn started coaching with another instructional coach, she is now the only instructional coach at the school. She works in all content areas and spends her time focused on instructional strategies. Caitlyn has now been coaching for seven years.

School context. Cailyn is an instructional coach for the largest district in this study. She coaches at a comprehensive high school with almost 3,000 students serving grades 9 to 12. There are six administrators on the campus, a male principal, three male assistant principals, and two female assistant principals. There are approximately 170 teachers at the campus. Caitlyn explained that although she is the only instructional coach on the campus, she works closely with the school improvement facilitator as a colleague when preparing professional development for the campus. Caitlyn revealed she shares an office with the school facilitator and although they have different contract days, they work together to improve instruction on the campus. This close relationship with the

school facilitator comes through in Caitlyn referring to "we" in her responses to many of the questions.

Coaching philosophy. Caitlyn explained her instructional coaching philosophy is based on Steven Barkley (2011). Her alignment with Barkley is evident in statements she made. "I think, like Steve Barkley (2011) says, right, you say what you're gonna do, and you do it. And, like, so we try to really do." Caitlyn disclosed that she saw her work as a "liaison" between the teachers and administrators. In referring to herself and the school improvement facilitator, she explained, "we listen to teachers. We're sort of liaisons, and that's kind of how we sort of view ourselves and how we try to position ourselves." Caitlyn views her position as one of focusing on instruction, which she revealed, "this is my whole job, which is amazing."

Katy

Educational background. All of Katy's experience as a professional educator has been at the same campus. She taught for eight years as a high school math teacher teaching Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 before leaving the profession to stay home as a mother of twin boys. After two years she decided to return to the classroom, but the principal had different plans. When Katy was looking for a teaching position, the principal asked whether she would be interested in becoming the instructional coach for the campus. She admitted at the time, she did not know what it meant to be an instructional coach. Nonetheless, she decided she would try the position and is now in her sixth year of being an instructional coach.

School context. The campus where Katy works is a comprehensive high school with approximately 2,200 students where she works with the male principal of the school. Katy works primarily with the three Algebra 1 teachers because that is the course that is tested for accountability reasons from the state, but there are approximately 20 math teachers in the school. There have been two administrators whom Katy has worked with as an instructional coach, both male. She disclosed the first administrator started at the same time she started coaching so they learned together. She explained this collaboration helped them to define their roles, which has led to an easier transition to the new administrator.

Coaching philosophy. Katy views her role as teaching teachers. She believes her experience in being an algebra teacher helped to give her credibility with her teachers. She also believes having been a teacher on the campus allows her to know the students at the school. Katy spends the vast majority of her time with the Algebra 1 teachers working on strategies to increase student achievement on the state accountability test. She shared that her Algebra 1 team of three teachers has a total of six years of experience among the team, with one having three years. Given the pressure of the state test on Algebra 1, Katy is concerned with this team's lack of experience and knowledge of the content.

Table 1 contains a summary of the participants as a reference to level of coaching, types of school(s), years as a classroom teacher, and number of years coaching. The table also includes the gender of the administrators the coach works with and indicates whether the coach is a district level or campus level coach.

Table 1:

Participants in Study

Pseudonym	Grade Level	Types of School(s)	Years as Classroom Teacher	Years as Instructional Coach	Type of Coach	Gender of principal (s)
Meredith	Elementary	Title I	14	6	Campus based	Female
Maggie	Elementary	Title I	36	6	District based	Female
Lindsey	Middle School - Science	Variety including Title I	13	5	District and campus based	2 female and 2 male
Candace	Middle School - Science	Title I	24	5	Campus based	Male
Caitlyn	High School – All Content	Urban High School	12	7	Campus based	4 males and 2 females
Katy	High School - Math	Urban High School	8	6	Campus based	Male

Between the Spaces

I talk about the space between that instructional coaches hold within a school, neither a teacher nor an administrator. It is the work that the coaches do within the space this study was interested in discovering. Caitlyn explains this space:

We listen to teachers. We're sort of a liaison, and that's kind of how we sort of view ourselves and have tried to position ourselves, because especially in the beginning it was definitely like, "Well, you're not us, but you're us," and so we've tried to kind of leverage that. We're not, so how do we help bridge that gap?

She is talking about bridging the gap between administrations-and teachers. Caitlyn was the one coach who clearly saw her role as occupying the space between. The other coaches could recognize themselves as liaisons, but did not fully embrace the space.

Maggie explained, coaches "can be a liaison because you have access to the administrator" when perhaps the teacher does not. Katy reflected the length of time you were a coach was a benefit for implementing change because, "Like, you know who to go to."

Meredith also shared that she is aware of her place within the space as not administrator or teacher. This understanding of the space is reflected in her work by when and how she works with the teachers. Meredith believes she does not always push teachers to improve as much as she might need to, but she sees a difference between working on compliance issues, such as not creating small groups for reading, and other classroom issues. She explains:

> I'm probably not as confrontational as I, maybe I should be. I don't like conflict but – and but if I know, if I already think that you're, if it's an issue that you're just not complying it, it's different than, you know what, you, let's, let's work on some classroom management strategies.

It is through understanding the space between that the coaches position themselves to do their work.

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Themes

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Through the application of Hatch's (2002) induction method and Slattery's (2006) post-structuralist techniques of deconstruction to the stories of the coaches, I hope to share the stories of the six instructional coaches who participated in the this study and

how their stories share the same themes. Keeping in mind the strength of the

metanarrative coming through the stories of coaches, I decided to organize the results of

this study in four sections or themes, coaches on coaching, coaching and power, coaching

for school improvement with a social justice lens, and gender and coaching.

Coaches on Coaching

To understand the work of these instructional coaches it is important to hear their

stories of their work. In this section how the coaches perceive the purpose of their work,

their identity, qualities of an effective coach and barrier to their work will be explored

through the stories of the coaches.

Purpose of coaching. All the instructional coaches define their purpose with a

focus on working with teachers. Improving instruction with an outcome of an increase in

student performance was clearly how the instructional coaches saw their work, however,

how to do this work varied widely. Some of the coaches focused on content knowledge of

the teachers and focused their time on working in professional learning communities

(PLC). Other coaches focused on instruction or teachers relationships with their students.

Katy is the only coach at her high school and she focuses almost exclusively on

content work with her teachers. Katy reported spending the vast majority of her time

working with the Algebra 1 PLC and she was clear on why this was the focus, such as the

lack of teaching experience of the teachers and the importance of the role Algebra 1 plays

in the state accountability. She explained:

> I spend a lot of my time supporting Algebra 1, mainly. And I would say – you
>
> want me to give you reasons why mainly Algebra 1? One, it's a STAAR tested
>
> area. Two, we have three teachers that teach Algebra 1 this year and they have the

least level of experience.

Katy's coaching is focused on the content and teacher knowledge with the end game for the students to be successful on the state assessment. Katy is assuming responsibility for the success of the 9th grade Algebra 1 teachers and their students' success through the focus of her coaching this year.

Like Katy, Caitlyn is the only instructional coach on her high school campus, but takes a different view of her work. She sees herself as responsible for coaching all the teachers in all content areas although her experience is in teaching mathematics. Caitlyn's focus is almost exclusively on instruction. She sets this frame of being inclusive of all teachers at the start of school where she and the school improvement facilitator lead the new teacher training. Caitlyn gave the following as an example of how she feels about instruction.

> I'm the lead mentor coordinator, so I coordinate all the mentors, and then we also have the, "New to The HS day" where all the teachers, whether you have experience or not, everyone comes and we acclimate them to the campus, and we run that whole day. So we set it up as PD and we do, you know, strategies and we take a tour and we do all that business but – so basically from the very beginning we kind of set the stage of like, 'We're your support. We're here instructionally to help you, and this is what we do, and we love it,' and – yea!

As with Katy, Candace is also focused on content. Correct content is important to Candace, but she is not as focused on the state assessment. She explained her coaching with the following story.

> That is really what I want to be seen as a resource and I want them to use me. So

that is kind of the attitude that I go in with. I don't know, just to tell you a story, we had one of our new teachers; it was the first time I was able to go into the classroom for a little bit this year. I was sitting there and he was doing a lesson on graphing motion. And it was not right. The content was not correct. I thought oh my gosh, now what am I going to do….And so, I waited until the end and went up to him and said, you know when I hear…this is how I see it. And he immediately realized that is not what he was doing. I think he was really embarrassed and I did not want him to be because frankly, I have struggled with graphing motion myself…. But to his credit, I said would you want to get together on your conference and we can kind of talk about it? And for next period, give them something that is not new introduction here so that they don't get confused and he said, yay and he came in and we talked about it. And he talked about how embarrassing it was and I said, this happens to everybody all the time, just kind of join the club. Because everybody has been in front of the class and realized they were not doing it right. And I really have to give him credit for being open enough to hear all of that.

From her story, it is clear that Candace wants the students to learn the science because it is important to learn the science correctly. Candace has developed trust with her teachers in order to be able to have conversations such as this one, which can be difficult.

Lindsey takes a philosophical look at instructional coaching. She explained, "the purpose of instructional coaching would be to me, it is to improve instruction in the classroom by encouraging teachers to self-reflect, to self-improve, and to buy into the process of self-improvement." Lindsey has both been a campus level and district level

coach; because she has held both roles she appears to have a more global view of the purpose of coaching. She wants to encourage teachers to grow within their craft and become self-reflective.

Maggie has had the most professional development on coaching having worked with Barkley (2011), Knight (2005), Murphy (2009), and Sweeny (2013) over her coaching career. She also had the most classroom experience. Maggie focuses on student data to determine how she approaches her coaching because she says, "I think it we need to focus on the kids."

> So we've all been reading Diane Sweeney, and helping all of us look at the student data, and so she has some very nice forms laid out, very simple, where we might just wait 15 minutes, but you know we're going to bring data, and you know sometimes the data is just what's inside the kids' desks. It's not a CBA, not an assessment, it's just, it's almost like what's in their pockets that day. It might be an anchor chart and we'll start looking at that as data, but talking about the next steps we could take with instruction.

Maggie approaches coaching from a technical aspect when she implements the coaching cycle with teachers, but she does not use the formal coaching cycle with all of her teachers. She explained, "I'm going to sit on the rug with you, like, try to help you whittle down why Peggy doesn't understand." Maggie's focus with her coaching is on the student learning.

Meredith had a harder time expressing her purpose of coaching. She understands coaching can be transformational because she is doing a book study of coaching by Aguilar (2013). It frustrates her that she is being used to support teachers with technology

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and this creates a barrier for her when working with the teachers. She shared how she spent her time one day.

> Technology – its programs like all of our textbooks are online. Well, you have – the teacher has to be able to know how to use that and get students to use it. Or, they have to, you know, login. They'll try to scan their assessment documents but that they took forever to make, you know. So they're trying to scan it. Well, they take ten minutes out of their planning time and they're, like, I don't know why it's not working. Well, then I get an e-mail, you know, two or three hours later saying, oh, by the way, you have to change the URL So it's funny. It's really just that technology that's just – people are not ready.

With the focus on technology, Meredith is frustrated with her coaching at her school because she knows coaching can be more than technology support. Meredith reflected about her time as an instructional coach from the early days of coaching to today.

> You know, to be honest, at the time [I started coaching] it was such a new thing in our district for every campus to have a coach. I probably didn't know what my goal – in fact, I didn't really have goals. Um, in fact, I mean the, kind of our job was kind of wishy-washy on every campus anyway. Um, but when I look back and look six years ago from where I am now it's like oh, my gosh. It's so different.

Meredith's goals today are to get the teachers through the day. She explained, "Basically it seems like since the beginning of the year is just, um, getting them [teachers] through. It's just a hard year, I think, for teachers it is difficult."

Although all of the instructional coaches describe their work differently, they

want to work with teachers to improve instruction. Maggie approaches coaching from a very technical perspective, but in later stories we will see that her relationship with her teachers is what is important with her work. Caitlyn, Lindsey, and Katy have clear focus on their work as instructional coaches. Candace and Meredith honestly shared they did not have a clear focus for their work, but they knew they were to help teachers improve.

Coaching identity. From the stories of the instructional coaches, I have concluded there are two factors influencing the how the coaches perceive their identity. One, I believe, is driven by the gender of the coaches, and how they describe their work to other people drives their choices. All of the instructional coaches did not want to explain their work initially to strangers. Caitlyn honestly responded with, "I try not to – no. It is difficult, very difficult." The coaches identified themselves as teachers when talking to strangers they did not think they would see again because it was easier. This seems to play into the metanarrative of women being pleasers (Freedman, 2002). I say this because the coaches did not want to make others uncomfortable with not knowing what an instructional coach might be. Lindsey explains, "Sometimes I say I am a science teachers' teacher. Just to simplify it." Meredith shared, "I don't wanna explain what a coach it." Candace puts it simply, "I am kind of there with them, let's face it, I am a teacher, I am not anything else, I am not an administrator." These comments lead me to understand that the coaches were aware of the feelings and reactions of others. The others' response to how the instructional coaches explained their work was more important than the coaches claiming their title or position as instructional coach.

The second influencing factor is how the coaches see the purpose of their work. I believe how the instructional coaches express the purpose of their work influenced the

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phrases they used to explain their work. Some of the coaches embraced the phrase of "teacher of teachers" such as Caitlyn and Katy; others pushed back on that concept and used words, such as "helper," "giver of resources" or "supporter" in representing their identity. Maggie defined herself as a "professional educator" and her work as an instructional coach is "to support other educators and help them see themselves as professional educators." Maggie was unique because she did not use teacher in her description of herself or her work. Although she revealed when she went into education, her goal was to be the teacher with the filing cabinet ready to teach the same thing year after year.

> To me, um, the first couple years as a teacher, just thinking, looking at my colleagues and thinking, one day I'm going to have everything in my file cabinet and I'm going to pull out that file and I have it all together and realizing after five years, 10 years, 15 years, that day wasn't coming. And then enjoying the ride.

Lindsey shared that she says she is a science teacher, or if she is talking to an educator she says instructional coach and expects they know what that means. Because she assumes if they are an educator they will automatically know what an instructional coach does, this allows others to apply their understanding of a coach to her identity. This approach to her identity puts the control of her identity with others. This is almost a self-silencing of her own voice and position within the educational reform process.

I was surprised by all of the instructional coaches' responses to the question of their identity. I had not expected all of the instructional coaches to answer the question, "how do you explain your work to strangers" by first considering "Is it someone I will see again." I had not anticipated the importance of the future relationship with a person to

determine how you would identify yourself and your work.

Qualities of an effective coach. The research on instructional coaches explains that effective coaches must build trust (Guiney, 2001: Killion, 2012; Knight, 2005; Murphy, 2009). Establishing trust with the teachers and administrators allows the coaches to build relationships. Instructional coaches must also have communication skills such as questioning (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Barkley, 2011; Knight 2007), listening (Aguilar, 2013; Killion, et al., 2012; Knight, 2011a; Scott, 2004) and creating dialogue (Knight, 2011a, Murphy, 2009). The research also suggests instructional coaches need to understand themselves (Aguilar, 2013; Lindsey, et al., 2007) and work with adult learners (Murphy, 2009; West and Cameron, 2013),

The instructional coaches agreed with many of these qualities but not all. Building relationships was important to all of the coaches, but having content knowledge was a quality that many of the coaches shared about their work. Lindsey explains that first and foremost you must work with people.

> You cannot do it [coach] if you can't work with people, if you can't build trust…if you don't build credibility and you do that by building those relationships. By showing that you respect their time, respect what they are doing, you see positive things and your acknowledge those and the when you do bring up negative things then it means something because they trust you and have faith in you. If you didn't have those relationships then you would just be someone else telling them what to do, or coming down on them.

Lindsey continues to explain to build that relationship you need content knowledge and empathy.

Hmmm. I think content knowledge and empathy almost equally, 'cause you can't there are things that you learn as you go in both. I mean, in – in both, building relationships and – and things that you learn as you go, but if you don't have that natural ability to step into somebody else's shoes and – and see somebody else's perspective or to at least acknowledge in your own head, yeah, that's ridiculous the way they feel, but they're really feeling it, then it's probably not the job for you, because, people can tell that. They can sense – they can sense that. And, um, content – content knowledge, if you can't speak the talk, nobody's gonna listen to anything you have to say, and I – teachers teach me things all the time, or – but for the majority of – of what goes on, you – you have to be able to understand the standards in and out, what the verbs mean, how that looks in a classroom.

