3-11-2021

Experience Between Mentors and Coaches: A Phenomenological Case Study to Examine Effective Coaching Conditions

Brittany Adkins
badkins01@bellarmine.edu

EXPERIENCE BETWEEN MENTORS AND COACHES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY TO EXAMINE EFFECTIVE COACHING CONDITIONS

BY

Brittany D. Adkins

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of

Bellarmine University

In partial fulfillment of the degree

Doctor of Education

March 2021

Brittany D. Adkins

Experience between Mentors and Coaches: A Phenomenological Case Study to Examine Effective Coaching Conditions

Dr. William Wells (Chair)

Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education, Bellarmine University

Dr. Grant Smith

Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education, Bellarmine University

Dr. Winn Wheeler

Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education, Bellarmine University

Acknowledgement

Throughout this educational journey, several influential people imparted their knowledge, collegiality, and support to get me to the finish line. I am grateful for the collegiality, expertise, and friendship of my fellow cohort members, Kristie, Julie, Robert, and Andre, and our fearless leader, Dr. Will Wells, of the first District Leadership cohort at Bellarmine.

Additionally, I would like to extend my gratitude to my committee, Dr. Wells, Dr. Wheeler, and Dr. Smith, for their unwavering support throughout this process. Furthermore, I am grateful for the opportunity to conduct my research through the Literacy Center; I would like to thank Dr. Smith, Dr. Paige, Dr. Magpuri-Lavell, and the Literacy Center Mentors who participated in the study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my rocks, Kevin and Nancy Adkins, significant other, Nathan, my family and friends, and especially my coworkers in the last few months. Their continual words of encouragement, assisting with my responsibilities at home or at work, and listening to me whine from time to time is greatly appreciated.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my grandparents, Linda, Charley, Evelyn, and Hobart.

Abstract

The study uses a phenomenological case method to explore the lived experience of the mentor-coach coaching phenomenon and examines the case of the Literacy Center (university partnership) in providing professional development to build instructional capacity in elementary reading coaches through a coaching model in order to improve reading achievement in students (kindergarten through third grade). The study is guided through the theoretical frameworks of Social Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (Cooter, 2004). It is focused on two research questions: 1) How does the mentor and coach experience change over time? and 2) What facilitates effective coaching conditions? The six central themes that emerged are the significance of relationships, collaborative culture, professional growth of coaches, school leadership, established school processes for teaching and learning, and a clearly defined coaching role. The study concludes with a discussion centered on clarity of the coaching role, factors for effective coaching conditions, and professional development for coaches explicated through analysis of the findings. This discussion is followed by implications for practices and recommendations for future research.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Despite tireless efforts on the part of educators to develop students' literacy skills, only one-third of students in the United States are reading on grade level by fourth grade, and nearly 70% of those students will remain poor readers in high school (Nation's Report Card, 2019; Fiester, 2010). Recently, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment results confirmed a lack of progress in students' reading by the end of third grade; the 2019 National School Report Card shows that reading levels have declined compared to 2017 student performance data. The significance of not reading on grade level by the end of third grade is the degree to which a student's low reading level is correlated with adverse effects when that student becomes an adult; poor reading skills increase the likelihood of experiencing economic, social, and personal hardships.

The United States government has invested in literacy and attempted to improve levels of achievement in reading for the last few decades. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, education policies have centered on improving student achievement in reading in kindergarten through twelfth grade, and on hiring highly qualified teachers and implementing research-based reading materials and instructional practices. The policies established during this time were the Reading Excellence Act of 1998 (REA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2000 (ESEA), and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which included the Reading First Initiative (RF). These policies targeted improving literacy skills in struggling readers and in students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Another focus of these policies was to develop highly qualified reading teachers through professional development because quality instruction improves student learning. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) stated that the policies provided

funding for coaches to support teachers' instructional practices and to ensure that research-based instructional practices were being implemented in classrooms.

Despite the changes in education policies and professional development for educators, student achievement scores have shown minimal progress, and results remained stagnant (International Literacy Association, 2018). One reason student achievement did not improve was due to inadequate instruction in the classroom; this is attributed to lack of effective professional development to advance teachers' instructional practices. Shapard et al. (2009) asserted that professional development for teachers has not historically had a significant impact on instruction; when teachers did receive professional development, it improved their content knowledge but not their instructional practices. Professional development should be focused on the sustainable development and growth of teachers. More recently, researchers have noted that delivering professional development in an isolated manner, or providing ineffective instruction in content and theory without follow-up support, creates surface-level understanding and does not allow teachers time to practice and make continual improvement in their instruction. The outcomes lead to poor instruction and unsustainable initiatives (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

One of the professional development methods introduced through the federal policies to improve reading was that of an instructional coach; the reading coach model was new to schools, and was intended to have a positive impact on instruction. Continual support from coaches following professional development sessions offers a promising solution to the improvement of classroom instruction. Teachers who received follow-up support from coaches after attending professional development sessions demonstrated an increase in effective implementation and produced improved student achievement (Heineke, 2013). Teachers are more likely to implement

effective instructional practices with continual support from coaches. Those who received professional development with the support of a coach earned an 85% implementation rate; alternately, those who lacked the support of a coach rated at 10% (Knight, 2005; Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Despite the research supporting the effectiveness of the coaching model, it has not improved results in student achievement (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Deussen et al., 2007). This is attributed to the diverse coaching roles, various levels of experience (in content and coaching knowledge), and differing coaching conditions. Desimore and Pak (2017) asserted that to build capacity in teachers, coaches need to ensure that their instruction is content-focused, promotes active learning, is coherent and sustained in duration, and encourages collective participation; without these factors, coaches are less likely to have a positive impact on influencing instructional change. If the professional development model is implemented by an effective coach under certain conditions, reading coaches can have a significant impact on improving literacy.

Statement of the Problem

Students' reading levels in the United States are a national concern. Over half of students are not reading on grade level when they exit elementary school (Nation's Report Card, 2019). Poor readers are more likely to have academic, behavior, and attendance issues throughout school; they are more likely to drop out of high school, experience unemployment, live in poverty, or to become incarcerated (Chapman & McHardy, 2019; Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Rampey et al., 2016; Bowers et al., 2012; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011). Those living in poverty experience economic hardships, which results in difficulties in securing stable sources of food, housing, employment, health, and relationships (Renahy1, et al., 2018; Mood & Jonsson,

2016; Eamon & Wu, 2011). Moreover, nearly half of students in the United States reside in low income households, and 20 % of students live in poverty; students who live in poverty are more likely to have learning difficulties associated with chronic stress and lack of exposure to learning prior to entering school (American Psychological Association, 2020; Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Bhattacharya, 2010). They are more likely to struggle with reading and have parents who are poor readers (American Psychological Association, 2020; Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Chapman & McHardy, 2019). This cycle perpetuates poverty and poor readers. Therefore, it is necessary to intervene prior to third grade to rectify this issue.

Early literacy skills are a strong predictor for a student's likelihood of reading on grade level by the end of third grade (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008). Early detection of poor reading skills and intervention in literacy instruction improves the student's ability to read and write through explicit instructional methods that target a specific skill or set of skills; students should acquire these early literacy skills prior to engaging in extended learning as the complexity of learning increases throughout schooling (Cervetti et al., 2020; Goldman, 2012; National Reading Panel, 2001; U.S. National Research Council, 2001; U.S. Department of Education America Reads Challenge, 1999). Several researchers have suggested that in order to improve reading and instruction, early intervention in literacy is necessary, and teachers need quality, ongoing professional development (Cooter, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2001; U.S. National Research Council, 2001).

In order for students to learn how to read more effectively, they must receive quality literacy instruction. One way to improve this instruction is through effective professional development to build instructional capacity in teachers; teachers must be content experts with deep knowledge of theory and pedagogical principles to engage in sustainable instructional

practices (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Shankin, 2006; Cooter, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2001; U.S. National Research Council, 2001). When students do not receive quality literacy instruction, they do not make progress in reading. Current national assessments support this claim; reading scores have minimally increased since 1992 on national and international assessments (National Statistics of Education, 2019; PISA, 2018). Educators and policy makers have attempted to address this issue through staff development of teachers to improve instruction in the classroom.