By placing empathy and content knowledge as equal qualities, Lindsey is positioning the relational and technical aspects of coaching as equal in her coaching model.

Katy explained that building the relationship with teachers is the most important quality as it is with working with students.

Uh, it's absolutely, like, the number-one thing, I would say. It's almost like working with students. If you don't have any rapport with them, you're really not gonna be able to reach them. Same thing with the teachers. If they don't feel comfortable, with you, then you – your job is really going to be – they're not gonna feel comfortable coming in, asking a question. I would say that's a difference in the fact that I do not supervise them, and I do not evaluate them, so we do have that rapport. They know they can come ask me and this is not gonna go somewhere on an evaluation or somewhere in a file or anything like that.

Katy continued and shared that being a good listener and problem solver helps to build

that relationship.

> I would say you must be a good listener, you must be a good problem solver, and,
>
> be able to build that relationship and that rapport with the teachers, because
>
> without that, you know, you might as well not even be there.

Caitlyn agreed with Katy that it is important to be a good listener and to build

relationships, but Caitlyn also shared that by listening, the coach can be flexible in their

work, taking the journey where the teacher thinks they need to go, not necessarily where

the coach wants the teacher to go.

> Clearly you need to listen, which is, you know, the hard balance of, like, kind of
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> having your head where you want to go. You have to be willing to let some of
>
> those [preconceived ideas], to be in the conversation and to just let it go where it
>
> goes. And then the ability to remember later what you wanted – where you
>
> wanted it to go and write that – make notes or whatever, you know? I think you
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> need someone who can build those relationships, who understands the importance
>
> of the relationship, and that is willing to take the time that it takes to build them,
>
> and that – and you need support from the administration to let you have that
>
> flexibility and freedom and not, like, expect results tomorrow.

Caitlyn placed less emphasis on developing relationships with teachers and instructional

strategies, perhaps she does not see the strong need for content knowledge because she

works with teachers in all content areas. She explains working with teachers not in her

math content area as open to working with her because she acknowledges the expertise of

the teachers. "Like, everyone's pretty welcome, yeah. I don't know the content. Like,

you're the content expert."

As with Caitlyn, Maggie believes coaches need to know instruction, follow through and partnership with teachers. Although Maggie did not specifically use the words, "trust" or, "build relationship," she implies both of these concepts by talking about not being a "snitch" and seeing the teachers as an expert in their craft.

I think a coach that has a lot of knowledge about instruction, first of all, to gain – that gains their trust, 'cause if I'm – I'm honest, first of all, I'm – I'm not real comfortable with the heavy coaching I'm doing. I say, 'You're the expert, but I have a lot I can bring you.' That would be one. Another characteristic of a good coach is does what they say they're gonna do, and if I'm gonna – if I tell you I can find a lesson for that, I'll go through whatever hoops. What else? Um, knowledge, does what they say they're gonna – uh, does not snitch but works alongside. And I think another characteristic – the last thing I'd like to say is models that teachers are learners.

Maggie works to balance the relationship and the technical.

Meredith suggested the personality of the instructional coach was important, such as the need to be outgoing. She sees this as a necessary quality in order to build trust with the teachers.

Uh, well, overall, I mean, my personality is pretty outgoing…Just building the trust that I watch all them. Like, you know, how can I make it easier, I guess. You have to build trust and you have to, you have to work well – you have to know your staff. Like I'm not gonna, they're not gonna trust me and they're not going to, um, think I can help or – if I don't know my stuff, which sometimes my

confidence is low on that because I can't know everything, every subject.…So I

don't want to pretend I know something so I will, study. It's just that making

people feel comfortable enough to trust you enough to, to work with you.

It is interesting Meredith thinks her personality is a quality that makes her a good coach,

but content knowledge it also important.

The coaches all understood that communication skills were important and without

trust and relationships they could not do their work. What was interesting about the

qualities the instructional coaches saw as important was none of the coaches included

knowing how to work with adults as an important quality. The need for this knowledge,

however, is implied when Lindsey talks about being respectful of the teacher's time and

Caitlyn listens to what the teachers wanted to work on to improve. The other quality that

was not discussed by any of the coaches was their own self-awareness. I am not

concluding they coaches are not self-aware, but they did not share this as a necessary

quality.

Barriers to coaching. The literature of coaching revealed several barriers to

effective instructional coaching programs. Poglinco and Bach (2004) showed that for

coaching programs to be effective, instructional coaches need training. Killion, et al.,

(2012) also support the findings that instructional coaches need professional development

to be effective. Denton and Kasbrouck (2009), and Knight (2011a) explain instructional

coaches need a clear focus for their work to be effective. Neufeld and Roper (2003)

concluded instructional coaches need to be given time to coach and not be given other

non-coaching duties on a campus. Implementing new instructional strategies in the

classroom does not always move from a PLC meeting to the classroom if there is not time

for teachers to learn the strategy (Guskey, 1998; Poglinco & Bach, 2004). The instructional coaches in this study identified with these barriers to their work, often causing confusion and frustration on the part of the coaches.

Lack of coaching professional development. The literature explains frequently coaches are put into the coaching role without any training (Aguilar, 2013; Gallucci, et al.; 2010; Psencik; 2011; West and Cameron, 2013). Although the coaches in this study were recruited from the Regional Instructional Coaching Network with the purpose of providing coaching professional development, the coaches did not acknowledge receiving professional development from the network with the exception of Caitlyn. Caitlyn's mention of the professional development was in passing, and it did not feel like it prepared her for coaching. It was not until Caitlyn received professional development from Barkley (2011) that she felt like she was prepared for coaching. Caitlyn embraces the need for coaching professional development and wants more.

> I went to a Steve Barkley. They [the district] brought him down and we did a two-day training, and I had done it at the service center but I guess it was in the beginning of my little coaching career part, and so it kind of – I remember I liked it and he was great. But, like, this one, I was ready. Like, I was ready to hear it all. And our two days were basically focused on pre-conferencing, so I feel good about pre-conferencing, and getting at what does the teacher really want.

Although she feels good about doing pre-conferencing, she does not feel as confident with the rest of the coaching cycle. "I don't feel really good about the observation or post conference. I keep asking, 'When are we gonna bring him back?' and they're [administrators], 'We need money.' I don't know, but it would be nice for more."

According to the literature, Candace's story is typical of many instructional coaches, one day a teacher, the next a coach. She was honest in her reflection of her work at the beginning of her coaching career.

I didn't know what the hell I was doing, so I was like, I really didn't know why, although I can understand why you wouldn't really want a coach. Lots of times coaches are people who come in and try to impose stuff on you and take up your time and you just kind of wish they would get in a classroom and teach kids. So I can understand that, that is why I try to be a resource. I am certainly a lot better. I mean, it is a job like teaching where you are constantly learning and solving puzzles and so I like that, it is creative in that sense. No, I don't think I am the best coach by any means. I am a much better coach that I was when I started.

Candace continued to explain, "there is an awful lot about this job that is 'you figure it out' and you supply what you can". As with Candace, Katy shared she has grown in the job over the years by learning on the job and not through coaching professional development.

I would say definitely in the beginning, I would say now I've kinda worked through some of those things six years into it, but, I would say definitely in the beginning trying to balance that, not doing it for them but making them part of whatever the solution is, you know, instead of me just coming in and wanting it to, one, be my way or – you know, not necessarily my way, but this is how I would do it, so that's really the only thing I know to tell you. Some people aren't gonna be able to imitate me in the classroom for whatever reason, we just don't have the same personalities so being able to say, like, you know, "Here's some

solutions. You pick one of these, not the one that I think is, the way I would do it," or 'cause that just may not match your personality and may not match, you know, your dynamics with your kids, or, you know, whatever.

Katy is aware the teachers make not have the same skill set as she, and gives choice to her teachers.

It does help having your toolbox full. I've seen a lotta classes in my six years. I watched a lotta people teach. When I first walked in, I knew how I did it…. You're [classroom teachers] not walking around seeing other people. So now I'm like, "Well, you know, this might be helpful, or you might be able to try this, or so-and-so did it this way. Maybe that would help," so in those times to be able to see different classrooms.

Katy did not talk about adult learning as a quality coaches need, but she is applying the theory by allowing the teachers to have choice in their teaching.

Maggie has had the most professional development and uses the knowledge in her work as an instructional coach. This knowledge has helped Maggie to feel confident in her work, unlike Candace who after six years of coaches still feels unsure of her work.

Lack of focus. The literature reveals that for instructional coaches to be effective there needs to be a clear focus for their work. Many of the coaches in this study shred their frustration with no having clear responsibilities. Meredith and Candace work in the same school district but both had different focuses of their work. Meredith recognizes that in her district the instructional coaches at the different campuses have different responsibilities. She shared some examples:

I do our campus-wide behavior program. A lot of people don't do that. Um, some

people still run – we do a lot of common and district assessments with the Eduphoria…and they still run the documents. I don't do that anymore. Some schools have gone to this math program where they, every kid takes a daily test every day, and we grade it and we give 'em a specific homework for their need, and that's a lot of manpower, and some people are doing that a lot every day. And some people still pull groups. They have a group…I had a group two years ago, just 'cause we needed an extra person. It was like all hands on deck.…It's easy to use us, to be the contact person for each campus when the principals are too busy.

Meredith seems to be accepting of the extra tasks she is asked to do on her campus.

Candace, in the same district as Meredith but at the middle school level, is concerned with the shift in her coaching responsibilities on her campus to the point where she questions if she can continue to work as a coach because they [district] want her to evaluate teachers.

The principals are, using us kind of as they want. One thing that's really starting to bother me is, I'm being used in some ways that are really more as an administrator. And so, you know, we go to administrative meetings, which I just don't have a whole lot, you know, to contribute to, and we, at my school, we're being used as evaluators, which I really dislike.

The lack of focus for these two coaches sets barriers to implementing the purpose of instructional coaching. Candace wonders, "Why isn't there more structure for us? There really should be. We would be better at it sooner." I think Candace is very insightful on what she needs to feel more confident in her coaching.

Lack of time and other duties as assigned. As much as the instructional coaches want professional development on coaching, this does not mean they see the purpose of all professional development. The literature warns about using coaches for duties other than coaching. It appears to me not providing support for coaches to do the work is disrespectful. If administrators value the work of the coaches, they would support them by honoring the coaches time.

All the coaches talked about how time was precious for them. Maggie describes the process of coaching as, "where you are running in like little rabbits and then running out to the next issue." Meredith and Candace both complained about the amount of professional development they were being pulled off campus to attend. Meredith explains.

> So for some reason, we have had tremendous amount of training. I've been off my campus, so I've been in a lot of different trainings here at three different series of teaching. These trainings do not mesh. No, not at all. So we've been off – the coaches have been off campus a lot.

A with Meredith, Candace wonders why she needs to spend so much time doing the same content professional development over and over again.

> We are also being called off campus a lot. We always have been, but much more so this year. Trainings, unpacking the TEKS, dissecting the TEKS, all those things. So a lot of the same thing over and over again. We get unpacking the TEKS with three different people just this year alone. Last week I was out two day, this week I will be out two days and next week I will be out two days. You can see how that can really mess up my PLC time because I just never get to meet with those

teachers and it might a matter of two to three weeks. In one case, four weeks

before I can get to meet with them. So that is really disturbing to me.

Candace also shared that the principal keeps adding to her duties. Although she does not

have bus or lunch duty, she has been added to the administrative team.

This year the principal also made us part of the administrative team whatever that

means. So essentially I have two days a week where I don't have meetings after

work. He keeps adding things on and including us in things.

Rather than embracing the change on her campus as an opportunity to influence

administrative decisions, Candace see this change in her position as taking her away from

the teachers. This shifting of the coaching to a more administrative position is causing

great stress with Candace. She went on to say:

Yeah, that is what is frustrating. If you were to ask me what is the most frustrating

thing about my job, especially right now, it is I don't have time to do the things

that I think a coach should be doing. Because I am so busy doing these other

things.

The campus based instructional coaches talked more about duty and it taking time

away for coaching than the district level coaches. Lindsey who was a campus based

coach before moving to the district level coach shared she thought it is easier for the

principals of the campus based coaches to use the coach for duties other than coaching.

Some disadvantages [of being a campus based coach], is because you don't have

students, you get pulled for everything. Every time there is a test on campus, you

are pulled to monitor the students with the test, whether it is your content or not.

Duty, morning duty, afternoon duty, substituting when people don't show up or

there are not enough subs. Coaching too, where there are classroom observations

and feedback. But it ends up eating a lot of your time, phone calls of, "I am thirty

copies short, can you run to the office?" Of course you are not going to say, "no"

because you are hurting kids if you say "no", but those things just kind of creep

into the time you have to do other things.

Meredith recognizes that she has more duty than other coaches in her district, but she

uses lunch duty to her advantage.

Um, you know, maybe, like, I have a lot of duty. I don't know if the middle

school and high school have a lot of duty, but I have – like I have morning duty,

lunch duty and after-school duty and, you know, I should probably complain, but

I love lunch duty….That's when I really get to know the kids; when you're at

lunch duty. So I could probably say I probably should – I should put up more of a

fuss. You know, like, my admin, they're very good about if it's, like, if a

substitute doesn't show up, they do not put me in the room.

It is interesting that even when the instructional coach, such as Meredith, knows she

probably should not have so much duty; she is willing to accept it and tries to make the

best of the situation by rationalizing the duty as a way to get to know the kids. I believe if

Meredith was male she would make more of "a fuss." I think Meredith has been

socialized as a woman to accept her place and learn to live with it.

Although Maggie is a district level coach, she spends most of her time at one

campus. She has clear expectations of what would be appropriate duty and what would

not and shared she would push back if she was asked to do duty.

If asked to do a couple of weeks [of duty], I would balk. But it happened this year,

very first day of school, a teacher couldn't make it, and she came to me, and she

said, I can't get a sub for the first day of kindergarten, so there I was, and I did it.

And I loved it, you know. It makes me real. You know, pretty much, the

principals know if a sub doesn't show up, we're not the sub. But I'm not shy

about going into the lunchroom for 30 minutes to try to keep my finger on what

the kids are doing. It's not a duty. I'm not assigned dismissal duty, but I'll go out

there at dismissal, because I want to be with the teachers, I want to be seen. And if

a teacher should say, oh my head is throbbing, I'll say, I'll take them [the

students].

Maggie makes use of her time to work with and support her teachers. Maggie sees

working with teachers during duty is a way of "enrolling" (Knight, 2005) teachers to

work with her, a way to start or build on the relationships.

Katy explained that she rarely does duty or is used as a substitute, and as with

Maggie, she views when she does duty, it is a way to build the relationships with the

teachers.

I will say there's a lot of days that I'm not assigned these duties, and mainly

because I'm off campus at a meeting or something. I am at a duty station but,

again, it's 15 minutes a day. Just trying to be an instructional coach and show the

teachers I'm out here with you and I don't mind doing this either. 'Cause you know

they're busy. They got a million things they're doing.

Being used as a substitute seemed to be a duty the instructional coaches would not

do, but both Maggie and Katy shared they did substitute duty this year. Both had a

rationalization for why it was necessary. Maggie taught the first day of kindergarten this

year because she could not let the kindergarten students start their school career with a substitute. Katy reluctantly shared she has been substituting in an Algebra 1 classroom where the teacher has been out for several days with a family emergency. She knows this is not really her role, but she feels the students need to continue with learning and the substitute is insufficient for that to happen. Katy further explained she only goes into the class to present the lesson and a substitute is in the room, so she does not spend her entire day in the classroom.

Being aware of the barriers for coaches to be effective in their work is important in order to work to remove, or work around them. It is important to realize the barriers discussed in the literature support the reality of the lives of the coaches because it validates the concerns of the coaches. If these barriers are the reality of the coaches, then it is important to take these concerns into account when creating a coaching program.

Coaching and Power

Power within the relationship between instructional coaches and teacher or instructional coaches and administrators are complex. The instructional coaches in the study shared stories revealing they understood the issues of power. Being conscious of how power is perceived or used was important for the coaches to understand as they do their work. The coaches understood their position in the space between the teachers and administrators; however, they more closely aligned themselves to the teachers. Their relationships with the administrators appear to be more difficult for the coaches, which the coaches clear the principal had authority over their work.

Power and teachers. Some of the coaches talked about how they worked hard to not have power over the teachers. Others talked about how the teachers perceived they

had power in almost magical ways. Candace explained that, "they [the teachers] think we are Oz behind the curtain," implying the coaches have all the answers. Lindsey shared the teachers often believe that because she is considered central office that she has more power than she thinks she does.

> Sometimes I think that they see us having more power than I think we have because we have district on our name tags. They think we have some magical fix for everything; or some knowledge or some secret person who we get all the answers from.

Katy went on to explain she is amazed teachers think she has more power than she does. She laughed when she shared teachers often attribute power to her position and then said she tells them, "but thanks for thinking that I do." Katy does seem to understand that there is a hierarchy within her school and district. "Yeah, what I always say. 'That's way above my pay grade.'"

This, being seen as different and powerful, almost magical, compared to the teachers, seemed to bother these coaches. They did not want to be seen as "above" the teachers in the campus hierarchy.

Maggie explained in her early days of coaching the coaches were position so they appeared to be different from teachers. Maggie recognized it was not helpful for her work, and this experience has influenced the coaching choices she makes in her work.

> There were five of us [coaches] on the team. It was very different then, from what we're doing now. But all five of us went to a high-needs campus every day. We rotated through, and that was not pretty. That just wasn't pretty. The campus knew that if it was Thursday, five of us were coming. We were meeting with the

principal first thing in the morning, they knew that, getting our marching orders,

than we were regrouping at noon to debrief and that at the end of the day, they

knew we were meeting to tell the principal what we learned, and so we weren't

coaches.

Maggie is therefore conscious of how teachers perceive all of her practices, including

little things such as how she uses her laptop when working with teachers. "I will lay it

[laptop] outside the door on purpose. I don't like to go in and be writing.…But mostly I'll

go back to my laptop and I will write my notes. That is what I do now."

Katy also understands how she is physically positioned on the campus could

affect how she is perceived by her teachers.

I'm in an office kind of in the middle of our math hallway for a reason. I want to

be next to them [the teachers]. I want them to be able to walk down the hall and

say, 'Can you help?' or, 'I need,' or, 'What do you think about?' Because if or

you're too far away and they don't feel like that you're, um, there for them, they're

not gonna run down and ask you. I know that that's being silly and I know some

teachers who feel like, 'I don't care if they're sitting in the front office or on the

football field. It doesn't matter.' But there are some teachers, you know, that does.

Clearly, Katy understands there could be issues of power with her teachers. All the

coaches acknowledge they considered power and positioning when working with their

teachers.

Power and administrators. Each coach perceived her work with the

administrator differently frequently saying they do not push for change, and then sharing

a story where they pushed. Or as with Maggie who claims she does not want to be seen

with the principal, but is on the administrative team and the district representation on the site based committee. There were more contradictions in the stories the coaches told about their work with principals than their work with their teachers.

Maggie shared she is very purposeful in how she is seen working with administrators and wants to be careful of the perception the teachers have of her relationship with the administrators. Part of what influences Maggie's work with the administrators is from her initial coaching days when she felt she was seen as an evaluator. Therefore, she works to avoid being seen with the principal other than in a "one-legged conversation," a conversation that can occur in the time it takes to stand on one leg, she contributed this concept to a professional development she attend with Barkley.

> Very rarely will the teacher ever find me with a principal on purpose. The principal I have right now, that's how she operates. The one-legged conference with her, but I'm with her because she's, when I'm in a team data meeting, she's there. When I'm in the campus leadership team, she's there. So we're meeting that way, and she always gets time with teachers. I truly try to send feedback to the teacher and carbon her. Very rarely, I'll meet with her when central office personnel comes to the campus, and the three of us sit down and start looking at how our meeting, how the goals are set. But I just don't think, I don't think it would be good for a teacher to know every Friday I have my meeting with the principal. I'm always on the campus leadership team; I'm just one of the teachers there. Sometimes I'm asked to do something on the agenda. Of course, I'm always at the faculty meetings; sometimes I'll do a power burst if I'm asked. Um,

site-based, I'm usually the district rep for the site base. Just as I'm there. It's easy. Whereas, Candace does not see being on the leadership team for the campus as important, Maggie sees is as almost natural.

There appears to be a contradiction in Maggie's positioning with administration. She takes it for granted that being on the campus leadership team and site based committee was a natural fit for her, but she does not want to be seen by the teachers talking to the principal in her office. Maggie does not discuss difficulty with this campus principal and her work as an instructional coach.

Maggie does not have the same relationship with all of her principals. She is working to enroll the principal at her "on call" campus by going to district meetings to work with the administrator.

I'm still having a challenge with my on-call campus. Just I keep – you know, I've asked my lead, "What should I do?" She says just document that you're offering. And I try to go any district meeting that's going to have a representative from that campus, I go. I'll look to see who that is. I sit next to them. Then later I say, "You know, I'm your on-call if you want some help with that." What else can I do? Oh, and the funniest thing happened. So there was some – apparently a big question about kindergarten math and, uh, the principal called Pam [district math specialist]. And Pam worked her through it, and I said, "Pam, did you at least mention that Maggie could've been there in a heartbeat to help them with that?" Isn't that funny? So now I'm really kind of starting to take it personally. Well, Pam has had a hard time enrolling that one principal when she was a coach, so she was really glad that she was able to help. It just now clicked. So Pam was very

glad that she could do that because she didn't feel valued when she was a coach. In the process of this story, Maggie reflected on her work and came to a new understanding of working with her on call principal and her relationship with Pam, who was a former coach. So as purposeful Maggie as Maggie says she is with her relationship with the principal and not being seen talking with principals, she wants to have the relationship.

Meredith's work as a coach this year has been difficult in that all of her administrators are new this year for the campus, so the principal who reached out and hired her is no longer her administrator. With this change she finds it difficult to meet and align her work with the principal's vision.

> Right now it's just time. I need to sit down and be on the same page because whenever I'm rolling out or whatever, we need to make sure we know because I can't just say, "Oh, you know what I think? I think we should make…our campus improvement plan." What do they see as their vision, but it's really just time. Like, I'll sit down with the principal and she'll get a phone call that she has to take, you know.

When the principal takes the phone call over having the conversation with Meredith, Meredith appears to see this as disrespect, not valuing her work. Meredith shared she has a lot of "autonomy," but she is frustrated by the lack of shared vision with her administrators.

Katy explains that she and the AP she works with started out together which she contributes to their alignment of the roles that each of them share. Katy places herself as an equal to her administrator. She believes because they learned their jobs together, it

places them as colleagues and reduced any issues of power within their relationship.

> Um, well, like I told you before, it – it's – it was very, very key, I think, in the
> very beginning with my first administrator. You know, he was starting as a new
> AP at our school. I was starting as instructional coach. Now, I had been a teacher
> there, um, so it was a different role for kind of both of us, so we had to kinda
> figure that out, and, you know, how're we gonna make this work? …that AP left
> and a new AP moved into that role, that was already an AP there, but he became
> over math. Um, it was different, 'cause I didn't have to work so much with him.
> We didn't have to lay all that groundwork. He just kinda moved in and said,
> "Okay, this is what was done before, and, you know, this is kinda how we'll just
> kinda move –" carry on, I guess.

When pushed about if power could be an issue between a coach and the principal Katy
reflected:

> Could've been. I mean, it – it could – it really could've happened. Right. But, he
> came to every single PLC meeting that we had, so he made it to them, like, "This
> is important to me. This isn't – I'm not just a discipline principal. I'm an
> instruction principal." …we became a close-knit team of how're we gonna make
> this work, not like he's in the front office. You know, I'm over here. You know,
> he's dealin' with discipline. I'm dealin' with, you know, instruction. So, I think that
> that's one reason it really makes us successful.

Katy's story is interesting in that she attributes her relationship as being supportive is
because they both learned their jobs together and the relationship could have been
different if the principal was not so hands on. I find it interesting that she places the

responsibility for why the relationship works on the principal. However there is also a contradiction in her story, she explained the principal wanted to be seen as an instruction principal not discipline, and ends her story with the principal does discipline and she does instruction. Perhaps she wanted to say the principal now trusts her with the instruction.

Very much like Katy, Candace credits the principal for the trust in their relationship. She explained "well, I have to say that is a lot due to him because he is willing to let you talk. He is not necessarily as open about actually hearing what you are saying." I think this is an interesting statement on the part of Candace. She accepts that she is lucky to have a principal who will let her talk and she does not see is not listening to be an issue. It appears Candace is satisfied with being able to express herself even if she is not heard. It may be that Candace has been silenced so long from society's silencing of women her expectation is to not have him listen (Blackmore, 2013: Freedman, 2002; hooks,2000; Skrla, 2000).

Candace claims there is trust in the relationship, but she is concerned with the change in the coaching model at her school. Her second interview was almost entirely about the change in the model. Under the new model, the instructional coach is required to be part of the evaluation system.

> This is evaluative, not just a note saying…That puts me in a tight position, plus it is a huge time sink. I don't do it quickly. It takes me a long time to go through that process. It is a very complicated document. Of course, I consider it important because it will go to the evaluation of the teachers, so yuck. So, even though I have been kind of lucky in I have not been given a duty yet like a lot of instructional coaches have, I don't know what I am going to do with this.

Candace explained she has tried to push back against this change, which sounds like she was unsure if she should bring up the issue at the district level, but she did and so far is not being successful.

> I have asked further up in the district, because the handbook says we are not to do that [evaluate], but there is a little asterisk by that and it turns out that if you are and pilot campus for the program, then you can do it. So that is going to be kind of weird.

Part of what is worrying Candace is the shift in the power in her relationship with her teachers. Candace has a plan to try to make this new system work for her teachers to help fears of the teachers with her moving to evaluator.

> I am not taking administration classes; I do not want to be an administrator. It is nothing that I am interested in. What I am going to have to do with the teachers is to just be very clear with them when I am in this role and when I am in that role. Because I don't want to side swipe them and surprise them. I am not going to be the sole evaluator, I will be one of two, and the principal will be the other one. I try really hard and tell the teachers that I don't pass out information to administration unless someone is doing something wrong, wrong, wrong and I have told them about it and talked to them about it and it has to do with scoring tests, district standardized test, something like that I would eventually. After I talked to the teacher, I might eventually have to go to somebody. In general, I am pretty careful about not passing things on, because I don't think that is my role.

She admits that she will do the program if she has to but she really hope that "he forgets." Candace was so worried about this shift in coaching, she wondered if she will continue to

coach next year.

As important as the relationship is between the principal and the instructional coach, Lindsey explains that she finds this to be a challenge. As Lindsey shares her stories of relationships with principals, she reveals a disconnect between her belief in herself and her work as a coach.

> That's a hard for me [making the relationship with the principal]. I am kind of shy; I know that sounds weird, at first especially with people who are in more of a superior position. So I just keep them informed, I try not to high jack their time either. I ask up front at the beginning of the year, how would you like me to communicate with you? How often would you like me to communicate with you? I know that they are people and they have different personalities. Some wants to hear every pin drop and others want you to not bother them, unless there is a big issue. So I try to tailor it to the person

Lindsey explains that she does not push back with principals because she has not ever had the need to push back.

> That's what I found [principals will listen to coaches]. I have some people tell me that egos sometimes get in the way. I have not run into that, but I also don't push either, so I have not had a situation where I have needed to. I think that if I had really needed to push, I would push, but I have not had a situation where I have had to.

Although what Lindsey told me in her interviews was she did not work closely with her administrator, during the focus group, Lindsey shared a story about the science curriculum on sex education the district has implemented.

I had a crazy day. I was going all day. I met with – well we had this big "Worth

the Wait," the sex ed program debacle where the advisory council like snuck

something by the board and didn't tell teachers and didn't tell principals and so

now they're committed to do things a certain way on our campuses. They have to

split boys and girls at seventh grade and they've never had to split boys and girls

and so there are not enough teachers at some campuses. There's an overload of

boys versus girls in certain periods and so it's, it's a mess. And so I had angry

people. Teachers. But today, like they were angry Friday, today they were ready

to figure something out. And so I met with a department chair about that and then

I met with the principal and the P.E. department chair and the science department

chair again after school and we talked about as a campus and what are the options

we have and what's the best case and the worst that we have.

Lindsey did not see this as taking the role of pushing back. She saw an issue and brought

the issue forward. She saw this as such an important issue she requested and has been put

on the district level committee in charge of the program so she can further argue for a

change in policy.

Lindsey also takes on the responsibility of working with the "angry" teachers.

Being a district coach has placed the blame for new regulations on Lindsey, or at least

she appears to take responsibility for the rule in the eyes of the teachers. So for a coach

who is "shy" and does not like controversy, Lindsey stepped up and worked for change.

Caitlyn was the only coach who directly shared she sees part of her role as an

instruction coach to, on occasion, coach administrators. "Our administrator is real young,

inexperienced. She's, like, 30, so it's like helping her kind of become an administrator

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and a good administrator, while at the same time helping kind of bridge that." When

asked if the administrator was aware she was being coached, Caitlyn responded:

> I don't know. I've thought about that a lot lately. Um, obviously it's always good
>
> for people to know when you're coaching them. *[Laughter]* Like having posted
>
> goals? It is not underhanded and manipulative, but it is that ways of just
>
> encouraging the conversation in her to grow. I definitely in my head have things
>
> that I've kind of identified through all of our interactions in lots of different areas,
>
> but I'm like, "Okay, I feel like this is kind of the side that *[laughter]* we should
>
> really develop." Um, so no, I don't – you asked directly if I have. I shared with
>
> her that's what I'm doing, or to see, like, is that her goal, where does she want to
>
> grow.

The relationships the coaches have with both their teachers and administrators are

complex. These six coaches understood they needed to be purposeful in their work with

teachers and not to appear to have power over them; whereas, working with the principals

the coaches were aware that the principal is in charge and has control over the coaches'

work and the relationship with the instructional coach. The coaches appeared to believe

it is appropriate for the principal to frame the coach's work, as well as the relationship

between the administrator and coach.

Coaches as Instructional Leaders

The coaches shared they feel respected by most of the administrators and are seen

as instructional leaders. Some were more confident in this attitude than others. Meredith

quickly acknowledge that she is seen as a leader, "I feel like I have a good reputation and,

you know, a leader, I was always a leader anyway." Lindsey did not say she was not seen

as an instructional leader, but shared an experience where she felt underused by the principal as an instructional leader.

> I felt like in – in my first district –because you're on one campus, the good thing is you become part of the department, but the bad thing is you just kinda become part of the department, too. And there's a lotta places that I felt like I could help the campus or that I could be utilized by the campus that weren't being utilized like on PD days and different department planning and things like that, where, I thought if I put myself out there, the principal would be – "Oh, if you wanna talk about that, blah, blah, blah," but I don't think he ever viewed the math coach and I as instructional leaders, yeah, 'cause if we wanted to do something, he let us, but it was like it was just kind of, "Oh, those're the nice ladies that help a science class now." *[Laughs]*

This story happened in the early years of Lindsey's coaching career and she did not push to be seen as an instructional leader. Lindsey shared a more recent story of coaching a principal on understanding data.

> Well, last year after STAAR scores came in, I had a sheet with me that had all the schools and their scores from the previous year and the scores from this year and, each of the columns had growth, like, and I walked into one of my schools and the principal goes, "Oh my God, have you seen our scores? They're terrible."

Lindsey explained that all the middle school science scores for the district were very similar to the scores of last year with one or two point increased or decreased. The reaction of this principal to the scores seemed to surprise Lindsey. She continued to explain:

'Oh my God, I can't believe that, you know, it's terrible,' and I was proud of them. I was going to tell my eighth-grade teachers what an awesome job they did, 'cause they have some tough kids, and their scores are right there with other schools that should be performing better – better than what they are, and they're stickin' right there with 'em. And so even though they didn't grow, they didn't fall like some of my campuses or all the campuses did. And, um, also their growth on advanced was 17 points. Seventeen points. So their total score didn't go up but their advanced scores went up 17 points, and that school's Title I this year. They weren't before.…I pointed that out to her and I said, "Look at your advanced scores." She goes, "Well, at least that's good." *[Laughs]* I was, like, slappin' myself in the forehead. And I said, "That's something to congratulate." I said, "Look at the growth in the other schools in their – in their advanced scores, and look at your – you guys' growth in your advanced scores." I said, "That's your teachers right there."…And she goes, "Oh, well, I didn't look at it that way." *[Laughs]* I think that when principals are the ones that're ultimately accountable, sometimes they don't dig into what the data really means. Like, what is the complete picture of what's happening there?