To narrow the scope of the problem, professional development for teachers has been focused on building their instructional capacity, but it has not yielded the desired results. Researchers have found that professional development is effective in changing teachers' behaviors and instructional practices only when it is participation-centered, involves active collaboration, provides opportunities for practice and feedback from a knowledgeable colleague (coaching), is embedded in the teacher's daily practices, and includes continual support over a sustained period of time (Lauer et al., 2014; Miller & Stewart, 2013). "Most formal training (professional development) is development for performance ([acquiring] knowledge, skills, attitude necessary before changes can be made) rather than the development of performance (professional learning to support change in practice)" (Cole, 2004, p. 3). Professional development is least effective when it is facilitated in isolation or without follow-up support to apply the newly learned skills; this method of professional development can increase the teacher's content knowledge, but it does not change instructional practices nor the outcomes of the students (Fixsen et al., 2005; McCormick et al., 1995). Therefore, previous professional development models have had minimal impact on teachers' instructional methods. The current issue with persistently low student achievement in reading is attributed to ineffective literacy

instruction. This issue has created a need to identify an efficacious professional development model; the reading coach is an effective professional development model to improve teaching and learning with primary students in order to negate the adverse effects that are often experienced by poor readers (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Cooter, 2003).

The effective use of reading coaches is a promising solution to improve literacy instruction. These coaches are the experts in literacy instructional frameworks and in staff development; they are employed in elementary schools to target early literacy (kindergarten through third grade) and to develop teachers' reading instruction, which results in improving the skills of readers. Coaching has yet to be proven to influence student achievement directly, but it has been shown to build instructional capacity in teachers and schools when the coaching model is implemented under certain conditions; the conditions in which coaching occurs determine the effectiveness of the coach, and these conditions are associated with improving teachers' instruction and increasing student achievement (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Growing evidence shows that coaches are instructional leaders who are able to influence change in teachers' instructional practices and increase student reading proficiency; reading coaches are linked to school renewal when coaching is embedded as an essential component of a school or district transformation system (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). The coaching role and responsibilities, conditions (work environment and school culture), and the experience and levels of expertise (content and coaching knowledge) among coaches vary greatly among schools; these factors contribute to the inconsistent findings throughout the research on coaching.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the complexity of coaching (the role and conditions) in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' (mentors' and

coaches') perceptions of their lived experience (successes and deterrents of coaching) and how their experiences evolved over the course of the year, and why the participants (mentors and coaches) felt this way. It is important to examine this social phenomenon (mentor-coach coaching experience) within a real-world context (coaching in elementary schools) to analyze emerging themes and interactions as they evolve throughout the school year. It is significant to capture the nature of the coaching conditions through the participants' experiences to contribute to the existing literature on coaching by clarifying the role of the coach, developing consistent criteria for effective coaching and optimal coaching conditions, and informing policies on professional development for coaches. In this study, the phenomenological case study method is utilized to explore the "how" and "why" of situations to elicit responses from participants (Yin, 2018). The research questions are reflective of the two qualitative methodologies in this study and are designed to evoke insightful participants' responses.

Research Questions

The following research questions are designed to provide insight into effective coaching in order to influence quality literacy instruction and to improve reading.

1) How does the mentor and coach experience change over time?
    a. Tell the story of an instance where you felt you had made progress with the instructional coaches this year.
    b. How do you feel the literacy program has evolved throughout the course of the school year? What challenges and successes did you encounter working with the instructional coaches?
2) What conditions facilitate effective coaching?

a. Please describe the conditions you feel are supportive to instructional coaches to build capacity within teachers.
b. Please describe the conditions you feel are a major deterrent to the success of the instructional coaches.

Context of the Study

In addition to reading coaches having a positive impact on improving literacy instruction in schools, universities have begun to develop partnerships with school districts to assist in providing professional learning experiences for teachers (Cooter, 2004). Universities have worked collaboratively with school districts through teacher preparation programs, but recently they have extended their scope to support the continual growth of educators through partnerships. "Teacher capacity-building has been found to be the most productive investment for schools and far exceeds the effects of teacher experience or class size" (Cooter, 2003, p. 198). University-school partnerships intend to put structures in place to build sustainable literacy systems in schools and focus on helping educators to implement effective pedagogy and instructional strategies. Cooter (2004) asserts that the purpose of university partnership and collaboration with school districts is to provide academic support to teachers and principals within selected schools; this support can build capacity in teachers and school leadership to remain constant despite changes in leadership, student mobility, and teacher turnover or fluctuating education policies and initiatives. The university mentors act as coaches, using evidence-based frameworks that incorporate professional development built on pedagogical theories and practices to increase teachers' content knowledge (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018). The university partnership and collaboration with schools and district leadership creates and maintains a sustainable literacy system.

The study took place in a southeastern state and explored the partnership between a university learning center (Literacy Center) and fourteen elementary schools in seven school districts. The Literacy Center's location was in a university learning center located in the central part of the state, allowing access to multiple school districts in surrounding counties. The Literacy Center was established and funded by the state's education department to address the deficiency in reading outcomes among third grade students (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018). The purpose of the Literacy Center was to provide professional development within schools with the intent to improve literacy instruction and subsequently, student achievement by the end of third grade.

The Literacy Center provided a unique professional development model to target improvement of school-based literacy teams, reading coaches, teachers, and principals with the intent of building instructional capacity within school staff. The mentors from the Literacy Center collaborated with the educators from the districts and schools to implement an embedded coaching model for reading instruction. This unique professional development model provided two layers of coaching; the Literacy Center mentors coached the school-based reading coaches, and these reading coaches coached the teachers.

The Literacy Center and School Partnerships

In order to participate in this partnership, district and school leadership agreed to fully implement and support the collaboration and implementation of the literacy framework and coaching primarily focused on supporting teachers in grades kindergarten through third grade (primary grades). Five highly trained mentors employed by the Literacy Center collaborated with the school districts, school principals, coaches, and teachers at each participating school. Primarily, the mentors collaborated with the coaches to build capacity and to create a systematic approach to improve reading instruction and student achievement.

School Selection

The director of the Literacy Center invited fourteen elementary schools from seven school districts to participate based on the demographic information of each school. Students attending these schools were consistently low achieving, and they came from vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations. The selected elementary schools were higher than 87% eligible for free and reduced lunches and had an average of over 50% minority students. All of the schools except for two schools in one county ranged from 51% to 96% minority. The majority of the minority population was composed of African-American/Black students. All of the participating elementary schools had less than 8% Hispanic population. The two remaining schools had nearly 30% minority populations and 87% eligibility for free and reduced lunch (Georgia's Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2019). The schools and districts varied in culture, climate, and leadership. Principals from each school and district signed a "promise" with the Literacy Center to ensure their commitment to the project and to fully engage and implement the literacy framework and embedded coaching model.

Role of the Literacy Center's Mentors

The Literacy Center mentors collaborated with the school's leadership team, provided job-embedded coaching to the reading coaches, conducted classroom observations, and facilitated and/or planned professional development with the coaches; the mentors partnered with the coaches and school personnel to provide continual support to "increase knowledge in language and literacy development and improve classroom practices in reading instruction" (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018, p. 15). The mentors were essentially the "coach's coach" and were "highly experienced educators, knowledgeable about subject-matter content, pedagogy,

professional development, state standards, requirements, and curriculum" (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018, p. 15). The mentors visited the schools regularly, assisted in locating resources for instruction, led the school teams in data analysis to identify instructional needs, and problem-solved potential barriers to implementation of the literacy project. The mentors collected and maintained data; they were responsible for completing monthly activity logs, reflective journals, surveys of literacy materials and assessments, and for guiding the coaches/schools with classroom data collection (walkthroughs and literacy assessments).

The Literacy Center's framework included a job-embedded coaching model as one of the components of the systematic approach to improve student literacy; the unique aspect of this study is that the mentors coached the coaches through the coaching model. Typically, this coaching model is reserved for teacher development rather than for coaches. The purpose of mentors coaching the coaches is to build capacity in coaches to provide quality professional development; ongoing support through the coaching cycle to teachers has promising effects on improving student learning and creating skilled readers. The mentors provided professional development to coaches to improve their literacy content knowledge, pedagogical practices, and coaching capabilities. The development of the coaches is essential to building capacity in teachers, thereby improving reading instruction.