Although Lindsey sees herself as shy and does not push administrators, she appears to have grown in her leadership to be willing to help an administrator see the data differently. Lindsey also revealed sometimes being frustrated with the principals because they do not always see the instruction or team dynamics as she sees them.

Most of the time I agree with the principal and how they see their teachers, and then sometimes, it's the opposite. Like, the principals are like, "Oh, our seventh-

grade team has really got it goin' on.…but then when I'm in the classroom, I'm

seein' disconnect, like, missed opportunities and just off alignment or you know,

there's still places to. And so they're like, "You don't have to meet with them."

"They don't need anything. They're fine," you know, but there're still areas to

focus on and areas to work on.

I raised the concept of a coach as a liaison between the teachers and the

administrators which at first Maggie was uncomfortable with. She said, "I need to let

that percolate." Then she immediately shared a story where she worked as an advocate

for the teachers with the principal.

Okay, something just is coming up right now with report cards. The primary

report card, there's been a lot of problems with it, that we have been trying to help

that get smoothed out, but the principal said the report cards have to be in Friday.

Well, to do a primary report card, first grade report card, you have to literally

click 67 boxes for one child. One child. And the teachers were going, she wants

these done by Friday, and we've got Literacy Night tonight, we got this tomorrow

night, and I said, ladies, I will talk to her, so she listened, although she would

have listened to them too. They're kind of busy doing teaching.…So she listened,

and today an email went out that said Tuesday. And boy the emails to her with

colored letters and everything, thank you, thank you, thank you. So I do a little bit

of that, but I don't do ugly, or I don't listen to tattle.

I find it interesting Maggie would consider the concept of being a liaison as someone

who would "tattle," but perhaps her early years of coaching, when coaches were set up

more as evaluators, colored her answer. Maggie was clear in all of her stories, she was a

coach who was there to advocate for the teachers and improve instruction.

Candace described herself as a "wuss," so she works with the other instructional coaches on her campus to help the principal see what is best for the students.

Okay, one of the things we wanted to do this year, if I can give an example is. One of the schools in the district that has been one of the low performing has actually raised their STAAR scores 15 points in a year, which is just incredible. We tend to be kind of right in the middle so we are really interested in doing what we can to raise our scores. So the other instructional coaches and I would talk to people and try to find out what they are doing….They do a tutoring program during the day, during their lunch/advisory time. So we were trying to set up something similar to that. So I would go in and talk to my principal about it and he would say, yeah we really cannot do that because…And then the other instructional coaches would go in and talk to him about it and he would say, no we really can't do it. Finally we had gone in so many times, that at one point when I went to talk to him he said, okay, see if you could make it happen. And he had us present it to the leadership team. Then he kept saying, okay, make it happen. Which essential means, you do all the work and if we can solve it, I will go ahead and let you do it. And so we did, we took it on and it meant doing a lot of stuff we don't know how to do, which is very time consuming and frustrating. But we did it and now we are at the point where we are going to implement it and see how it works. So it was kind of a matter of beating him down a little bit.

Candace appreciates that her principal may not be like other principals because he is willing to listen and let the instructional coaches push him at time.

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Also at a recent meeting, everybody has been complaining to him that we really

need more time and there are ways that we can have this time if he will allow us

to adjust the schedule. His view is that there is not more time, so kind of live with

it and so at this event that were all at last week there were other administrators

from the other schools and he asked all of them so how much time do you give to

planning to your teachers?… and I was there as part of the conversation and he

was talking to this other AP who was at the school who had done so well, then

after the AP left the four of us talked, myself the other ICs, and the principal. And

it became apparent that he did not hear the same thing that we heard. He heard

that they didn't have much more time than we do. The fact is they really have

three more days than we do a week to do this stuff.…He kind of cherry picks

what he wants to hear. So it is kind of a matter of just working and working and

working on him. And to his credit, he allows us to do that. I will say that and not

all principals will, as you know. Beating him over the head. We kind of tease with

him about that.

Although Candace occasionally pushes the administrator, she also accepts that she might

need to push back more.

Usually he does not say too much negative. If he does say something negative,

sometimes I pander to him, and I will oh yeah, and I will agree with it, sometimes

I just kind of ignore it. Sometimes, I think, Candace, you should not have just

accepted that.

She continues:

I am really lucky because the two other instructional coaches at my school are

these dynamo women who will say almost anything and they kind of have given

me a role model to follow. So I have seen them step over the line many times and

realized that I can step over it too and he will accept that.

Candace draws her strength as an instructional leader from the other instructional coaches

on her campus; it appears from her story that left to her own devices, she would not push

for change like she does.

Katy shares that when she goes to her principal, she usually is going with what

she calls "a teacher's voice."

My first principal that I was under, a lot of times, you know, I would go to him as

a teacher's voice and say, "Hey, just think about what you're asking them to do

right now, and I get if you're asking them to do that, but is there any way that you

could take something else off their plate?" Um, and he did. You know, he listened

to those things, because he did, he trusted me, and so sometimes I would go and

think about, hey, remember when you were in a classroom and, you know, if you

were asked, asked one more demand of you, you were gonna snap. So think about

that….because sometimes as your, as a principal, you know, the teacher has this

amount of time to go in and talk to that principal, and sometimes it blurts out in,

you know, in the most awkward way ever, and then now they've heard the third

teacher walk in and say the exact same thing, and so sometimes it's easy if they

just come to you and then you can go to them and you can make it be a good time,

because if not you can come back in 30 minutes, whereas they don't really have

that luxury.

Having the time and access to the administrators is important for the coaches to be able to

have the conversations with the principals to implement change.

In the scenarios, I presented one where the administrator was frustrated with the teachers and taking out the frustration on the instructional coach. I wanted to know how the coaches would react to a situation that pushes the instructional coaches in their work. Katy could not even begin to believe this would happen between a coach and administrator, I believe this is because she has such a collaborative relationship with her administrator; however, both Maggie and Lindsey accepted the fact that this might happen. It could be the difference with being a campus based coach and district level coach because the district level coaches have more administrators to work with. Maggie explained she would address the principal with a "teacher centered voice." Lindsey shared an experience where she had encountered a similar scenario.

> I have encountered this same scenario. Parents complained that their child wasn't doing the same activities as children in the other 7th grade science classes. I knew that the teachers were teaching the same content but with different lessons because they disagreed on what to do. I was unaware that one teacher was doing fewer labs and more worksheets than the other. The principal and I agreed that we would set a department standard that all students would have the same lab experiences, assessments and number of grades in each category, but they could still have their own style of teaching the content.

Again, Lindsey who says she is shy and has a hard time making relationships with principals, worked closely with this administrator to solve the problem. Lindsey was also able to separate the inequity of students not being allowed to do labs with the order of content the teachers were using. She clearly saw a problem with teachers not giving the

students experiences with doing science labs as an issue where the administrator needed to step in. She continues her story explaining when she would support a teacher's choice of instruction to the principal.

> I have also had teachers flip content within a unit because it made more sense to them to teach it that way. As long as it doesn't change the district scope and sequence or assessment I would support it to the principal. For example, some teachers prefer to teach moon phases before seasons, some prefer atomic structure before periodic table.

Again, Lindsey would support the teachers to the principals, although she would say, she does not "push back" to administrators.

The instructional coaches worked as instructional leaders on their campuses by working with administrators to see issues from the teacher's point of view, as well as raising issues for discussion with the administrators. When the coaches believed their relationship with the principal was that of colleagues, or at least having the support of the principal, the coaches were able to work effectively in the space between administrators and teachers.

Although the instructional coaches talked about being seen as instructional leaders on their campuses, they did not present themselves as instructional leaders to the community. The coaches all identified themselves as teachers when asked what they do for a career. In presenting themselves to the world in this manner, the coaches have not positioned themselves as instructional leaders.

Even though the instructional coaches do not present themselves as instructional leaders to the world, this does not mean they are not seen as instructional leaders on their

campus in the work that they do. Caitlyn reflected at the end of our second interview about the future of being an instructional coach by telling me she worries about going back into the classroom because she believes she will always be seen as an instructional coach on the campus.

Coaching for School Improvement

The instructional coaches in this study work to improve the schools where they work. They wanted the best for the students and worked with the teachers and administrators to improve instruction. This improvement could be getting teachers to be better at working in small groups or helping teachers see their students differently. I looked at the data on the coaching work on school improvement in two sections, first the relationship between "heavy and light coaching" (Killion, 2009). Then I examined how the instructional coaches worked for social justice.

Heavy vs. light coaching. Within the coaching world, professionals use the phrases heavy versus light coaching (Killion, 2009). Many of the participants referred to this concept as they were sharing their stories. Interestingly, the coaches who discusses this concept felt they should be doing more heavy coaching; they were almost guilty over this concept, again because these women wanted to please and do the work right. It was important for the coaches to perceive I valued their work, which may have contributed to the coaches talking about the need to do heavier coaching. The coaches justified doing more light coaching because it is easier to do the light coaching. It was as if there was more chance to be rejected as a coach if you did heavy coaching. The coaches were worried if the teachers felt the coaching was heavy, the teachers would reject them as coaches.

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Meredith brought up the issue of heavy versus light coaching and I asked her to clarify the two different types of coaching. She explained her understanding of the two concepts.

Heavy coaching would be more changing like a skill that you really change, not just, support. Or, I'm gonna stay with you for a month and work on that. But yeah, and I do think that I need to do more heavy. But the needs right now are light. Like they, it's a lot of just computer training. That's light. That's not, and a lot of my classroom management would be heavier. I've done so much this year, just little stuff, but the classroom management would be heavier.

It is unclear why Meredith thought the need was for light coaching, but Meredith did not ever want to suggests there were needs of teachers on her campus that were not being met unless it was in relationship to technology.

Maggie compares heavy coaching with light coaching by explaining when she uses each of the different types.

Well, light coaching a lot of times I think of as that one-legged thing in the hall, or even one coaching cycle I'm in right now is light. They don't need much. But I'm doing some heavy coaching with two ladies that don't understand reading and they're teaching it. I mean and they I've taken them to places. I've modeled, modeled, modeled. I'm doing coaching cycle and I'm still trying and I've said, 'Look, your principal expects small groups, small groups, small groups. These are all the ways you can do it.' And I still walk in and they're all reading the same thing and they're all doing the same worksheet. Really?…we've got to keep data. And I'm still being nice, the yogurt parfaits and all that, but, now I'm just saying,

’’Ladies, we've been here since August. We have not done anything that the

principal expects to see. And you're gonna have an evaluations soon.’

It was surprising that Maggie became direct with these teachers; I believe her frustration

is coming from trying so hard to get the teachers to change their strategies without

success.

Maggie is the most experienced of the coaches in working in public education,

which I think helps her frame her work with the teachers, such as when to push and when

to look for alternative was to implement change. This year Maggie is using technology to

create a forum for the teachers to share in a vertical conversation. She explains she uses

this forum to help teachers move to a deeper understanding of content, as well as a

method to move to heavy coaching.

You know, I made it as easy for them as possible, on a Google document, and I

posted a question to the two grade levels every other week, and they – there were

partnered up, and they had to respond to that opposite grade – the other grade

level about that question. And it really became pretty good data. You know, they

– they started talking. Um, and then every once in a while, every couple of

months we met face to face. But I opened it up by making it in your pajamas with

a glass of wine. But it was so slick because it was so plain. And my questions just

kept getting heavier and heavier, and a couple of times it was too much and they

let me know. They said, ‘We need more time to think about that one." And I said,

"Okay, well, let's just run this one for three weeks.’

Maggie always keeps the teachers needs in mind as she works, but also always tries to do

more to push the teachers forward.

Lindsey did not use the phrases heavy versus light coaching but she shared her thoughts on using coaching to change the beliefs of teachers. "You can't change teachers so much, but help open them up to seeing other views but not necessarily change them. Maybe make them more aware. Open up possibilities to think differently." Lindsey described her understanding of the purpose of coaching as to help teachers become more self-reflective and I think this statement further supports her views of coaching.

Coaching for social justice. Stories of social justice emerged in several of the coaches interviews. The literature on coaching suggests coaches can play an important role for improving instruction by working with teachers on their beliefs (Jacobs, 2006; Voltz, et al., 2010). Lindsey, et al. (2007) explained every teacher brings their beliefs to the classroom with the choices they make and how the teachers interact with students.

Not all of the instructional coaches even recognized a need for a discussion of social justice. When asked if her teachers ever talk about the problem with education is that kids don't want to or cannot learn, Meredith quickly said, "I don't get that." When pushed a little about this concept she expanded to say:

No, when I think that thing, I'm, like, you know, we don't – we don't get that. Ours is probably more they'll say that they're not listening or they're just not, you know, to keep a third grader engaged. They just say they're misbehaving, they're not paying attention, but it's not that they can't learn. It's just getting – capturing that attention.

Katy is much like Meredith; "I don't really feel that we have a lot of that." She then said that there are some math concepts the students lack, but they don't blame the students they just implement strategies to help with those gaps in knowledge. Her frame

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to the conversation about deficit thinking was a focus on content which is not surprising because all of her coaching has been around content and getting students to pass the state algebra test. Katy talked about how the culture of the school is focused on helping students learn and there is no deficit thinking on the campus.

> Um, or, you know, we have a, a, a lot of low-SES students. We do. But it's just we've had that so long that maybe that's just not something that we – you know, yes, we do. So what are we gonna do to fix it? What are we gonna do to help them? Um, so maybe that's just, you know, kinda maybe the culture of our school, but I don't feel like that I have a lot of teachers, um, coming to me and saying that. I can't, I can't even think of a time, to, to be quite honest with you.

I wondered after our conversation if Katy's school really did not have deficit thinking or this it was a part of the school culture and Katy was just unaware.

> Candace acknowledges deficit thinking can happen with the teachers. She listened to the teacher than tries to move them to a solution. She explained:

> There were times that I just sat and listened, because they just needed to do that [vent]. There wasn't, we weren't going to go anywhere with that. Under the best of circumstances; if it is not somebody who is really resistant to me, at some point, we need to talk about what we are going to do about it, because you are right, some kids just don't have everything that they need to understand this, but we do have to get them from here to here even if we cannot get them over to here, so what are we going to do.

Candace took a pragmatic approach to her teachers, let them vent and moved them forward. She explains that her years of working at an inner city school had prepared her

to work with struggling learners.

> And then, I have all kinds of ideas because I taught in inner city schools, so I don't have a problem when thinking of, you know, really simplistic silly things that will really help kids that are kind of low, my problem is stepping out of it and letting them do it more. That is kind of hard for me because I have a million and one ideas, but that is not always the best way to help figure out how to help people solve the problem. But to just answer that one question that is the way I do it, sometimes they just have to talk and just let it go and then at some point you have to say, yeah it is awful, but at this point, let's start looking at what we can do whatever it is. We want to get their scores up even if it is just that little bit.

Candace acknowledges the need for teachers to vent, who have not had experience with struggling learners, but she is also aware teachers cannot stay in the venting mode, so she needs to help them move forward. What Candace also understands is the teachers themselves need to be part of the solution for working with the learners who struggle and she cannot give them all the answers.

Much like Candace, Caitlyn understands the need for coaching for social justice and conversations is the vehicle for the possibility for this change. Her story for this conversation revolves around a teacher who is struggling with a freshmen science class.

> I just had a conversation today. You know, it's just a hard situation. She's just so frustrated, and you know, even with the kids in there [the room]. You know, she even told me before I came – it was a science class, but I mean, we've had multiple conversations beforehand. And so finally today I was like, "You know, I'm gonna come by and I'm just gonna look and see if I can, you know, give you

any feedback on, like, what kids are doing, like, as it's happening, whatever."