The Literacy Center's professional learning framework to improve reading was delivered through the Professional Learning Delivery Model and a Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD) (Cooter, 2004). The Professional Learning Delivery Model has three components: school-based literacy teams attend monthly workshops for redelivery; the school's literacy coach and teacher leaders provide professional development to all kindergarten through third grade teachers; and classroom instruction is monitored and supported by the coach, Literacy

Center mentor, and Literacy Center research team. The following sections will provide a brief overview of the theoretical frameworks for this study; the CBMTD was the primary framework the Literacy Center used for teacher and staff development.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of the mentor and coaching interaction in order to better understand effective coaching conditions and professional development to build instructional capacity in reading coaches. The two theoretical frameworks in this study, the Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (Cooter, 2004), are complementary. Both of the frameworks form the basis for the coach model, which incorporates learning through social interactions and collaboration and guidance from an experienced colleague, as well as progressive stages to build capacity in educators.

According to Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, people learn through social interactions. First, they learn through social interactions, and then they individually internalize their learning. The theory consists of two concepts relevant to the study. The first concept is More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The MKO concept refers to the instance in which a person seeks out an expert upon wanting to learn something new. The second concept of Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Daniels (2003) quoted Vygotsky (1978) to describe the zone of proximal development as the 'distance between actual development level and independent problem solving of potential development through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers' (p. 4). Vygotsky claims that it is in the space between independence and requiring guidance, the ZPD, that learning occurs (Yarborough, 2018). The MKO and ZPD concepts are both embedded in the mentor-coaching

model. The mentors are the literacy and instructional experts, providing knowledge to the coaches and school staff. The mentors are the MKO. The ZPD is present in the coaching cycle and embedded in the Literacy Mentoring framework. The mentors continue to coach the coaches with the intent of building capacity to promote a sustainable literacy system within each school.

The Cooter (2004) Capacity-building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD) is an example of the job-embedded coaching model in this study. The study is focused on the Literacy Center's mentors coaching the reading coaches to become literacy experts who are confident in coaching teachers. This systematic approach provides professional development to instructional coaches to enable them to lead professional learning with the teachers and literacy teams in their schools. The goal of this model is to build sustainable instructional methods in teachers to continue in order to improve students' literacy skills over time. The purpose of these models is to provide ongoing support through coaching and intentionally focus on building the capacity of teachers and coaches through the coaching cycle. The theoretical frameworks are described in depth in chapter two.

Summary of Methodology

The design of the study is a phenomenological case study to examine the phenomenon of the mentor-coaching experience and the coaching framework of the Literacy Center in its entirety. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) assert that the purpose of phenomenology is to "investigate the meaning of lived experience of the [participants]" and allow the researcher "[to] seek to understand [the] commonality, or essence [of the phenomenon]" (p. 54). Additionally, researchers assert the purpose of a "case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the richness and complexity of a bound social phenomenon" (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019, p. 49). These two methodologies are designed to capture the essence of the coaching experience and the perceptions of each participant (mentors and coaches).

The research process was intended to accurately portray and represent the participants' perspectives and rich descriptions of their experience over the ten-month period of the study. The data collection methods included monthly mentor reflective journals, mentors' activity logs, document review, semi-structured individual interviews, and focus groups. The data analysis methods included phenomenological reduction, coding methods, bracketing, and memo-writing. Research techniques to ensure trustworthiness of the study included triangulation of data; members checking; and thick, rich description of data and methods to capture the experience and perspectives of the five mentors and their interactions with the coaches in a school setting. Through data analysis, the researcher identified emerging themes to reveal not only optimal conditions for coaches, but also how coaches evolve over time with the support of a mentor throughout a school year.

Chapter Summary

Students unable to read proficiently by the end of third grade are at risk of dropping out of high school and living in poverty for the remainder of their lives. Policy makers and educators have attempted to improve student learning through a variety of innovations focused on curriculum, instructional practices, and professional development for teachers. However, students' reading levels have remained stagnant after decades of attempting school transformations through these methods (International Literacy Association, 2018). A promising method that has emerged from policy change is coaching. Coaches provide the opportunity for quality, ongoing professional development for content knowledge and instructional practices of teachers through the coaching model. Educators who receive coaching are more likely to

implement instructional practices appropriately than teachers who receive traditional professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The effectiveness of coaching depends upon the expertise of the coach and the conditions of the coaching environment (Knight, 2005; International Reading Association, 2004). Several factors can affect coaching, including undefined coaching roles and various levels of content knowledge and of coaching experience. The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of the mentor and coaching interaction in order to better understand effective coaching conditions and professional development to build instructional capacity in reading coaches. The findings from this study will inform effective coaching practices and professional development for coaches; quality coaching improves teaching and learning.

Definition of Key Terms

Building Capacity

O'Day et al. (1995) define building capacity when referring to "teacher capacity" as "procedural knowledge and skill" of a teacher; knowledge consists of "subject matter, curriculum, students, and general and subject specific pedagogy in order to help students learn," and skill includes "curriculum development, instructional strategies, or assessments" (p.2). The Literacy Center used a Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD) as the coaching framework for the mentors use to provide professional development to the reading coaches; coaches also used this model to coach the teachers. The purpose of the CBMTD progressive stages of professional development is to build instructional capacity (improve knowledge and practices) of the recipient of the coaching and provide differentiated support/coaching.

Coaching Cycle

The coaching cycle is the model the Literacy Center mentors used with the instructional coaches, "[involving] many steps embedded in three components: identifying, learning, and improvement" (Knight et al., 2015, p.12). This model provides the opportunity for learning and application of new concepts, self-reflection, and feedback. Implementation of the coaching cycle is a sustainable method of staff development. In turn, the coaches implemented this cycle with teachers to improve literacy instruction in their schools.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaches are the staff developers in education. Knight (2016) defines instructional coaching as, "The [coaches] partner with teachers to analyze current reality, set goals, identify and explain teaching strategies to hit the goals, and provide support until the goals are met" (para. 1). The Literacy Center mentors were training and supporting the coaches to become experts in literacy content knowledge and instructional practices to develop long-term implementation of quality literacy instruction in each school building.

Job-embedded Professional Development

Job-embedded professional development (JEPD) refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practices and is designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). JEPD was one of the primary focuses of the Literacy Center's model to improve literacy instruction; the CBMTD is an example of the JEPD model used in this study. The purpose of this model is to build instructional capacity in a sustainable method. The JEPD is designed to increase content knowledge and instructional practices through the continual guided support of a mentor/coach. In the embedded professional development model, teachers are

afforded the opportunity to clarify misconceptions, to receive guided practice, and to work with the guidance of a coach toward a sustainable method to improve student learning.

Overview of the Study

The next four chapters will review the literature, methodology, findings, and conclusion and implications of the study. Chapter two reviews literature about the significance of reading by the end of third grade, lifelong impacts of being a poor reader, the significance of early literacy interventions, national efforts to improve reading, professional development to improve instruction, and in-depth descriptions of the coaching model and its impact on instruction. Chapter three provides a description of the methodology and a rationale for its use; this is followed by the researcher's positionality and an ethical statement and description of the research process. Chapter four interprets the findings and describes the emerging themes. Chapter five will discuss the conclusion of the study, followed by implications and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the importance of reading by the end of third grade, the significance of quality reading instruction, and the reading coach model as an effective form of professional development to build instructional capacity in teachers in order to increase student achievement in reading. It begins with an overview of literacy in the United States that emphasizes the urgent need to improve reading instruction in the classroom and the adverse effects of poor reading extending into adulthood. It emphasizes the significant impact of quality reading instruction, the relationship between early reading skills and later skill development, educators' efforts to improve reading, professional development, and a description of coaching and the components of effective coaching. An in-depth understanding of each of these concepts is imperative to address the established issue of ineffective reading instruction that impedes the progress of student learning.

This analysis of literature provides an understanding of the reading issue in the United States and describes an effective method to improve teaching and learning-- the reading coach model implemented under certain conditions. It also explicates the coaching model, which uses Cooter's Capacity Building Model for Teacher Development and Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory as a framework to provide professional development to literacy coaches to improve reading instruction kindergarten through third grade. The literature on reading coaches is interwoven throughout this chapter to describe the evolution of the reading coach within education policy, the reading coach as a professional development model, and the conditions

necessary for coaching to be effective. The focus of this study is the conditions necessary for a reading coach to positively influence literacy instruction and to increase student achievement in the primary grades.