And then she's just so frustrated…I was like, "Is there anything you want me to

watch?" She literally stands there and she's like, "That one, that one, that one,"

and I was like, "Okay, probably not the way I would've done that, but all right."

Caitlyn knew going into the classroom the teacher was frustrated, but because she

approaches the classroom differently did not anticipate the level of the teacher's

frustration that the teacher would call out the students. She continued the story:

I didn't anticipate that or I would've just not said anything. Then she would come

back and kind of whispering, not really whispering at all, with her back to the

room, "Well, you know, really about, like, 90 percent of – of these kids just – they

don't get it." Like, she's just so frustrated, right?

I had asked a question about teachers not always thinking about kids in a positive light as

far as their learning went and had not used the phrase of "deficit thinking," but Caitlyn

applied that phrase to my question.

Your question was how do you work with deficit thinking, I guess it's the part of

me that is the Pollyanna. I always take the positive presupposition. She's been

teaching a long time, and you know, she's just frustrated, and it is frustrating

when you're not able to reach them. And she even said…"I just feel like I can't

reach them. I'm just not reaching them." And it's like, that's what you want to

hear, right? I don't have all the answers, but you know, I said, "I'll get back with

you. I'm gonna try to research some things….So I guess to answer your question,

what I do when people kind of start in that spiral down is – I think it's probably

just me, but I start that kind of Pollyanna, like, "Oh, well, you know, what can we

do?" but also listening to conversation, too, because if people are in that mind

where they're not gonna hear that, then it doesn't help

Although Caitlyn herself stays in a positive frame when working with the teachers, when she hears teachers change their attitudes about the students, she knows she is making a difference

When you first start working with people, they're very frustrated, with like, kind

of and sort of over-generalize about groups of kids or, you know, those kids, or

these kids are making me crazy. Or, you know, that kind of thing. And then, after

you work together awhile and work on, kind of that—not humanization—but, you

know, that really helping people see the kids as individuals and think about their

strengths that they bring…and then when they'll talk to you specifically about a

student that they've kind of gotten to know or taken them in their wing.

Caitlyn sees her role as a change leader on her campus by helping her teachers see their students differently. Caitlyn also has support from her administrator to work on changing teacher beliefs.

Caitlyn shared her principal set up the focus for her work to have a social justice lens. I had asked her a question about changing beliefs or behaviors, which was most important as an instructional coach. She responded:

[Laughs] Yeah, I actually and I don't know if it's just specific at my school, but

that's what we do [change beliefs]. I mean, I feel that that's—not, like,

completely clear from my principal, it's not like he said, "Go out and change

everyone's beliefs." But I mean, he really is about, we're shifting. And shifting

the culture and yeah. And, and really, that is actually what I feel my job is. As

opposed to, you know, getting in everything. I mean, I'm, I'm not in the

classrooms…let's have the little conference, let's talk, come in and watch, what

you're thinking about? And then we'll talk about it afterwards. Of like, kind of

slowly help, you grow and improve as a teacher and that changes your beliefs.

Caitlyn appreciates the support from the administrator this helps them work as a team to

improve instruction on their campus.

Lindsey acknowledged that with the teachers some are more aware of issues of

diversity than others. She shared a story about working with a teacher directly when she

witnessed issues of discrimination in the classroom.

It depends on the teacher, not the campus. I think there are teachers who come

across as completely a non-issue and then there are some who have issues they do

not realize. If you talk to them about it they would not even recognize they have

an issue, but I can see it. This week, a new teacher, every time a distraction would

happen that she would not see exactly what was going on, she was calling out the

black girl in the second row. Sometimes it was her and sometimes it wasn't her.

So when she was calling her out, she was over reacting. And then in trouble for

over reacting and setting a bad tone for the rest of the year and the class. "I didn't

do anything."

I asked Lindsey how she approached this observation with the teacher or if she even

talked to the teacher about the interaction. She shared:

I talked to her after class. Not about the race of the girl, but I did point out to her

that several times when she called on the girl, it was not her but the little white

boy on the front row. She goes, "oh he is sweet." I said he is sweet when you are

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looking at him, but as soon as you turn your head, he is undermining you. He is

making faces while you are talking. She was completely unaware. Of course he is

also right there under her face. So he could see her body turning and he was very

subtle. She was surprised.

Because Lindsey was able to observe the interaction, she was also able to start the

conversation. If Lindsey was solely focused on content, she may have missed this

opportunity. She continued:

I also gave her some pointers for working with the girl that she thought was

causing the problems, because I noticed that she was also eager to answer and

wanted to be busy. She wanted to talk and to be busy. The more the teacher kept

her busy, the more on task that she was. As soon as the attention when off of her,

then she was, not with malice or anything, but talking to her friend or rustling

through her supplies or things like that. So I did not address it, I did not address

the racial part of it.

Lindsey believed race may have contributed to the interaction, but instead of addressing

the issue from a racial position, she approached the teacher with strategies to improve the

classroom.

I gave her a pointer for dealing with the boy. I said, look for it and the second that

you catch it, you call him out on it. You tell him you want to talk to him after

class, quietly so that he is not getting the show. You just say, I need to talk to you

after class, don't worry, I just need to talk to you a couple of minutes, but don't

worry about it. She said, "Oh that is going to freak him out", I said, "exactly." She

said, "I will just move him." I said, don't move him, give him a chance, give him

an opportunity to fix it himself, because then if he messes up, it is on him. If you

just move him, it is on you. You are the bad guy; it is just another reason for him

not to listen. So she tried it and he straightened up on his own. She did not have to

move him.

Lindsey used this opportunity to coach a teacher on her beliefs without judgment, but

knew the issue needed to be addressed. She did not frame her work as social justice, but it

was apparent to me it was an issue of great importance to Lindsey. When asked why

Lindsey thought see could see these issues of injustice in the classroom, Lindsey reflected

and shared after a very long pause:

No, it's not a difficult question. It's just hard to – it's hard to answer because I

don't know the answer. It's not an easy answer. I grew up poor, and my big

brother was a troublemaker and he was six years older than me, so maybe that has

part to do with it because I came behind him and I felt like, in middle school, they

would go, "Oh, you're Darrell's sister," you know, so they had that preconceived

kind of notion. Same thing with poverty 'cause our family, um, moved house to

house a lot. We had a dirt yard with the dog tied to the tree kind of – You know, a

good family, good people but, in our town, there was a lot of haves and have-nots

so maybe that, I'm sure that shaped part of who I am as an adult, but maybe part

of my views is that a teacher or 'cause I always feel like, in my classroom, when I

was teaching, I tried not to have prejudgments on kids, and when I would see kids

mistreating other kids or even making them feel bad in any way, that was, like,

ooh, that would get under my skin, so maybe the same thing comes out with my

coaching too, that when I hear people judge without full knowledge of what or

prejudge. I don't know, there are trends within some of our subgroups. I mean, you can say – which you could say really tend to be this or tend to be that, that they do prove true a lot of times. Each student is an individual person, and I don't like to see people, I guess. The injustice based on, like, not even really trying to find a way to reach that person.

Although she shares a passion for protecting students, she referred to the students who are in the accountability groups as "subgroups." Perhaps unware that the phrase in and of itself sets up a structure of making one group superior to others. However, Lindsey is passionate about wanting the teachers to see every student as a unique person with their own gifts.

Maggie initially explained that Title I elementary schools just do not have time for deficit thinking so they need to focus on what they can control and work for the best of the student.

I think the teachers I work with really, at the elementary, really understand that, especially at a Title I school, that they have to take off the plate that it's the parent, or it's the child, and it's just what we have to focus on. That's such a hard thing to keep reminding ourselves. And saying, you know when you think of, you've got a first-grader whose mom is a pole dancer at night, and he comes in wearing little girl's shoes because whoever spent the night that was the shoes he put on, and needless to say doesn't have lunch, so it's easy to say that he can't learn because he didn't have a bed to sleep in, blah, blah, blah, um, just continually helping each other look at the student.

Maggie gave this description of the little boy very nonchalantly, which took me a little

aback in our conversation. She continued:

> Knowing when to make that phone call, but helping each other, just supporting each other when they start to go down that lane and say okay, all right, but now let's go back and let's just find one thing he can control, and let's build on that one thing and find that next step….They [the teacher] get to know them as a family and a community.

Maggie appears to say there is no deficit thinking, but then she also shared that it was through the teachers working together to stay in the positive and not go to deficit thinking, the campus was able to look at the whole child.

Lindsey and Maggie participated in the focus group where they started to discuss what frustrates them as instructional coaches. Maggie initiated this part of the conversation when she talked about what she does when she gets frustrated with her teachers.

Maggie: You really sometimes just walk away, right. I mean I've had some…

Lindsey: I have to remove, I try to find a good place to, to dismiss myself because I find it hard to keep my composure, I mean I never would blow up or anything but it's definitely hard to, to keep paying attention. And then also my eyes start burning like not like I'm going to cry 'cause my feelings are hurt but when I get mad I cry too. And so I have to like mm hmm, hmm. You can tough this out ten more minutes or whatever.

Maggie: Yeah. What triggers you? I mean I know what triggers me.

Laura: Rudeness. Like when people are just hateful or mean is what gets me

the most because I, you need to disagree to grow. And when people

can't handle a polite disagreement they're rude or mean or hateful it

just unnecessary. It just makes me angry more than sad or upset but

like just, just what kind of person are you, you know.

Maggie: I could, I could see that.

Lindsey: There's not, that's not often. I mean most people are reasonable.

Maggie: Well, I think in the world of elementary, luckily, for whatever reasons

elementary teachers tend to stay away from that. I can tell when I'm

with fifth grade or *[laughter]* because they will and I've only

experienced it one time in my coaching some real rudeness from some

fifth grade math teachers. But to me it's when they get on their

soapbox about it being the kids and it will send me over the edge when

that's their fallback to their deficit thinking. Kids in this neighborhood

have changed, okay. I have some of my pat responses but I know in

the end I'm going to have to say ooh, gosh guys, sorry need to go.

[Laughter]

It was interesting to have Maggie use the term deficit thinking in her response. She had

shared they did not have time for that thinking at a Title I school, but it is what pushes her

buttons and frustrates her. Lindsey continued the conversation explaining a story of a

young boy who was homeless and how his teacher interacted with him. Lindsey had

shared this story with me earlier in her second interview.

Lindsey: I had one that was talking about a student one time and she was he's

just gross. He's homeless and he smells and I'm like that's just mean.

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You know I was doing that in my head what kind of person are you?

Maggie: Did you say that?

Lindsey: No, I said well, those things aren't his fault, you know. And she was like well he's, he sits right in front of me 'cause I have to put him in front of me because I can't control him otherwise. And, and I can smell him and it just makes me, you know pretty much made her mad to look at his face every day in more words than that.

Maggie: Mm-hmm. Wow. See that would just --

Lindsey: And so I, I said well, first of all, it's not, a sixth grader doesn't choose to be in whatever situation that they're in and so the way he's acting at school is, is part and she's like I know. And I said well, you know what get him out of your face then. Put him to the side, keep him close, but put him, put him to the side because maybe it's too much. Maybe it's too much for him and it's too much for you. You know, but still, you know keep him where you can keep your thumb on him but take him out of your front vision and put him on your, on your side vision so you can still see what he's doing. And put him close to somebody that likes to momma. Don't you have any little mommas?

Maggie: Oh, that is great.

Lindsey: Little mommas? And she was like yeah, I have a couple girls that like to help.

Maggie: Ohhh, oh, that is great.

Lindsey: Put him in between a couple mommas and let them, let them momma,

momma him and then you won't feel like you're doing it all the time. And it worked. It worked for a while and then it, and then he left. He moved.

Maggie: Oh and then he moved. Ohhh, Lindsey that was a wonderful response.

Lindsey: It was hard, it was hard not just be mean though.

Maggie: To be mean back.

Lindsey: To, you know, who do you --

Maggie: Who do you think you are?

Lindsey: That's right.

Maggie: Describing a person. Ohh, my goodness. So, what are some of the things I talk about? I usually fall back to, you know, a common experience I've had and what helped me work through it or, um, *[sigh]* I might quote something from *Failure's Not An Option*. I think in any case it would be what you think the teacher will respond to. I think what Lindsey said a teacher that's in that emotional frame of mind is going to respond to an emotion.

Lindsey: It would just, it would, like I, if you would say you know, it's not his fault but if we had, if we had gone down that street it just would have been she just wouldn't have liked me. And, and we would just like disagree and she would still keep her mindset so solve the problem not the person, you know.

Maggie: But you stayed, you stayed in the emotion. You piggybacked off of it. That's, that's really sweet. Don't you think? I mean if I had confronted

that one with a quote.

Lindsey: It just changed my opinion of her for sure. I mean now she's earned

some of, some of the respect back but, um, that was towards maybe

three months into my coaching last year. It took a while before I could

even look at her like, like she cared about kids, you know.

This exchange was interesting to me for many reasons. One is the shared attitude towards

teachers who do not see the entire child and prejudge students. Both of these participants

took the opportunity to encourage each other in their coaching. Maggie was very

reflective in the thought of how different the coaching situation would have been if she

had shared a quote with the teacher and not staying in the emotional frame with the

teacher. It is also interesting that Maggie talked in her interviews about how there was not

time for deficit thinking in a Title I school, but what pushes her buttons is when teachers

have deficit thinking about the students. It appears that when instructional coaches

acknowledge issues of social justice in their schools, they are willing to have

conversations around the issues, however hard some of the conversations may be. Lastly,

I found the exchange to reinforce the metanarrative that little girls want to mother others.

I knew Lindsey and Maggie did not see this interaction of putting girls in the momma

role as reinforcing the metanarrative I wanted to disrupt.

Coaching and Gender

Gender was an issue the instructional coaches shared many ideas that feed into the

metanarrative of gender roles. Meredith recognized as she was telling her story that her

beliefs were stereotypical of men.

I think my male teachers are, um, they're very relaxed and comfortable, which I

have, I have a brand new one that's a little more professional. Some of them are not that professional. And they do, they feel a little too comfortable, which is good and bad. I don't think it's any different, really. I mean, to be honest, this is horrible to say, but they're not – some of them just are not as organized, as a woman. I'm being stereotypical. Um, but I, no, not really. Some of 'em are, are more willing to work with me, actually.

In Meredith's story, she wants to apologize for being stereotypical of the men, but then she pulls it back and stands by her beliefs that men are just not as organized as women.

Meredith shared a story of working with a male teacher in setting up small groups. When asked if it was required to have small groups in elementary schools Meredith replied:

Well, that's why I wanted to make sure it's confidential, because it is a requirement. Here's why I have trouble, because he had, he knows he's supposed to do that, and he's not. And that's, to me, I'm not his boss. I'm gonna help you with that, but I'm not gonna help you and waste my time if you're not, if I'm gonna show you – which I've done before – if I'm gonna show you and help you set up the system and take, you know, and then if you're just gonna turn around and not do it, that's just a compliance issue.

Meredith is struggling in the space between where she knows the teacher can improve and knows he needs to change, but she is not in a place where she can require him to change. She continued to share:

I mean he has been written up lately for other stuff, but not that, so I'm having trouble personally that there's coaching and then there's just noncompliance. And

I don't feel like that's my job. My job is to, I like the model that we call the

SQUISH. The principal tells the teacher, "I saw this. You need to work on this.

This is something that I have to see an improvement on, and Meredith will help

you with that." Instead of me going in and saying, "You know, you're not doing

small groups." Because even if, even if I went in there, I know him well enough

to know if I said, "Hey, how can I help you with small groups?" he wouldn't do it

unless he felt like he was getting in trouble.

Meredith is clearly frustrated with her work in the space between.

Lindsey revealed that she had more male teams in the past then she does this year,

and she was cognizant that she worked differently with the male teachers. She shared a

story about another coach who also works differently with male teachers.

Mary [the current instructional coach for this school] had a hard time with the

team that has the two males and one female. She's had a hard time with the guys,

'cause they're tough at first. They think they know everything. They've got no

use for you. They'd let you sit there, but they don't really wanna *[laughs]* hear

what you have to say. So it took a while last year to win their trust, and so Mary

had a hard time with 'em this year. She called me yesterday and she was like, "I

brought breakfast tacos, and it changed my life forever." *[Laughter]* So it was

pretty funny. She was like, "You gotta feed the men. That's what I learned today.