Literacy is the ability to read and write, to understand written texts, and to communicate through these texts in order to function and to participate in society (UNESCO, 2018; White & McCloskey, 2003; Lawton & Gordon, 1996). In the United States, literate citizens are able to comprehend written texts and to use the information they gain to make choices in daily life. Nearly 80 % of adults in the United States possess the required literacy skills to function in society (OECD, 2013). In contrast, adults who lack these basic reading skills are socioculturally disadvantaged, and they lack autonomy; they are unable to understand written texts and to make informed decisions related to their finances, social engagement, health, and safety (Feinberg et al., 2018; Vágvölgyi et al., 2016; Eamon & Wu, 2011). Literacy skills are essential to function adequately in society; thus, policy makers and educators in the United States place a strong emphasis on early language and literacy skills to improve literacy rates.

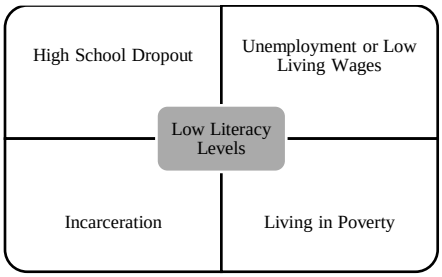
Only one-third of students in the United States are currently reading on grade level at the end of the third grade (Nation's Report Card, 2019). Students without the ability to read on level upon entering fourth grade have difficulty extending their learning. Those who lack basic reading skills have reduced opportunities to comprehend texts and to apply acquired knowledge for future learning (Goldman, 2012; Fiester, 2010). The U.S. Department of Education America Reads Challenge (1999) reports that as students progress in their education, reading becomes a more complex task, requiring them to use their skills to comprehend, analyze, and problem-solve across content areas. Students who do not read on grade level by the end of third grade will struggle with learning new content and applying their knowledge as this complexity increases.

Literacy skills are a strong predictor for success in adulthood; due to this correlation, educators intentionally focus on reading achievement scores in elementary school. Fourth-grade students' performance levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate future success in school and the probable outcome of a person's life post-graduation. Researchers have found that those who fall behind are at higher risk for poor academic performance, behavioral issues, and social problems, and they are more likely to drop out of high school and to experience adversity in adulthood (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Bowers et al., 2012; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011). To combat these daunting statistics, educators and policy makers focus on early literacy intervention.

Consequences of Low Reading Rates

Statistics reveal that compared to peers with adequate skills, a person with poor reading skills is more likely to drop out of high school, to struggle to maintain employment, to earn a lower than average annual income, to become incarcerated, and to have a shorter life span (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Bowers et al., 2012). Students who read poorly-when exiting elementary school continue to have low literacy levels, which negatively contribute to an individual's life

Figure 2.1 Low Literacy Levels and Adverse Effects



High School Dropout Rate

Poor readers in elementary school are more likely to drop out of high school. Ninety-five percent of high school dropouts score in the lowest levels of national reading assessments; students who score in the lowest level (below basic) reading on NAEP are four times more likely to not graduate high school compared to peers who score in basic, proficient, or advanced reading levels (Hernandez, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The National Center for Education Statistics (2019) defines a high school dropout as a student who is "not enrolled and [has] not enrolled in school and [has] not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED certificate)" (NCES Fast Facts Dropout rates, para. 1). The national dropout rate is 5.4%, and in 2017 it accounted for 2.1 million people ages 16 – 24 years old (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Living in poverty for at least one year, researchers say, contributes to skill deficits; students who do so have a dropout rate of 22% as compared to the 6% rate of students who have never experienced poverty (Fiester, 2012**;** Hernandez, 2011). Other studies about poverty have yielded similar results, and these will be reviewed next.

Donald Hernandez (2011) conducted a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students to determine the long-term effects of reading levels and poverty on high school graduation rates. The researcher used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), and the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) to study the correlation between reading levels, high school graduation rates, and ethnicity and socio-economic subgroups. The students in the study were born between 1979 and 1989. Hernandez found that one in six students who were not reading proficiently by the end of third grade did not graduate from high school on time. Hernandez also found that minority

students and students living in poverty and not reading on grade level by the end of third grade were less likely to graduate from high school.

Employment Rates and Living Wages

Sixty percent of high school dropouts read below grade level and subsequently struggle to gain employment (Hernandez, 2011). These individuals have difficulty transitioning into adulthood. They are more likely to find themselves unemployed than those who graduated high school, and they will earn lower wages (Chiara et al., 2019; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011; Rumberger & Lamb, 2003). Researchers have studied dropouts around the world to learn more about this connection.

In the United States, a high school diploma determines a person's ability to obtain employment. Rumberger and Lamb (2003) conducted a study to compare the postsecondary educational and economic benefits of completing high school in the United States and in Australia. The researchers compared longitudinal data from the National Education of Longitude Survey to the Australian Youth in Transition Survey from the Australian Council for Educational Research from 1989-1994, using a multivariate model. The variables included months of productivity and earnings among high school graduates and dropouts. The researchers found that compared to Australian students, students from the US are less likely to be able to apply for postsecondary training or vocational opportunities without a high school diploma. The United States requires individuals to have certain credentials in order to be accepted in postsecondary training or to obtain employment in a majority of jobs. The researchers also found that within the first two years after high school, 45% of students who never graduated high school were unemployed and not enrolled in any school or vocational program compared to 6% of graduates

who were unemployed. These results demonstrate that students who do not graduate from high school are less likely to secure employment as adults, especially in the United States.

Researchers with the National Center of Education Statistics (2018) found that students who drop out of high school earn only half the salary or less than their peers with bachelor's degrees. Adults with adequate reading levels earn an average of $101,000 annually compared to adults with the lowest literacy rates, who earn an average of $16,000 annually (Kutner et al., 2007). The median annual income for adults without a diploma is a salary of $29,000 compared to adults with a diploma, $38,000, and adults with a college degree, $62,000 (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The annual salary of a high school dropout is scarcely above poverty level. The current poverty federal guideline is a nearly $26,000 annual salary for a household of four people (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Students without a diploma are more likely to be unemployed, increasing their likelihood of living in poverty.

Incarceration Rates

Incarceration rates are significantly higher for those who did not graduate high school. Researchers have gained this knowledge by studying hundreds of prisoners in the United States; they suggest that nearly half of prison inmates did not graduate high school, and two-thirds of them are at the lowest literacy levels. Of the inmates who did not graduate from high school, nearly one-fourth of their parents did not complete high school either (Rampey et al., 2016; Kutner et al., 2007; MacKenzie, 2006). Males who grow up in extreme poverty, within the bottom 10% of income distribution, are 20 times more likely to be incarcerated during their life compared to their middle and upper socioeconomic peers (Looney & Turner, 2018). Literacy rates are a strong predictor for incarceration.

The National Center for Educational Statistics and Division of Adult Literacy and Education (2003) conducted a four-year study with over 18,000 participants, including non-incarcerated U.S. citizens and 1,200 prison inmates ages 16-74. The participants were administered a survey to measure prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy. The survey also included background and demographic information about the participants. Adults with a high school diploma or higher level of education scored higher on all three literacy categories. Compared to the U.S. citizens who were non-incarcerated, prison inmates scored at a higher rate on the lowest literacy levels, i.e. the basic literacy levels, of the test, indicating that they had lower literacy skills. The inmates scored 40% on basic literacy levels compared to 29% of non-incarcerated participants. Inmates scored 39% on document literacy compared to non-incarcerated participants 33%, and they scored 35% on quantitative literacy compared to 22% of non-incarcerated participants (Davis, 2013; Kutner et al., 2007). The researchers indicated that low literacy rates are highly correlated with lower educational attainment and increased likelihood of incarceration as an adult. Assessments in other countries have yielded similar results and will be reviewed next.

A similar study, the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), is a large-scale cyclical study under the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that occurred in 2012, 2014, and 2017, and will occur again in 2021. The participants were from a minimum of 22 different countries. The U.S. participants included people from U.S. households (non-incarcerated) and a sample size of 1,300 prison inmates ages 18-74; inmates' data was compared to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 data from U.S. households. The purpose of this study was to determine the cognitive and work skills needed for a social and global economy; the test measured numeracy, literacy, and problem solving in technological

environments. The researchers found that half of the inmates without a high school diploma scored in the lowest literacy levels. Additionally, the researchers found that one-third of prison inmates were not in the paid workforce prior to being incarcerated; 19% were unemployed and 16% were considered students, caretakers, disabled, retired, or of another circumstance. Literacy scores did not differ from those of non-incarcerated citizens when the participants had the same level of educational attainment. In turn, the researchers found educated inmates were less likely to return to prison (Rampey et al., 2016). Inmates were more likely to have low literacy levels and no high school diploma.

After incarceration, former inmates face social stigmas and systematic barriers to securing employment and housing. The unemployment rate among former inmates is 27% compared to 3.6% within the U.S. general population (Bureau of Labor and Statistics 2020; Hyland, 2019). Employers are less likely to hire ex-offenders and 50% less likely to call back formerly incarcerated people who apply for a position (Couloute & Kopf, 2018; Pager, 2003). In addition to being less likely to secure employment, former inmates earn 14-26% less in wages compared with those who have never been incarcerated (Davis, 2013). Unemployment and lower earning opportunities increase the likelihood for recidivism. The U.S. recidivism rate is 83% within nine years of release from prison, indicating that former inmates are more likely to reengage in criminal behaviors. Nearly half of former inmates, 40%, are rearrested and will return to prison (Alper et al., 2018; Pager, 2003). While other factors influence this cycle of adversity, it stems largely from poor reading skills and poverty.

Poverty Rates

Nearly half of adults with the lowest literacy levels are unemployed and live in poverty; reading skills are highly correlated with the quality of a person's life (National Center for

Education Statistics, PIAAC, 2020; Chapman & McHardy, 2019). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2019) defines poverty as, "[a] lack [of] economic resources necessary to experience a minimal living standard" (Poverty estimates, trends, and analysis section, para. 1). People are born into poverty, or they fall into poverty because of a single event such as change of people in the household or a loss of income; the longer one lives in poverty, the less likely that individual is to transition out of it (Stevens, 1999). The poverty rate of U.S. citizens is 11.8%; yet U.S. citizens without a high school diploma ages 25 and older experience a poverty rate of 25.9% compared to those with a high school diploma, who experience a rate of 12.7% (Semega et al., 2019). The lack of economic resources leads to hardships in obtaining food and housing, health hardships, and adverse effects on socialization and relationships (Renahy et al., 2018; Mood & Jonsson, 2016; Eamon & Wu, 2011). Additional adverse effects of poverty such as learning issues and academic and behavioral deficits can also negatively influence student outcomes.

Effects of Poverty on Learning

The cycle of poverty continues to perpetuate low academic achievement for students. Students living in poverty are more likely to have poor reading skills; 60% of students from low-income families score below average on reading achievement assessments, and these students are significantly at risk for academic failure. Growing up in poverty exposes children to chronic stress, resulting in an increase in learning issues such as concentration, memory, and emotional and behavior problems (American Psychological Association, 2020; Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Bhattacharya, 2010). Forty-one percent of students in the United States reside in low-income households, and one in five students lives in poverty. Children with parents who did not receive a high school diploma are more likely to live in poverty (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019;

Koball & Jiang, 2018). Three out of four students whose parents are poor readers are more likely to struggle with reading and have academic, behavior, and attendance issues in school (Chapman & McHardy, 2019).

An abundance of research demonstrates that poor readers are more likely to live in poverty and more likely to have parents with low literacy levels (American Psychological Association, 2020; Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Chapman & McHardy, 2019; Koball & Jiang, 2018; Bhattacharya, 2010). If this issue is not adequately addressed in schools, parents and children with low literacy skills will continue to produce generations of poor readers. Prioritizing third-grade literacy interventions will decrease the adversity associated with low levels of education attainment.

Summary

In the United States, literacy is an essential skill to function and contribute to society (Feinberg et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2018; Vágvölgyi et al., 2016; OCED, 2013; Eamon & Wu, 2011). Nevertheless, despite literacy being a necessary skill in adulthood, only one-third of students are reading on grade level upon entering fourth grade in America (Nation's Report Card, 2019). Poor readers are more likely to struggle in academics and in behavior during their entire school careers (Chapman & McHardy, 2019). In turn, poor readers have a significantly higher rate of negative life outcomes; they are more likely not to graduate from high school and to experience chronic low living wages and unemployment (Chiara et al., 2019; Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011; Kutner et al., 2007; Rumberger & Lamb, 2003). These adverse consequences often lead to living in poverty and higher rates of incarceration (Looney & Turner, 2018; Rampey et al., 2016; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011). This perpetuates a cycle of poor readers and perilous life trajectories. The synthesis of the literature demonstrates a strong

correlation between reading and the outcomes of a person's life; this creates a sense of urgency to prioritize reading in elementary schools and to intentionally target reading instruction through evidence-based practices to support and improve teaching and learning.

The following section will discuss evidence-based instructional strategies and essential reading content to improve student achievement in reading. Additionally, the review of the literature will describe the previous efforts to increase student learning in America over the last few decades and the outcomes of those efforts. The prominent efforts reviewed are related to improving reading are accountability systems, reading coaches, and professional development.

Efforts to Improve Reading

This section explains the significance of early reading intervention and effective reading instruction in improving student achievement. Over the last four decades, educators and policy makers in the United States have made tremendous efforts to improve students' reading ability. Both successful and unsuccessful attempts to change the direction of student achievement have been made. Yet, despite substantial efforts, a significant number of students (two-thirds) in the United States are not advancing in reading.

Significance of Early Reading Development and Quality Reading Instruction

Low reading achievement in the United States and the long-term adverse effects associated with poor reading levels were explained to demonstrate the seriousness of students not reading on grade level by the end of their primary education (kindergarten through third grade). Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the importance of early literacy intervention and quality reading instruction as a preventive method to address the reading problem in America.

Poor readers often struggle with understanding alphabetic principles and comprehending written text, which prevents them from engaging in further learning. The researchers indicated

factors that inhibit literacy: students with content deficits, little exposure to reading prior to entering school, poor understanding of alphabetic principles, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and parents with reading deficits (National Reading Council, 2001). The National Research Council (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to study the effectiveness of early literacy interventions for at-risk students in primary grades. The study targeted reading development and factors that influenced reading outcomes. The optimal model is early literacy interventions in kindergarten through third grade to provide instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension; additionally, listening comprehension and oral language skills are requisites for students to comprehend text, preventing reading difficulties in all students (Cervetti et al., 2020; National Reading Council, 2001).

Early Reading Intervention

Early intervention is crucial in the primary grades because the complexity of reading increases upon entering fourth grade, when students use their reading skills to comprehend, analyze, and problem solve across content areas (Cervetti et al., 2020; Goldman, 2012; U.S. Department of Education America Reads Challenge, 1999). Reading is required for additional learning, and students who are unable to read proficiently fall behind in academics, rarely catching up to grade level. This leads to negative long-term effects throughout school and adulthood. An effective way to improve reading and student learning is through quality teacher instruction; explicit literacy instructional methods improve students' ability to read and write, which are necessary for later skill development (Shanking, 2006; Cooter, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2001; U.S. National Research Council, 2001). Effective literacy instruction is facilitated by a well-trained teacher and includes evidence-based systematic instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and writing; these skills enable students

to decode words and comprehend text for additional learning (National Early Literacy Panel, 2009; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008; O'Connor et al., 2005; National Reading Panel, 2001). Therefore, it is important to understand the literacy content required to improve reading skills as well as the systematically instructional methods delivered to students by qualified teachers.

Relationship between Early Reading Skills and Later Skill Development

Developing early literacy skills is closely related to developing the more advanced skills necessary for "complex comprehension, reasoning skills, and knowledge that students need as they progress through school" (Goldman, 2012, p. 89). Researchers continue to support the need to target literacy prior to fourth grade to develop basic reading skills to comprehend text. The National Early Literacy Panel Report (2009) reported the results of a meta-analysis of 500 studies that explored the relationship between early literacy skills and later developing literacy skills (conventional literacy skills) as well as instructional interventions and their impact on student learning, particularly in literacy. The researchers identified 11 early literacy skills that are strong predictors for future reading success; these included alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid automatic naming of a sequence of number and letters, rapid automatic naming of objects or colors, writing letters and name, phonological memory, concepts about print, print knowledge, reading readiness, visual processing, and oral language. Researchers found that students would need to have a basic understanding of print, the names of letters and sounds associated with print, and the ability to recall verbal and written communication prior to entering kindergarten to be able to acquire and apply conventional literacy skills. Conventional literacy (later developing) skills include decoding, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling. The researchers also found that instructional interventions were most successful when facilitated in a small group or one-on-one. Reading interventions in phonemic awareness and alphabetic

code had a direct positive effect on conventional literacy skills. Reading interventions in shared reading had a positive effect on oral language and print knowledge. When students are unable to decode words, they have deficits in comprehension. Early literacy skills are required to expand learning in school and in adulthood.