You gotta feed the men."

Lindsey continued by sharing how she uses the male teachers' expertise to enroll them in

the coaching process. Although she finds their expertise helpful, she is also frustrated that

they are unwilling to use data to help change their practices.

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So, I think, too, with my guy teams I feel like I acknowledge their expertise more. *[Laughs]* Like, we address their ego a little more, *[laughter]* not that I'm trying to do that, but I think. And with my all men team, those guys know their science better than I ever did, my two eighth-grade guy teachers.

It is interesting that Lindsey feels that she can coach to the egos of the men because of the overall science knowledge.

They are both fantastic teachers. I think that they have room for growth in, which students to target and understanding the data and working from that to do, 'cause they're completely resistant to data, to being targeted with which students need to grow or which ones are prepared or, you know, are gonna fail probably if there's not some intervention in place. It's just good teachin'. … Whenever I say data, they're like, "Oh, data, data, data".…I think that's just mistrust in the whole *[laughs]* educational system, you know? I mean, that's exactly, when we bring up data, that's exactly what gets said, "We do great every year. We do great. We're good teachers." Yes, you are; *[laughs]* however Um, I've backed off.

Lindsey's attitude of working with the male coaches contributes to the metanarrative. Men need food; men need their egos stroked and if they are not willing to listen, back off. This is interesting because Lindsey will have conversations with teachers on social justice issues, but was not willing to push the male teachers to work with data.

Maggie was reflective in her response to the question if she worked with male teachers differently. She starts out sure that she does not, but as she was speaking she ended with maybe.

I hope not. I do, but um, uh, I'm not in a coaching cycle with one, but a second

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grade teacher, we do talk about getting materials and resources for his room, but I just hope we're at the point we all know, we're educators, and I hope I don't. Maybe.

Candace much like Maggie is unsure if she works differently with the male teachers and like Maggie, she wanted to reflect on the issue.

You know, I am not sure I can say. I have coached two men. Maybe a little bit. I mean, you end up having to do the same things. But I think I am not sure how a man is going to take something. But I have to say, I don't know that they respond that much differently than woman. I just don't know. I will have to think about that.

I had not anticipated the coaches would not see the issues around gender or want to talk about them. When they did share, they were very stereotypical in their stories, such as, "you need to feed the men," or Maggie, with "I am not sure how a man is going to take something." This leads me to believe more research needs to be done around the issues of coaching and gender.

Conclusion

This study brings to life how instructional coaches perceive their work. Through the coaches' stories, they explained that their work was centered on working with teachers to improve instruction. Some coaches referred to this process as "helping" teachers, others talked about being support for the teachers. Several of the coaches suggested that they did not influence administrators, but then shared a story where they worked to implement change by working with administration to see situations differently. Many of the stories support the previous literature on the work of instructional coaching

such as the qualities and barriers to coaching. However, the coaches stories have added to the understanding of the how instructional coaches understand their purpose, their identity and how the coaches work with administrators. The coaches in this study want to work for school improvement and see their work as important. Lindsey shared, "coaching is hard work." I think she is correct in her summation of coaching. What I learned from these coaches is they are willing to do the hard work.

V. ANALYSIS

This study unveils the views of six instructional coaches as they approach their work for school improvement. It is important to hear the voices of the coaches themselves, as this role is likely to continue to grow within the school improvement process (DeNisco, 2015). Many of the stories the coaches shared reinforced the metanarrative of women as helpers, pleasers, and followers (Zhu, 2011). By metanarrative I am referring to the societal positioning of women as being subordinate to men (Freedman, 2002); society creates structures where women are seen as homemakers, care givers, and helpers (Zhu, 2011). After deconstructing how the metanarrative is at play within the common metaphors for instructional coaching from Barkley (2011), Fullan and Knight (2011), and Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010), a reframing of instructional coaching will be offered for consideration. Finally, implications for administrators, policy makers, and educational leadership programs will be discussed, as well as potential future research studies.

Reinforcing the Metanarrative

As I was deconstructing the stories of the coaches, I was surprised by the number of times the instructional coaches shared a story that reinforced the metanarrative of gender. The reinforcement of the metanarrative occurred in a variety of ways. For some of the coaches, the metanarrative was blatantly stated in claims that men and women are different, such as Meredith saying her male teachers were not as organized as the female teachers. At other times, the metanarrative was more subtle, hidden in the phrases and attitudes of the women, such as Lindsay giggling every time she referred to her all male team of teacher as her "dude team." The stories of the coaches reinforced the

metanarrative of gender within the structure of school in multiple ways. I framed my analysis of the metanarrative through three lenses: coaches as housekeepers, coaches as pleasers, and coaches as reluctant leaders. In these three areas, the instructional coaches position themselves in the socially constructed relationships of leaders being male and followers being female on the side of the teachers (Blackmore, 1997; Marshal & Young, 2013). Blackmore (1997) posits that gender issues in education may have changed, but there are still issues. I would suggest the stories of the coaches support this conclusion.

Coaches as Housekeepers

Zhu (2011) explains girls are taught certain expectations about being female, including women "should be at home and take on the supportive and caring roles as wives and mothers" (p. 614). The coaches in this study seem to have brought this perspective to their work in schools, seeing themselves as the caregivers or housekeepers of the school. I view the coaches as accepting of the housekeeper role because of the stories they shared about repeatedly stepping in to fill needs to make the school run smoother, often taking on responsibilities they were not assigned.

Maggie and Katy shared stories that further the metanarrative of coaches as housekeepers when they said they were not used as substitutes on their campus, but then took on substitute roles. Maggie explained she was a substitute on the first day of school for a kindergarten class in order for the students to have a great first day. Katy worked as a substitute for several weeks with Algebra 1 students so they could be prepared for the state-mandated test. In her first interview with me, Maggie had stated, "Principals know if a sub doesn't show up, we're not the sub." However, she put aside this stance when she took on the substitute position on the first day of school. She shared, "A teacher couldn't

make it, and she came to me, and she said, I can't get a sub for the first day of

kindergarten, so there I was, and I did it. I loved it. It makes me real." The coaches put

the needs of others in the school above their own work within the school. On the first day

of school Maggie put aside her work as an instructional coach to work as a substitute, a

role she clearly did not believe a coach should perform, I find it interesting that the

coaches seemed to be the only ones who stepped into these substitute positions. When

the coaches discussed taking on the substitute role, they did not convey this was a duty

other people within the school, such as the assistant principal would or should take on.

Rather, their stories seemed to suggest the coaches did this out of an expectation that they

would take care of any unfulfilled need, in much the say way a mother and wife is

expected to address unfulfilled needs in the home (Freedman, 2002).

Meredith has taken on the technology support for the campus this year because of

new educational resources the teachers are struggling with, making her and instructional

coach and technology coach. But beyond Meredith working as the technology support for

her school this year, Meredith runs the behavior management system at her school

because there is a need and as she explains, "There's some things I do that are not in my

title, but I'm gonna' do it because I'm good at it and it needs to be done." Candace shared

she often takes on responsibilities because they have to get done, and no one else steps up

to do the task.

> Actually I still did a lot of stuff because she [the department chair] did not have
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> time or did not do a lot of things that needed to get done. This year we have a
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> department chair, who has been a department chair in other school, but this is her
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> first year at this school and she has not been able to fill that role because she is

just overwhelmed, so I kind of been filling that role as well, but is really not

supposed to be my role. I do it because it is needed.

Lindsey also explained she would do tasks because it was hard to say no when it affected

the students.

It ends up eating a lot of your time, phone calls of, "I am thirty copies short, can

you run to the office?" Of course you are not going to say "no" because you are

hurting kids if you say "no," but those things just kind of creep into the time you

have to do other things.

All of these stories reinforce the image of the instructional coach as a mother or caregiver

or housekeeper, which is why women are perceived as natural teachers (Zhu, 2011).

When the instructional coaches take on the extra duties of the school, such as

being department chair on top of being the instructional coach, then in essence they are

doing two jobs at the school. Taking responsibility for everyone is a social expectation

for women, especially for working women who work all day and then go home and take

on parenting responsibilities in the home (Freedman, 2002). Throughout the history of

women in the workforce, women have often done this double shift of work (Freedman,

2002).

Working two jobs is true in the case of Candace being the instructional coach and

department chair and Meredith being the technology support on top of being an

instructional coach; in effect the coaches are doing multiple jobs at the school. When

Caitlyn shared her story about her first year as a coach, being department chair as well as

having classes with students, it took her husband to tell her she could not do it all. How

well ingrained in these women it appears to be to take on extra responsibility even when

they view the principal as being the responsible party. In much the same way as women often run the household while giving the male head of the household status (cite), the coaches seemed to accept the role of housekeeper of the school while acknowledging, as Lindsey said, "The responsibility of the school is with the principal."

Although Lindsey says the responsibility of the success of the school is on the principal, she also believes it is her responsibility as the coach to improve the school.

> I take more on every, every year. I think I feel more responsible to take, to take care of more. I think this year is hard because of all the beginning of the year unknown and we didn't know what to prepare for. I feel ill prepared this year. But I also feel like I have to, like I, it's my job to address everything more than thinking. It's just my responsibility to make change.

Lindsey and the other coaches want to improve their schools and are willing to do the extra work it takes.

Coaches as Pleasers (The Influence of Silencing Women)

I would argue the coaches' hesitation in voicing their jobs within society comes from the instructional coaches as "pleasers" (Zhu, 2011). When the coaches were asked to identify their work, they all wanted to clarify who was asking before they answered the question. I believe the coaches asked this question because they did not want to make the person asking the question uncomfortable, so it was easier to say "teacher" than "instructional coach," which is a position in education the general public may be unfamiliar with. This demonstrates they wanted to make the stranger more comfortable within the conversation.

Another way the coaches manifested this concept of being "pleasers" was

throughout the interviews. All but one of the participants sought affirmation that their answers were adequate. Meredith asked, "Is that what you wanna know?" Lindsey wanted to know, "Did I fully answer that?" Candace was unsure if she was on target with her answers, "I don't know if there is anything else that you want." Caitlyn needed clarification that she was adequate, "Am I getting at your question? Does that make sense?" Maggie summarized, "Well, it's the teacher in all of us. We all want the gold star." Katy was the only one who did not ask for reassurance or reflect on the need for teachers to be praised. This need for acceptance is in line with Clifford (2002) who explains women try to figure out what others want so they can please them. From an early age, young girls are conditioned to be the "good girl", "docile and compliant" (Zhu, 2011, p. 614).

Good girls. The instructional coaches wanted to be the "good girls" within the school. I saw in the stories how the coaches wanted the teachers to come to them for support, help, or therapy. The coaches wanted to be seen as useful to the teachers. This wanting to be seen as useful is embedded in Knight's (2007) partnership coaching model where Knight (2007) explains it is important for instructional coaches to make implementing new strategies easy for the teachers.

All of the coaching models discuss the need for trust. All of the instructional coaches in this study said you cannot coach if you do not have trust with the people you are working with, teachers and administrators. Although trust is important, the trust must work in both directions, not with the coach always pleasing the other person in the relationship.

When the coaches talk about coaching heavy and coaching light, they were also

reinforcing this metanarrative of women as "good girls." Coaching heavy (Killion, et al., 2012) asks for the instructional coaches to push the thinking of the teachers. When coaches do heavy coaching the coach runs the risk of being rejected by the teachers because the conversation can become difficult. Coaches have a tendency to do light coaching because they want to be accepted by the teachers (Killion, et al., 2012). I think this came through the stories of the instructional coaches in this study because they talked about not doing heavy coaching even when they thought they should.

Self-silencing. I could not stop wondering why the coaches wanted to please me with their answers to my questions. I then began to wonder if it was because as women we are so often silenced by society and not allowed our own voice (Skrla et al., 2000). Freedman (2002) talks about how the silencing of women starts in the school, and hooks (2000) explains that it starts in the home. Skrla, et al (2000) argue the silencing of women helps to create an "invisible majority of those who work in the school" (p. 613). I believe that part of the need of the coaches to find validation in their answers was rooted in this silencing of women. Because we live within a socially constructed structure where women's voices are not honored (Wallin, 2001) and I was allowing them a voice, and they were unsure of how to use it. So within such as system of silencing women, it was hard for the coaches to open up to tell their stories, and they wanted them to be the "right" stories.

When Lindsey explained that when she describes her work to fellow educators as an "instructional coach" and lets them determine what that means because they are fellow educators, I felt she was allowing others to define who she was. Every time the coaches said they told others, "I am a teacher" they were positioning themselves in a role different

from their work. I do not want to say that instructional coaches are superior to classroom teachers, but I do think the roles are different and I believe that instructional coaches should claim their space within school improvement and the unique gifts coaches bring to school as instructional leaders.

Coaches as Deliberate Leaders

Although the instructional coaches conveyed respect for the administrators they worked with through their stories, none of these coaches wanted to move into an administrator position because it was clear to the instructional coaches there was a difference in the focus of the jobs, which they seemed to view as discipline versus instruction. Lindsey explained her plan was to become an administrator before she decided to become a coach.

> I was working on my administrator's certification and the more I got into the administrator side of it, the more I could see myself working from the instructional side of it. I was kind of dissatisfied with the kind of work the APs do, you as the disciplinarian and building manager, that type of thing. When I finished in December of 2009, I had planned to teach one more year, and then decide whether to go the AP route or look for something on the instructional end.

Caitlyn shared, "I don't wanna be an AP; I definitely don't wanna be a AP." The other four coaches explained if their instructional coaching position was to disappear, they would return to the classroom. I concluded from these statements these instructional coaches were not working to become campus administrators. I raised the issue of instructional coaches moving into administrative positions with the participants of the focus group.

Me: From the data that I've been reading so far it's really interesting to me

          that not one of the coaches has said they want to go into

          administration. Everybody has said I'll either do this or if I have to I'll

          go back to the classroom, but I am not going into administration,

          which I think is really interesting. Do you think if I had interviewed

          six men instead of six women I would have seen anything different

          than that?

Lindsey: Absolutely.

Me: And why do you say that Lindsey?

Lindsey: Just from my experience with working with the few men that I've

          worked with, or those working with me have been on their way to, to

          administration.

Maggie: Oh, really.

Lindsey: I think maybe being the breadwinner for their family too that this isn't,

          this isn't a job where your wife can stay home with the kids. It's also a

          job that somebody can have while their working on their masters. And

          so I've had a couple of guys at different schools that were working on

          their masters and as soon as they got it they, they switched to admin.

Maggie: I'd have to think about that. I mean we've never had them [men].

          We've just been women on our team. I think just the few I know like

          David and I don't know. I'd have to think if that would be the same

          place. As far as I know a man has never applied. As far as I know. I

          mean I haven't been on the committees.

This exchange seems to reflect the metanarrative that men need to move up in administration because they have the need to support families. Further, women fill the role of instructional coach due to the lack of men in the pool to choose from, or because there is a lack of interest on the part of men.

From examining the history of education, women have filled the roles that men did not want to fill (Blount, 2000). This shift in women in education happened with the shift in education from teaching a few elite to the expansion of education to the masses (Blount, 2000). Lindsey clearly still sees the relationship of men moving into administration (Blount, 2000) while women stay in the classroom or perhaps coaching. Her statement about instructional coaching being "a job that somebody can have while they're working on their masters" positions the work of instructional coaching as a stepping stone job in education allowing for advancement from being a teacher to an administrator. From the participants in my study, they were not going to make that step. These coaches did not see a place for themselves in administration unless it was as Caitlyn said, "I would like to do something instructionally. Um, maybe, downtown eventually. Like, much later in life." The instructional coaches would like to focus on instruction, not on other administrative roles. The coaches in the study did not say they did not want to be leaders, but they were choosing a different kind of leadership; a leadership with a focus on instruction.

Deconstructing Coaching Metaphors

After understanding the coaches' voices on their work, and how their stories brought out the strong metanarrative of duality and power within the educational systems, I deconstructed the coaching metaphors of Barkley (2011), Knight and Fullan (2011) and

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) from the views of the stories of the instructional coaches in this study. By applying a post-structuralist frame to these metaphors, I looked to see if the metaphors essentialized the role of the instructional coaches as well as if the metaphors reinforced the metanarrative of gender roles within schools.