Reading Interventions and Impact on Learning

In addition to understanding the relationship between early literacy skills and later learning, it is important to recognize the second critical aspect to students learning to read, the quality of reading instruction. The effectiveness of instructional reading interventions is essential to improving student learning, and this effectiveness focuses particularly on literacy content and instructional methods. The National Reading Panel (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to identify effective instructional methods in reading and teachers' readiness and ability to implement quality literacy instruction in their classrooms. The National Reading Panel divided the study into the following critical reading categories: alphabetic principles (phonemic awareness and phonics), fluency, comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, and reading instruction.

The researchers on the National Reading Panel found students who had mastered phonemic awareness skills were often better readers; poor readers often had poor letter knowledge, poor phonemic awareness, and substandard literacy skills. Quality systematic literacy instruction in phonics, fluency, and comprehension has a significant impact on improving reading; it improves students' ability to read words and to spell, their reading rate and prosody, and their ability to comprehend texts. The researchers found these abilities increase student achievement and have a positive impact on students reading on grade level by the end of third grade. They also found that teachers are often not prepared on how to teach reading in the

preservice education programs or in isolated professional development sessions to provide effective literacy instruction, teachers require extensive professional development after preservice programs.

In a similar manner, O'Connor et al. (2005) conducted a four-year study targeting early literacy intervention to have students reading on grade level by the end of third grade. The purpose of the study was to measure the impact of a longitudinal early literacy intervention program. The treatment included ongoing professional development in explicit literacy instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension for teachers in the classroom and providing effective small group reading instruction to students. Data collection included literacy assessments three times a year to measure the students' progress, field notes, and observations of instruction. The researchers found 81% of students were reading on grade level after receiving treatment. When students received effective instructional strategies in the classroom accompanied with intensive small group instruction, early intervention in literacy led to their reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

Subsequently, it is evident that quality instruction in early literacy skills is critical to increase the number of students reading on grade level by the end of third grade (Goldman, 2012; National Early Literacy Panel Report, 2009; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008; O'Connor et al., 2005; National Reading Panel, 2001). The synthesis of the literature indicates that students who demonstrate mastery of early literacy skills (phonemic awareness and phonics) are able to decode words to comprehend text; poor readers have deficits in these areas, therefore impeding their ability to acquire later developing skills needed for continual learning (Goldman, 2012; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008; National Reading Panel, 2001). Additionally, in order to provide effective instruction and have a positive impact on student learning, teachers must have requisite

knowledge of literacy content and evidence-based practices (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008; O'Connor et al., 2005; National Reading Panel, 2001). Researchers continue to demonstrate that many teachers are not prepared to provide the effective literacy instruction needed to improve students' reading skills; this can be attributed to lack of preparation prior to entering the teaching profession and isolated, ineffective professional development they receive throughout their careers (Cooter, 2004; National Reading Panel, 2001). The following section discusses the advantageous efforts and inauspicious efforts made in recent years to improve reading rates and to build teacher capacity.

Education Policies

Over the last few decades, educators and policy makers in American government have invested in reading achievement in schools and attempted to improve it. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, educational policy objectives have focused on improving student achievement in reading levels in kindergarten through 12th grade by providing additional support in the schools for students and teachers. Policies adopted during this time were the Reading Excellence Act of 1998 (REA) and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). All of these efforts were intended to target family literacy, early literacy intervention, and professional development for teachers, with the goal of improving instruction and student achievement through research-based methods, with the expectation of every student reading by the end of third grade. Cooter (2004) asserts:

> [NCLB] intended to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. [NCLB] has four key provisions: stronger accountability for positive results, expanded flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proved to work. (p. 14)

The significance the REA and NCLB policies have in improving reading is based on introducing accountability systems and reading coaches to implement specific research-based reading programs and to provide professional development for teachers (Edmonson, 2004). Accountability systems include revising standards and assessments to measure adequate yearly progress (AYP) and student performance goals on student achievement (Linn, 2013; Shapard et al., 2009; Hallway & Hamilton, 2008). According to Gong, Blank, and Manise (2002), the purpose of accountability systems is to "inform and improve education practices and outcomes, provide information to stakeholders of educational progress, and inform educational policies" (p. 4). Additionally, reading coaches provide a form of professional development introduced through NCLB. A reading coach can provide leadership and professional development to improve teacher practices in reading (Heyward, 2007). Both methods (accountability systems and reading coaches) were intended to improve instruction and student achievement in reading.

Shortcomings of Accountability Systems and Reading Coaches

Accountability systems were introduced through federal policies with the intent to improve instruction through revising standards and conduct annual state assessments to monitor student progress, Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Hannaway and Hamilton (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of six states to review the outcomes of education policies (accountability systems) beginning in 2000. The researchers found that accountability systems (standards revisions and accountability testing) yielded both positive and negative outcomes. Accountability testing does have some positive impact on student achievement; the majority of states have demonstrated some improvement in student achievement and made progress in narrowing the achievement gap often experienced by minority students. They have also found some positive impact on professional practices and the attitudes of educators. Teachers demonstrated a stronger awareness

of the importance of curriculum, instruction, and assessment directly related to student learning; they demonstrated more instructional focus and an increased work effort. Teachers reported the accountability system did improve their instructional practices, but it negatively impacted teacher morale.

Furthermore, the researchers found significant "reallocation of instructional efforts" (Hallway & Hamilton, 2008, p. 13); instruction increased in reading, math, and tested areas and decreased in non-tested areas. They also found accountability testing could lead to "narrowing instruction" to focus on test items and assessment strategies. Researchers reported that another negative outcome of the accountability system was unethical behavior on the part of teachers and administrators; this included teaching previous test items, cheating on assessments, and neglecting to teach non-tested areas. Notable findings included evidence that there were no differences in instructional practices between high-stake and low-stake test environments, and there was an increase in professional development in schools, particularly in low performing and low socioeconomic schools.

A component of accountability systems is standard-based revision. Recent research indicates that teachers continually were provided with a standard-based curriculum and instructed to focus on state assessments, but they not were provided professional development to accompany the instructional requirements within the classroom. Costigan (2018) conducted a study with 20 new teachers with less than five years of teaching experience about their experiences teaching English and Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for seven semesters. The purpose of the study was to examine the experience of new teachers in implementing ELA standards to ninth-grade students in urban school settings for seven semesters. The participants worked in similar urban schools and all taught ninth-grade English.

Data collection occurred through participants' interviews, journal writing, and document review. The participants were provided by their schools with the required ELA curriculum and test preparation materials to implement in their classrooms. None of the participants received professional development about CCSS or instructional methods. The researcher found that the curriculum differed significantly among participants, and the participants did not understand the rationale of the curriculum or test prep materials. This discrepancy subsequently led to misunderstanding of standards, poor instructional methods, and disengaged students. A noteworthy finding was that all of the schools had unstable administrations and unsettled school environments. Teachers lacked understanding of the instructional methods and content knowledge, and they did not have the capacity to implement new standards. Standards and curriculum are irrelevant if professional development is not provided to teachers to explain the rationale, content, and instructional methods.

In addition to the use of accountability systems, reading coaches provide a form of professional development to improve reading. Reading First was an initiative through NCLB, which funded reading coach positions in the schools. Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, and Unlu, (2008) conducted a National Center of Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance report on the Reading First Initiative. The report examined three years of implementation, 2004 to 2007. The purpose of the report was to measure the impact of Reading First on student achievement, classroom instruction, and level of implementation. Data collection methods included student achievement on reading assessments measuring comprehension and decoding, classroom observations during literacy instruction, student engagement, and surveys and interviews conducted with teachers, reading coaches, and administrators.

The researchers found positive results from the Reading First initiative; teachers spent more time providing instruction with the five essential reading components, increased support was provided for teachers through professional development from reading coaches, and support was provided for struggling readers. Even though additional opportunities for professional development and support were provided, the researchers found there was no impact on reading comprehension and only a slight improvement in decoding skills. However, it can be concluded the reading coaches provided more professional development to teachers and positively influenced content knowledge of teachers and the amount of time reading instruction in the classroom.