Barkley (2009) represents the instructional coach as a male circus performer spinning plates. I do not know why Barkley uses a male in his metaphor since most coaches are women, but perhaps it is because he sees coaching as technical and driven by data. I applied the lens of coaches as housekeeper to his metaphor and the image that came to mind was of women at home juggling all of the jobs such as cooking, cleaning, raising children and pleasing the man of the home (Caplan, 2000). All of this juggling is reflective of the instructional coach who takes on many roles within the school, including roles that are non-coaching roles. By reinforcing the metanarrative of the coach as housekeeper, this metaphor positions the coach as a helper within the school, not a leader of the school.

Fullan and Knight (2011) relate the concept of instructional coaching to a dancer. This image allows for the relationship part of coaches, as well as the issues around the positioning of the coach in the space between. However, this conceptualization of coaching suggests an ease of coaching, a flow to coaching, and a femininity to coaching. The dancer moves easily between partners. This metaphor reinforces the metanarrative of the effortlessness of women's work (Bianchi and Spain, 1999). Much like the work of Donna Reed and June Cleaver, Bianchi and Spain (1999) explain these portrayals of women "epitomized the essence of a women's adult role; to provide everything necessary

for the smooth functioning of a happy family." The instructional coaches in this study would not agree that coaching is easy; in fact, some would argue it is very difficult work.

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010) express instructional coaches can be thought of as *whisperers*. Although this may sound magical, they argue that whispering is actually a set of skills the coach can develop over time. This metaphor reinforces the metanarrative of women and their natural intuition; being able to read people's minds (Caplan, 1989). This metaphor positions the instructional coaches as the *fixer* of teachers. The instructional coach natural knows what the teacher needs to do to get better, so the coach will whisper and *fix* the teacher. From the stories of these instructional coaches, the work they do is more involved with listening than with whispering. The coaches did not see themselves as the *fixer* of problem teachers, but someone who worked alongside teachers. If the purpose of the coach is to improve instruction, the coach will need to do more than whisper to impact change.

After conducting this study, for me, all of these metaphors seem inadequate to explain the work of an instructional coach for the work is complex and cannot be simplified to spinning plates, dancing, or whispering. The metaphors seem to reinforce the metanarratives around gender rather than breaking or challenging the metanarrative of the binary of gender roles.

Reimagining Instructional Coaching

I conducted this study in order to hear the stories of the instructional coaches doing the work for school improvement within schools. As I was reimagining the work of the coaches, I wanted to honor the voices of these women; however the women in the study did not see themselves as empowered in their work. I say the coaches did not see themselves as empowered because the stories of these women reinforced the

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metanarrative of gender roles within schools. This placed me in a space where I wanted to create an identity for the coach that was a symbol of empowerment which is how I see the potential of instructional coaching in schools, yet honor their beliefs. As I wrestled with this internal struggle, I decided the best way to honor and describe the coaches work and begin to disrupt the metanarrative was to describe the work of the coach as a landscaper.

There are several reasons that the image of the landscaper honors the work of the coaches as well as disrupts the metanarrative of power structures within schools. The work of the coaches is important for school improvement. As with Katy who is spending her time with the Algebra 1 team working to ensure success for those students on the state mandated assessment or with Maggie working with her teachers to learn how to teach reading to their students improving instruction was the goal. All of these coaches were working hard to make sure their schools were the best they can be. Even when the coaches felt their time was being hijacked with duties and other tasks, they worked towards doing what was best for the school.

Although the imagine of a landscaper may not seem to be as much fun as a circus performer, or as graceful as a dancer, or as mysterious as a whisperer, I was not looking for a fun, graceful or mysterious metaphor. I see these metaphors as essentializing the work of the instructional coach. I was concerned that creating a metaphor that is *sexy* would not only dishonor the work of the coach, but further reinforce the metanarrative. I was seeking a metaphor that honored the work and led toward an empowering image. I was seeking a metaphor that allowed for the variety of the work the coaches do, placing the coach in a position of claiming their work as their own creation.

When I envision a landscaper I see a male with dirty hands doing heavy lifting and hard work. If I was to describe a typical instructional coach, I would say female, white and gentle. These two images do not match, but I think their work does. Instructional coaches do the heavy lifting within the school, getting their hands dirty, often doing the work that others do not want to do, or work they see needs to be done.

Conceptualizing an instructional coach as a landscaper appears to bring the concerns and positions of the coaches into focus. A landscaper is all about nurturing growth, as is the instructional coach. When the landscaper first looks at the space they will be tending, it may be overwhelming, and they may be confused about where to start. This sense of being unsure about how to approach a teacher or teams at a school may overwhelm an instructional coach at times, especially if they have not been trained. However, as with a good landscaper, they will select one of the spaces to start and work on improving one area at a time without ever neglecting the other areas.

Gardner versus Professional Landscaper

When I first began to conceptualize this metaphor for coaching I toyed with the idea of a coach as a gardener. As a little girl, I spent many of days with my grandmother *puttering* in the garden with her. We would weed, water and pick the vegetables. I loved watching my grandmother working with her roses, the tender care she gave her plants as she pruned them. I was amazed how she could produce such beautiful roses. As the women were working with the flowers and small vegetables such as peas, green beans and tomatoes, my grandfather was doing the heavy work in the garden. My grandfather created the layout of the yard; he worked with the corn which was the vast majority of the garden and kept the yard meticulously cut. It was a beautiful yard where he had mowed

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the grass in diagonals that you could see as you gazed across it. With these two images in my mind I selected the landscaper to represent these coaches. He was doing the heavy lifting of the work to impact the greatest change in the yard.

Although I gave a description of my grandfather's work as a landscaper, he was retired and the yard became his life. I imagine the majority of landscapers as professionals. I think it is important that the metaphor for the instructional coaches is a metaphor that encourages the instructional coaches to see their work as professional and not a hobby. When Maggie positions herself as "a professional educator" in lieu of "teacher" she is claiming her work as professional. I see a landscaper as moving instructional coaching from "those nice ladies" to creating a space for instructional coaches to claim their work as professional. Landscapers are also doing hard work, a gardener may not pull up a tree to replant some new scrubs, but a landscaper will.

Empowering Coaches

The coaches in this study did not identify themselves as feminist except for Caitlyn, so I was searching for a way to empower these coaches without imposing my feminist belief onto them. I wanted to reveal the possibilities of being empowered to impact real change on their campuses. Through creating a metaphor that empowers the coaches I was trying to disrupt the binary of the gender roles and reposition the coach in a space where the instructional coach could claim the identity of leader.

I was hoping from this study some of the coaches would be empowered by reflecting on their work. It is time for instructional coaches to claim their place in school improvement with a level of authority for knowing instruction, and to see themselves as professional educators with expert knowledge in instruction. Instructional coaches should

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not have to apologize for having a role that is neither a teacher nor administrator. The role of instructional coach is important to schools improving their instruction as shown by the stories of the coaches themselves. Caitlyn shared a story where she explains why she is ready to choose empowerment.

> I was just describing myself to someone even today. It was two team leaders. And I said, 'You know, I mean, at this point in my life I now kind of see myself as confrontational.' Like, I'm not, like, going out seeking confrontation from people, but I don't run from confrontation. If a conversation needs to happen, then I'm gonna have it.

Much as a landscaper willing to pull some weeds or replace a tree, coaches such as Caitlyn are ready to embrace the influence that instructional coaches can have to ensure schools improve. Blackmore (1997) reminds us it is important for women to push against a system where the authority has a male perception. I believe this metaphor can be used to reconstruct the work of the instructional coaches to become empowered in their work.

Although it may seem like landscaping is as non-relational as some of the other metaphors, landscaping is very relational because the plants only grow when they are given tender loving care. A good landscaper knows when plants need to be removed and replaced or when there is just a need for a little trimming. A good landscaper understands that in the yard, all aspects of the yard need tending and that each plant of the garden or yard has its own unique needs to grow and be healthy. From the conversations of the coaches, being flexible and willing to change was important. Candace explained:

> There's so much about coaching that's not either this or that, you know. Because it's very much an interactive position and so it depends on whom you're

interacting with or who's interacting with you. If it's, you know, admin,

sometimes they're interacting with you and you just have to make adjustments all

the time.

Although I may not see Candace successfully spinning plates, I can see her as a

landscaper, being aware of what needs to have attention.

Much like a coach, a landscaper learns the techniques over time, however, as the

space gets more developed, the landscaper may see more and more places in the garden

or yard that need to be addressed. This is the sense of the coaching work that Lindsay and

Maggie were discussing at the focus group, each year they see more and more that needs

to change or be improved. There is no garden or yard that is perfect without some care.

Even though a landscaper may be focused on one area of the space, they still need

to be aware of what is happening throughout the entire area and moving to another area

as the need arises. The key is seeing global and being flexible with the time and task.

This sense of needing to see the global issues of the school and also the specifics of

working with teachers, teams and administrators is important to the work of the

instructional coach. Knowing when and where to best spend their time is essential to the

work of the coaches.

Problemetizing My Own Metaphor

I offer the metaphor of instructional coach as landscaper as a counter to common

metaphors for instructional coaching, which I find problematic. While I believe the

landscaper metaphor comes closer to capturing the work of instructional coaches, this

metaphor, too, must be problematized.

Landscaping is typically coded male within our society. While the use of a male

image to describe the work of instructional coaches disrupts the gendered narrative of instructional coaching, there is a danger that this metaphor will suggest instructional coaching could be improved by making it more masculine, an image associated with being male allows for this shift. The image of a landscaper shifts the instructional coach from an image conceptualized as female to an image that is coded male. Blount (2000) explains "traditional notions of gender require somewhat polarized definitions of masculinity and femininity" (p. 85). As women began to become dominant as the teachers in the school, the men looked for positions that were male, such as supervisory positions (Blount, 2000). As the men moved up in the educational system to superintendents, the gap widened between teachers and administrators. Blount (2000) continues to asset that the space between male administrators and female teachers widen to where administrators were at different locations, the men in administrative buildings and teachers in their classrooms. Since the instructional coach is in the space between administrators and teachers, they need a position that is coded male to gain the respect from administrators. Although the when the position is coded as a male position, it is important to understand that being male is not what makes the position of more important than a position being female, except that in our society male roles hold more value than female roles. So coaches as landscapers do not imply I value men over women, but rather, I would like the women to be valued as much as men would be valued.

It is important to make a distinction between how words are coded and the value of a word. Just because a word is coded *male*, does not mean that being male has more value than being female. However, in society we often put this value on the word, which is why in the binary the second phrase is almost always seen as the having lesser value

than the first (St. Pierre, 2000). I intentionally used landscaper as the metaphor because it is coded *male* in society, even though there are female landscapers. I wanted to disrupt the binary by claiming an image that was male and reclaim the position as one that is occupied by the female coaches.

Implications

This study reveals several implications for administrators, instructional coaches, policy makers, and researchers about the role of instructional coaches in the school improvement process. There are implications for administrators and district leaders to empower instructional coaches to be change agents on their campuses. The strategies the coaches would like to see in their day to day work on their campus or within the district are within the control of administrators and district leaders. Colleges of educational leadership can learn from this study how to help new administrators work effectively with their instructional coaches. Instructional coaches may need to become more politically active as there are policies in play that may change the focus of their work especially if they are being asked to become evaluators. Lastly, there are additional areas of research to more fully understand the relationships and issues of power between instructional coaches and the others that they work with.

Implications for Administrators

Administrators can learn from this study how to best work with their instructional coaches. Caitlyn discusses that what is important is to have conversations with her principal around instruction and work as a team. She concluded what makes their relationship work is "he actually listens a lot, and really well." Helping administrators understand that instructional coaches can be a powerful partner increases the likelihood a

school will be successful.

The stories of these instructional coaches reveal they want to work for school improvement. When there is alignment between campus leaders and instructional coaches the instructional coaches feel more empowered to work for change. The coaches supported the vision of the administrators when they were aware of the vision. Although the coaches were willing to do the work of the campus, if administrators limited the amount of time the coaches spent doing non-coaching duties, the instructional coach can focus on their purpose of improving instruction. Coaches can be more beneficial to the campus when their purpose is clearly defined for themselves, the administrator, and the teachers.

Administrators should also work to ensure their instructional coaches have the training they need to be effective in their work. As Candace said, "Why isn't there more structure for us? There really should be. We would be better at it sooner." If the district is not providing quality professional development on instructional coaching, it would benefit the campus principal to provide the training for the instructional coaches.

Although this study was focused around issues of gender, power, and coaching, it was difficult for the coaches to see gender in their experiences with coaching. All of the coaches saw issues of power in their coaching role, but they saw the power as fixed, not fluid. I believe the coaches also saw power as a negative so they tried hard to minimize the perception of power. Most were very aware their relationships with teachers could be damaged if the coach was seen as having more power than the teacher, and most acknowledged that the campus or district administrator held power over them. The coaches even recognized that they occupied a unique space between the teachers and

administration, but it was difficult for them to acknowledge the influence they may hold within the school. If administrators could help the instructional coaches to embrace their unique position between administrators and teachers, they could work to empower their instructional coaches and impact real change within their schools.

Implications for Instructional Coaches

If instructional coaches do not claim their own identity in the school improvement process, they are ineffective in impacting systemic change within schools. Although as a coach it is easier to be the resource provider or the classroom helper, it is important to use coaching to improve instruction. This means that Instructional coaches need to move to heavier coaching to challenge the belief systems of teachers when they display deficit thinking. If instructional coaches stay in the role of pleasures they are creating their own barrier to the effectiveness of their job and the impact they can make on school improvement.

For the coaches in this study, I believe it was harder for the campus based coaches to provide the heavy coaching. These coaches wanted to be seen as a resource provided and support. This is not to say the coaches did not do any heavy coaching, but they seemed to shy away from the coaching. Even when the district level coaches push on the deficit thinking of teachers, the coach themselves was not always aware they were doing heavy coaching. Heavy coaching can sometimes look like light coaching because heavy coaching happens through conversations.

In order for instructional coaches to learn the necessary skills to be effective as coaches, they need quality professional development as coaches. If the school or district does not provide these professional developments, the instructional needs to seek out

their own professional development to continue to grow as a coach and to fully impact systemic change on their campus.

Implications for the Academy

Educational leadership programs designed to prepare campus leaders need to help emerging administrators work effectively with other campus leaders, such as instructional coaches. However, the issues surrounding gender and leadership are often not explicitly addressed in these programs. This study brings to light the need for gender and power to be explored within the structure of schools. If gender is not discussed within the academy and future school leaders, the structure and metanarrative of who has power, or who is worthy of power in schools will never be disrupted.

Educational leadership programs could also create programs with the focus on the position of instructional leadership for the teacher who wants to move into leadership roles on their campuses without becoming principals. If there was a Master's program for instructional leadership that was designed with instructional coaching as the goal of the program, it would help to position instructional coaching as a leadership position within schools.

Implications for Policy Makers

As policy makers make decisions around the role of instructional coaching, it is important for them to understand there needs to be a separation between coaching and evaluation. Candace shared, "the new evaluation system we believe the state is going to adopt and we are one of the pilot campuses I am going to be asked to, told to, observe and evaluate the science teachers." She continued by saying, "the idea is you are trying to help the teacher to become better, but it is also evaluative and you cannot get around that.

It is a formal evaluation. It goes on their record." If this new system is adopted, then a shift will take place in the work and perhaps shift the focus of the work of the instructional coaches. Katy is also at a pilot campus with the new evaluation system, but there is another coach for that specific role and she does not do the content coaching. Katy explains:

> I mean, that's – that's her job is walkthroughs and evaluations and pre-conferences and post-conferences, you know, but sometimes there is that, you know, dire need of, you know, "Please help do this and that." We worked together to try to set up some intervention stuff, and, you know, okay, here's their math scores. Where do they need to go when – stuff like that. So, we kinda cross in that a little bit, um, but not as far as she's more of an evaluator piece, and I'm more of a content piece.

If a policy is put into place that uses instructional coaches as evaluators, this may shift the power within the coaching position to being more of an administrator.