Similar studies regarding the effectiveness of the Reading First initiative attribute little impact on student achievement results from minimal changes to instructional practices. Despite an increase in professional development for teachers, reading coaches were unable to provide consistent embedded coaching to support teachers with reading instruction; the coaches were utilized to perform other responsibilities throughout the school rather than to perform their primary role. Furthermore, the coaches' experience and roles varied greatly between schools (Al Otaiba et al., 2008; National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance). Reading coaches were not as effective as intended.

Despite these efforts, there has been slight improvement in student achievement since 1992 but overall not a significant impact; the most recent national reading (NAEP) scores in 2019 for fourth and eighth graders have decreased when compared to the 2017 reading scores (National Center for Education and Statistics, 2019). The efforts of policy makers and educators intended to increase student achievement have provided a surface level solution but have lacked a sustainable systematic approach to improve reading instruction and build teacher capacity;

professional development was essential to build instructional capacity in teachers (Shepard et al., 2009; Cooter, 2003; Desimone, 2002). Researchers found that accountability systems varied greatly among states and had minimal alignment between state and national standards (Linn, 2013; Shapard et al., 2009). The quick expansion of reading coaches led to hiring inexperienced coaches, undefined coaching roles, and provided inconsistent professional development (Deussen et al., 2007). Therefore, this expansion did not improve student achievement.

Lastly, the shortcomings of the education policies and continuation of underperforming students are partially attributed to inadequate professional development for teachers; reading coaches only spent one-third of their time focused on instruction in the classroom, which in turn did not improve instruction (Heineke, 2013; Deussen et al., 2007; Cooter 2003). The synthesis of the literature continues to support the need for effective professional development to build instructional capacity in teachers to improve student achievement (National Center of Education and Statistics, 2019; Costigan, 2018; Shapard et al., 2009; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008; Shanking, 2006; Cooter, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2001; U.S. National Research Council, 2001; Desimone, 2002). Previous professional development attempts did not have a significant impact on sustainable changes in classroom practices. Reading coaches are further discussed in the next section, focusing on the effectiveness of the reading coach professional development model.

Professional Development

An efficacious way to build teacher capacity and improve teaching and learning is through effective professional development. Professional development can be a vehicle to build a sustainable system and a formal attempt to provide quality teacher instruction; it is used to improve individuals' practices and increase knowledge, practice teaching techniques and reflective techniques to guide cognitive and decision-making capabilities, and to change teacher

behaviors to improve student learning (Kuijpers et al., 2010; Fixsen et al., 2005; Cole, 2004). Initial research on professional development for teachers indicated that its effectiveness was dependent upon the attitude and willingness of the participant (Berman et al., 1977). Loucks (1983) disproved a commonly held belief that only teachers themselves could improve their own learning in the Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement in which researchers found three essential factors to support teachers' professional learning. These factors included teacher commitment to learning and applying new methods, professional development provided by an expert with follow-up activities, and ongoing support from educators and administrators. Loucks was one of the first to reflect that ongoing professional development with a support system can lead to improved teacher practices.

Components of Effective Professional Development

Effective professional development is defined as "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-et al., 2017, p. 1). The review of the literature identifies corresponding characteristics of effective professional development in order to change instructional methods in the classroom. These overlapping features include collaboration; collective responsibility relevant to learners' daily practices; active engagement for the learner, grounded in inquiry; opportunities to practice and to receive feedback with a more knowledgeable other; ongoing and sustainable practice; and a component of a systematic change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimore & Pak, 2017; Desimone et al., 2002). There is a significant amount of research on teaching and learning that indicates professional development is one of the most effective ways to improve teacher (instruction) and student learning (achievement) when professional development includes a combination of pedagogical methods (theory, content, demonstration, and modeling evidence-

based practices) and continual collaborative learning with the guidance of a content and instructional expert (coach) (Fixsen et al., 2005; Dole, 2004; Joyce & Showers, 2002).

The following studies include longitudinal data and meta-analysis of components of effective professional development where researchers identified the common characteristics. Desimone et al. (2002) conducted a longitudinal study over three school years (1997 to 2000) to review the characteristics of effective professional development and teacher development. Participants included 207 teachers across multiple states in 10 different school districts. The teachers participated in teacher surveys describing their professional development experience at the end of each semester. Researchers found when professional development is only content-focused, it does not have an impact on instruction; if it is focused on instructional practices coupled with content, teachers are more likely to implement those methods in the classroom. The common characteristics of efficacious professional development include collective learning with colleagues who teach similar content or grades, active learning (examining student work, practicing skills with feedback) relevant to teachers' daily practices, and coherence of the teachers' goals and alignment with the school's curriculum framework.

Furthermore, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 studies of teachers' professional development that yielded positive results related to building capacity in teachers' instructional practices and student outcomes. The researchers reviewed the methodology of each study and teacher development, and they identified common characteristics of effective professional development through coding each study into the following categories: active learning, coaching/expert support, collaborative, content-focused, feedback, reflection, models/ modeling, and sustained duration. The researchers identified the commonalities of each of the studies that had a positive impact on teacher development included the following

components: collaboration, focus on content, opportunities to practice the skills with a more knowledgeable other, feedback and reflection, continuation and sustainability, modeled effective practices, coaching, and incorporation of active learning.

In a similar study, Desimore and Pak (2017) conducted a meta-analysis on professional development and examined the effectiveness of the coaching model. They reviewed longitudinal qualitative and quasi-experimental studies over the past 30 years. The researchers found that effective professional development included five components to build instructional capacity in teachers: collective participation, a content-focused approach, active learning, coherence, and sustained duration. The researchers stated that the coaching model included these components of effective professional development and thus increased the likelihood that teachers would transfer new instructional strategies into practice.

Conclusively, researchers indicated that professional development must occur under certain conditions and share common features in order to build capacity in teachers in a sustainable manner. The overarching characteristics include collective participation, evidence-based content and instructional strategies, coherence with the teachers' daily work with students, active learning, and alignment with school and district goals (Desimore & Pak, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Deussen et al., 2007). The following review of the literature discusses primary professional development delivery methods, which are also a key element in effective professional development.

Professional Development Methods and Models

Over the last two decades, researchers have focused on the commonality and effectiveness of professional development in terms of mastery of instructional methods, implementation, and the impact instructional practices had on student learning. In turn,

researchers have studied the effectiveness of the different delivery methods and the likelihood of changing teachers' practices. Professional delivery methods often include presenting theory and content, demonstrating or modeling, applying skills, and practicing implementation with a peer or coach; the majority of models incorporate one or more of these delivery methods and vary in duration and support. Dole (2004) described the five professional development methods originally derived by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1996) to support teachers:

- Theory: Discussion, reading, and lectures to explain the rationale behind content and pedagogy.
- Demonstration: Opportunities for teachers to instructional practices modeled by another teacher or coach.
- Practice: Opportunities for teachers to apply their newly learned skill in a classroom.
- Feedback: Peer/colleague or a more knowledgeable others (coach) provide support or assistance to discuss the practice skill with the teacher.
- Coaching: Collaboration between a coach and teachers towards mastery of a newly implemented skill; the teachers learn and practices newly taught skills with feedback and problem solving with the coach. (p. 465)

Joyce and Showers (2002) observed that "Professional development models consist of different delivery methods and researchers have continued to search for ways of conducting training that increase the aptitude of educators to learn skills more easily and effectively" (p.70). In the following studies, researchers discuss the effectiveness that delivery methods have on changing instructional practices.

Professional development with training and feedback as delivery methods were examined in a study conducted by Ross et al. (1991) that included 70 teachers, with 45 receiving training

and feedback. The professional development model included 20 hours of modules, role-play, and follow-up telephone consultations. The trained teachers implemented significantly more of the curriculum than the untrained teachers did. The students who received instruction from the trained teachers showed significant gains in content knowledge and attitudes. The students who received instruction without trained teachers made no progress. The professional development model with training and feedback demonstrates improvement in content knowledge and increases the likelihood of implementation.