Learning from the past about how supervision was coopted by becoming evaluative, it is important to keep instructional coaching separate from evaluating teachers. Sergiovanni, et al. (2014) warn supervision and evaluation are often confused within schools because the role of the principal is often as supervisor. In fact Sergiovanni et al. (2014) explain, "because being supervised by an administrator is, within the teaching culture of many if not most schools, by definition a threat, it is understandable why 'being evaluated' is considered an undesirable experience" (p. 120). If instructional coaches are asked to become evaluators, the purpose of instructional coaches as being used to improve instruction may be lost.

Future Research

Additional research needs to be done to continue the conversation of gender and power. I felt throughout this study, the metanarrative of the binary was ever present and difficult to disrupt in the conversations of the instructional coaches. I came away from these conversations often wondering why it was so difficult for the women to see their work as having influence greater than sharing a strategy with teachers. Saying that, I do, however, think that the longer the coaches do their work, the more change they see is needed, the more they want to take responsibility for making that change. Lindsey and Maggie shared this during the focus group.

Lindsey: It [coaching] gets harder every year.

Maggie: Mmm, why do you think, think that is?

Lindsey: I think because I take more on every, every year. I think I feel more responsible to take, to take care of more. I think this year is hard because of all the beginning of the year unknown and we didn't know what to prepare for. I feel ill prepared this year. But I also feel like I have to, like I, it's my job to address everything more than thinking. It's just my responsibility to make change.

Maggie: I think I can see where it gets harder every year. Um, it gets harder every year because in our world we get, we're not stuck just teaching first grade or just teaching a content. It gets harder because every year you know you're going to try a new campus or a new content or have new teammates whereas in the classroom it didn't get easier every year by any means, but you did have continuity. So I can see why it gets

harder every year. I would be really curious, I wonder, um, how long

do coaches want to stay coaches?

I think this exchange demonstrates the importance of their work to the instructional coaches and raises a very good research question from Maggie.

It would be interesting to conduct a similar study with administrators who work with instructional coaches to see if their views of the work of the instructional coaches align with the views of the instructional coaches themselves. A study of male instructional coaches would also be important to continue the process of understanding the work of instructional coaches and the conversation around gender and coaching. Throughout my literature review on supervision, I did not come across literature on gender as it relates to supervision and this would be an important area of research. This also leads to the question of how do we begin to disrupt the narrative of women's work? For schools to really improve we cannot be satisfied with the status quo, so instructional coaches need to be willing to do more heavy coaching, how do we push the coaches to do the heavy coaching?

Conclusion

Coming to the analysis of the study from a post-structuralist feminine perceptive, I was interested in how power was seen through the eyes of the instructional coaches. St. Pierre (2000) explains that post-structuralism assumes power is not fixed but is fluid and moves between relationships and is ever-changing. This is not how these instructional coaches saw power in their work. Although the coaches were aware of their choices and how power could be perceived by teachers, they believed the teachers saw them in power positions. The coaches took it on themselves to level the power with the teachers. Several

of the coaches spoke of working collaboratively with their administrators; however, there was still a sense that the school administrator was the person with power. The lack of recognizing the possibility that power could be fluid in their work keeps the instructional coaches from feeling empowered and able to make real change in school improvement.

The instructional coaches in this study strongly identified with the teachers over the administrators. Maggie clearly does not want the teachers to see her talking to the campus administrator in the principal's office, but will get on the floor and work with the teacher and the students. The instructional coaches position themselves with teachers, but even more so the instructional coaches position themselves with the female teachers. Although the coaches told me many stories about coaching men, they continued to make mental distinctions between men and women, and were unsure about how the men would react to coaching conversations. Perhaps the coaches see themselves in the roles of the female teachers because they all were previously female teachers.

Although, the responsibility of the school is on the shoulders of the campus principal, the instructional coaches appeared to take on the attitude of women from the 1950s, where the coaches did not see it as their role to raise issues, but rather to support the teachers. With this attitude, the instructional coaches are continuing the metanarrative that men, or the position within the school structure associated as male, (Blount, 1997) makes the decisions for the school.

This study provided a voice for six instructional coaches explaining and reflecting on the work that they do. Through their stories, administrators, policy makers, and educational leadership programs can better understand how instructional coaches work for school improvement. Through better understanding these six coaches, policies can be

put into place to help instructional coaches become more successful in their work. The work of instructional coaches is not easy; they work with many different players often not knowing the expectations. These women are brave and working hard to make sure the students on their campuses are getting the best education.

<p align="center">**One Final Story – Kitchen Table Learning**</p>

I purposely took a *kitchen table* approach to this study to place the societal learning of women at the forefront of the study. I wanted to honor the way women communicate and help clarify their knowledge. I decided to open the focus group by explaining why the interviews were done in coffee shops and cafés, and why we were in my home doing the focus group. The following is an exchange that happened at the end of the focus group.

Maggie:	Something Pam and I did a few years ago, for some reason we were both at the same campus. I can't remember why right now probably had something to do with the state assessment. But, um, we started modeling coaching each other in front of teams. So I did a lesson or she would do a lesson and the other one would watch. And then in front of the team we debriefed each other and that broke some barriers for the teachers working with coaches.
Lindsey:	That's brave too. I mean it takes a lot of courage to start.
Maggie:	Yeah. Well, believe me, we scripted it beforehand. I mean exactly what questions she was going to ask me to consider. But it just paved the way for the team. And we did it very casually. We actually sat on a bench in the hallway after they dropped off the classes and we just

	gathered around and said hey, come, Pam is going to debrief me.
Lindsey:	The kitchen table.
Maggie:	The kitchen table. And it was, you know, more than a one legged moment but it – we acknowledged that they were busy. They had a lot to do on their off time, but this was important to see that morning to watch each other debrief. So it was good.

I think this exchange shows a value not only for the work instructional coaches do, but the method of how they do the work, honoring the learning of women. Although the coaches were not at a kitchen table, they were using kitchen table learning. They were taking the space that was theirs (the hallway near the classrooms) and created a space for communal learning. That is the essence of kitchen table learning, women taking the space they have been relegated to (i.e., the kitchen) and making it a powerful site for learning. Even though I am not sure I helped these coaches see the potential in their work in influence change with administrators, I think this exchange may have helped them to understand the power of their conversations.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF INITIAL DATA

An initial pilot study was conducted to determine the general characteristics of the instructional coaches in the central Texas area. The survey was conducted at the regional service center during December professional development training. 128 coaches participated in the survey.

- 77% of the coaches identified education as their first career, while 23% indicated education as their second career.

- 45% of the coaches identify themselves as elementary coaches, 31% as middle school coaches, 10% as high school coaches and 14% as district coaches.

- 42% of the coaches had been in the classroom 6 – 10 years.

- 60% of the coaches have been coaches for 0 – 2 years.

- 80% of the coaches rated their own professional development as extremely important, but they have little or no training in coaching.

- 85% of the respondents identified as female, 5% identified as male and 10% did not respond to the question.

- 62% identified as White, 9% Hispanic, 2 % African American, 2% Other, 8% did not respond, and 17% identified their sex, but not ethnicity.

- 8% did not complete the back of the survey which included the demographics.

- 1 respondent identified as "female," but did not respond to the ethnicity part of the question commenting, "I don't appreciate this way of defining people" and labeled themselves at "human."

A table 1 represents the number of years the coaches spent as a classroom teacher.

Table 1: Years in the classroom teaching

0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	20+ years
16	54	28	14	16
12.5%	42%	22%	11%	12.5%

A table 2 represents the number of years the coaches spent as an instructional coach previous to this year.

Table 2: Years as instructional coach

0-2	3-5	6-8	9+
77	35	10	6
60%	27%	8%	5%

A table 3 represents the location and area the instructional coaches occupy.

Table 3: Type of Coach*

Elementary	Middle School	High School	District Level	Embedded
62	43	14	19	1
45%	31%	10%	14%	1%

*Participants could respond to one or more category.

A table 4 captures the areas where coaches have received professional development.

Cognitive Coaching, Jim Knight and Barkly are the only coaching models, the other

categories focus on skills coach might need.

Table 4: Professional Development*

Costa & Garmston (Cognitive Coaching)	Jim Knight (Partnership Principles)	Dufour (Professional Learning Communities)	Kilgo (Data Analysis)	Barkley (Coaching with the End in Mind)	None	Other
20	40	61	41	24	11	56
8%	16%	24%	16%	9%	4%	22%

*Participants could respond to one or more category.

A table 5 captures the areas where coaches have read books on coaching or coaching skills. Cognitive Coaching, Jim Knight and Barkly are the only coaching models, the other categories focus on skills coach might need.

Table 5: Read a Book*

Costa & Garmston (Cognitive Coaching)	Jim Knight (Partnership Principles	Dufour (Professional Learning Communities)	Barkley (Coaching with the End in Mind)	None	Other
17	55	54	21	16	39
8%	27%	27%	10%	7%	10%

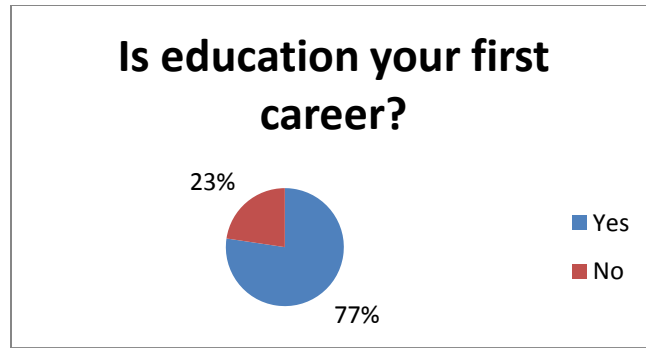*Participants could respond to one or more category.
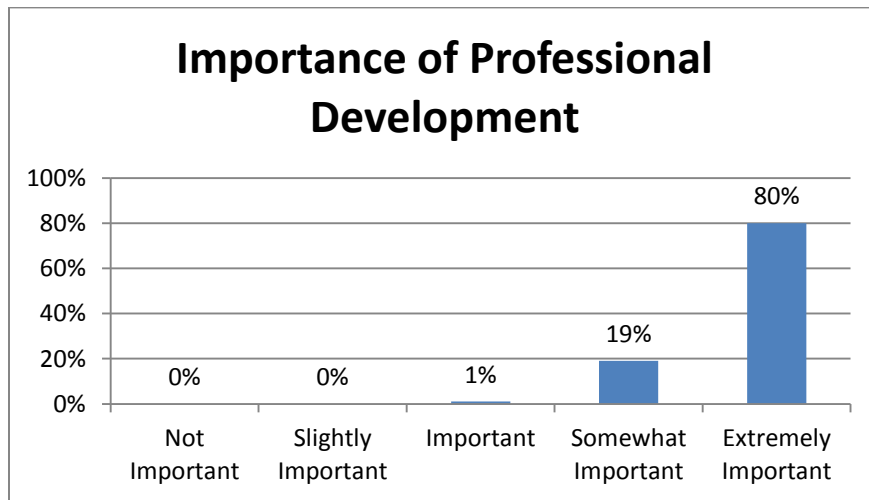
Figure 1: Education as a first career

Figure 2: Coaches identification of the importance of professional development for their
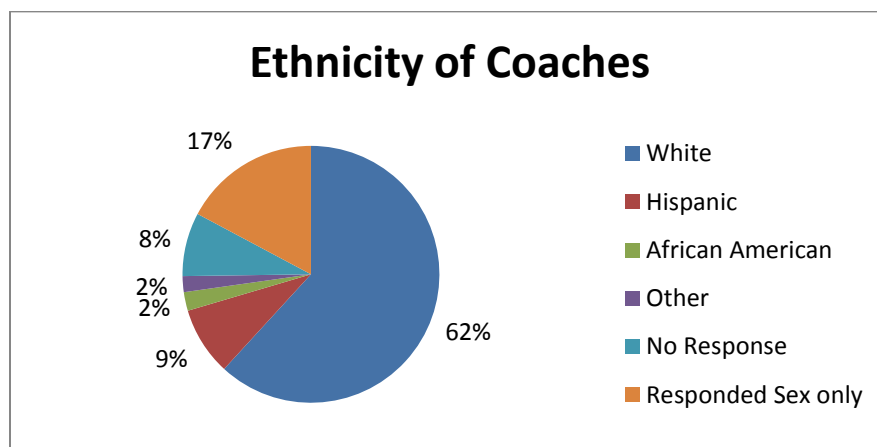
coaching skills

Figure 3: Ethnicity of Coaches

APPENDIX C

INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

2. How did you become an instructional coach?

   a. What did you hope to achieve when you became a coach?

   b. How do you explain what you do when asked from a stranger what do you do?

3. Describe the schools you work with or have worked with.

   a. Student diversity

   b. Grade levels/courses

   c. # of teachers

   d. # of administrators

4. How do you spend your time? If you were to describe a typical day, what would it look like?

5. What do you understand as the purpose of your work as an instructional coach?

6. What challenges do you face with your work when working with teachers?

7. How do you respond when you hear teachers dismissing the ability of the students or their parents?

8. What challenges do you face with your work when working with administrators?

9. How do you respond when you hear administrators dismissing the ability of the teachers or the students or their parents?

10. If you could change anything about your work as an instructional coach, what would it be?

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As a coach, what do you think your job is when working with teachers, changing teacher behavior or teacher beliefs?

2. As you work with administrators, how important is it that you have a relationship with them?

3. Do you feel like administrators respect you and your work as a coach?

4. What are the characteristics of a good and effective coach?

5. I often hear that coaches "fix" teachers, what are your thoughts on that?

6. What was a time you felt really successful as a coach when working with a teacher or group of teachers? Why did you feel successful?

7. What was a time you felt really successful as a coach when working with an administrator? Why did you feel successful?

8. What do you struggle with the most when working with teachers?

9. What do you struggle with the most when working with administrators?

ON-LINE SCENARIOS AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Scenario #1

You have a new teacher to your campus and she is very instructionally strong in her instruction. You have observed her in the classroom and notice that she has great relationships with the students. In your conversations with her you believe that she puts the learning of the children first and enjoys working with her students. However, she does not get papers grade promptly which delays the return of the papers to the students. How would you help coach this teacher to see the importance of grading assignments promptly? She has expressed a desire to hire someone to do her grading for her, how would you respond to this idea?

Scenario #2

You have been working with a teacher who has several years of experience teaching but is teaching a new content this year. You have planned with the teacher and think you and he are on the same page with the instruction. When you observe the class you notice that he seems unprepared for the lesson. This unpreparedness is evident when he attempts to do an example and does not know where the math is going and gets confused. This then causes confusion within the class. You think this may be a onetime occurrence, so you observe again a week later and witness the same issue. This teacher has been resistant to coaching until this year. How would you help this teacher with his preparedness for his classes?

Scenario #3

You are working with a principal who expects the coach to run all the PLCs on the

campus within a department. As some of the PLCs are needier than others, you choose to prioritize which PLC you spend the most time with. When the principal observes the teachers within the same course/grade level, the principal is surprised to see different lessons given by the different teachers. She calls the coach (you) in and asks for an explanation on way there is differences within the classroom. How would you respond?

<div align="center">Final questions</div>

1. How do you overcome resistance when working with teachers?

2. How do you overcome resistance when working with administrators?

3. What is it you like best about the work you do?

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Can you share a coaching experience from today?

2. How intentional are you in the choices you make when you coach?

3. Do you think you are seen as an instructional leader?

4. From the data so far, not one of you wanted to go into administration, why do you think that is?

5. If I had interviewed men instead of females I would have seen the same results in regards to desires to go into administration? Why or why not?

6. Is there anything else you would like to say about coaching?

APPENDIX H

DATA ANALYSIS TABLE

Participant	Coaching Identity/ Purpose/Qualities	Coaching Barrier	Metanarrative/ Gender/Power	Social Justice	Working with Teachers	Working with Administrators
Meredith	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2
Maggie	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2 FG	I#1 I#2 FG	I#1 I#2 S FG	I#1 I#2 S FG
Lindsey	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2 FG	I#1 I#2 FG	I#1 I#2 S FG	I#1 I#2 S FG
Candace	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2
Caitlyn	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2	I#1 I#2
Katy	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2	I#1	I#1 I#2 S	I#1 I#2 S

Interview #1 – I#1

Interview #2 – I#2

Scenario – S

Focus Group – FG

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