In a similar study, Smeele et al. (1999) compared participants who received follow-up support and feedback to participants who only received delivery of content and pedagogy through lecture without follow-up support. In the intervention, one group received an additional four, two-hour follow-up support sessions over a period of a year. The methodology was a randomized experimental study and measured the outcome of the intervention by pre- and post-questionnaires. There were nearly 450 participants in this study, and they were divided into control and treatment groups. The group with the additional follow-up sessions demonstrated a slight increase in content knowledge and self-confidence but did not change their behavior or implementation. Professional development without the opportunity to practice the skill and receive feedback over an ongoing period will increase content knowledge but does not change instructional practices.

Researchers, Keatley et al. (2000) conducted a study with 500 teachers in 20 school districts. The training included content, modeling of skills, and practice with feedback. Participants who received practice with feedback from coaching reported that they felt more prepared and confident and delivered 89% of the curriculum. The researchers in this study found that teachers were motivated and willing to change and were knowledgeable enough to make

instructional decisions. Necessary resources for implementation and self-efficacy were also factors in implementation effectiveness. Professional development that includes modeling and practice with feedback improves content knowledge, teachers' confidence, and the likelihood of implementation of new practices in the classroom.

Joyce and Showers (2002) conducted a meta-analysis to study the effectiveness of professional development methods through the participants' learning and implementation outcomes. Through their research, they determined the percentage of implementation (transfer of a new skill) associated with the type of professional development. When teachers received content knowledge and pedagogical theory through lecture and demonstration (modeling skills) without follow-up, they did not transfer the skill into practice. They also found teachers who practiced skills independently obtained 60% of the content but transferred the new skill to their students only 5% of the time. The highest level of retention of content knowledge and transference of new skills with 95% accurate implementation rate was when the teacher received ongoing coaching. Teachers are more likely to change instructional practices and positively affect student learning when professional development models incorporate presentation of content/theory as well as practice, and when they receive coaching over a sustainable period.

In summary, professional development is most effective when the models are embedded in daily practices for extended duration, incorporate collaboration, involve active engagement and are relevant to learners, and provide opportunities to apply practices with continuing support from a coach. Training with minimal follow-up support does not change the implementation of practices nor outcomes of the recipients, but it can be an efficient way to provide information or improve content knowledge (Fixsen et al., 2005; Joyce & Showers, 2002). The coaching model encompasses the elements of effective professional development and increases the likelihood for

teachers to alter their instructional practices when they receive effective coaching. For the purposes of this study, the review of the literature on reading coach model will be examined.

Reading Coaches

Reading coaches are a form of professional development introduced as a component of the NCLB policy during the 2000s as an effort to improve reading. Initial studies on their effectiveness began following the Reading First initiative with NCLB and continued through the evolution of the reading coach over the last two decades.

In the late 2000s, the report from the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2007) discussed the Reading First (RF) literacy coaches. The researchers examined the qualifications, backgrounds, and descriptions of the coaching role for the RF coaches. They found most coaches were experienced teachers, but they were inexperienced coaches. Reading First coaches were supposed to spend 60 to 80% of their time working in classrooms and provide direct support to teachers with instruction. On average, the coaches spent 29% of their time in the classroom and supported teachers with instruction. The RF coaches were divided into five categories of coaches per this report: data-oriented, student-oriented, managerial, and two groups of teacher-oriented coaches. The teacher-oriented coaches were divided into coaches who supported teachers individually and teachers who collaborated with groups of teachers. Data-oriented coaches spent half of their time with assessment data and linked the data to improve instruction. The student-oriented coaches worked directly with students the majority of the time and supported teachers as minimally as 14% of the time. Managerial coaches facilitated meetings and completed clerical tasks. The teacher-oriented coaches supported teachers nearly half of their time and spent minimal time on clerical tasks. A third of the teacher-oriented coaches supported teachers individually. Coaching roles are often

undefined and are extended to various responsibilities. As a result, coaches are not able to provide consistent and systematic support to teachers, and therefore they do not affect instruction.

Similarly, Al Otaiba et al. (2008) conducted a case study about the experience of a reading coach and 33 teachers during the initial year of implementation of the reading coach model. The study took place in high poverty, urban elementary schools throughout the 2001-2002 school year. Data collection included student achievement scores, teacher surveys, observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and document review. The researchers found that primary (kindergarten through third grade) teachers collaborated with the reading coach and participated in coaching sessions more than intermediate teachers. The fourth and fifth grade (intermediate) teachers were resistant to change; they did not want to engage in the coaching model but expected the coach to function as a resource teacher to instruct students. The researchers indicated this was the result of an undefined coaching role. The teachers were reluctant to engage in the coaching cycle and preferred to use their previous methods based in core reading programs rather than to learn new instructional methods. The researchers also found the teachers lacked adequate literacy resources required for instruction and struggled with implementation because conflicting reading initiatives within the schools caused frustration and resistance among them.

Furthermore, the researchers reported that the coaches performed multiple roles within the school besides coaching teachers; they assisted in school-wide assessments, supported administrators, collaborated on multiple school-wide committees, and provided individual resources to teachers and students. These extra responsibilities reduced the coaches' time to collaborate and coach teachers. The researchers also found the coaches spent a significant

amount of time in the first year of implementation attempting to build relationships and gain teacher buy-in; this limited the time a coach engaged in a coaching cycle. Coaching is not an effective professional development method when the coaching role is undefined and consists of various responsibilities, and when teachers are resistant to change and conflicting curriculum initiatives are in place in schools.

Reading coaches are one example of the coaching model; this professional development model can have a positive impact on teaching and learning when implemented under certain conditions (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Cooter, 2003). The next section will explicate the components of coaching and conditions necessary for effective coaching to occur. In order to comprehend the context of the reading coach in this study, it is essential to understand the role the coach plays.

Coaching

This section will discuss the origins of coaching, the coaching cycle, the coaching role, and the components of effective coaching needed to have an efficacious effect on teaching and learning. The explanation of the reading coach was intentionally explicated in the previous section since it is the specific professional development model examined in this study. The purpose of this section is to describe the commonalities of coaching and effective coaching conditions. The role of the coach includes similar responsibilities and methods used to implement a coaching cycle regardless of the type of coach; coaching positions vary by content area or initiative to achieve a specific outcome aligned with the coach's role. The literature on coaching is centered on the role of the coach and the effectiveness of coaching related to student achievement. The research on coaching identified common characteristics and conditions of successful coaching models. In this study, the reading coach and Cooter's CBMTD coaching

model are examined relevant to development of literacy coaches; the overview of the coaching role and components of effective coaching are explicated to provide an in-depth understanding of the reading coach.

An initial form of coaching was peer coaching, a non-evaluative professional development model to help teachers transfer new instructional skills with repeated practice and with peer coaching to improve the quality of instruction and student achievement (Kuijpers et al., 2010; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Joyce and Showers (2002) pioneered the coaching model beginning in the early 1980s. In this model, colleagues coached their peers and agreed to "practice together" and "support one another" in collaboration in planning, problem solving, and implementing new instructional practices (Joyce & Showers, 1996, p. 14-15). Joyce and Showers (2002) found teachers demonstrated growth in content knowledge and in implementing new practices when they engaged in theory (rationale or knowledge), demonstration (modeling), practice, and peer coaching (coaching cycle) through collegial collaboration. In peer coaching, one teacher (peer coach) observes a peer, models a strategy, and provides guided practice and feedback to another; learning takes place through shared problem solving and collegiality. Researchers found teachers who had opportunities to practice and received peer coaching at least 25 times demonstrated new learning strategies in the classroom. Notable findings from researchers state that the peer-coaching model focused on improving teachers individually when not aligned with school processes, or when it did not contain a progress-monitoring component to determine the effectiveness of the teacher's implementation or of student achievement. In addition, researchers found the effectiveness of peer coaching changed, depending on the teacher's willingness to change, and was influenced by the peer coach.

Different coaching models have evolved from peer coaching. Hasbrouck and Denton (2007) compared major coaching models and assert, "[the different] approaches may include activities such as observing instruction, the focus of observations and nature of feedback may vary considerably among these approaches" (p. 159). The majority of the coaching delivery models include elements of the coaching cycle and allow teachers to learn the content and to practice instructional methods in their classrooms. These elements include providing feedback on teachers' performance, continually monitoring student progress, and encouraging teachers hesitant to engage in implementation to change through a coaching cycle; these models provide long-term results and sustainability (Fixsen et al., 2005). The coaching models described in this study are reading coaches and the CBMTD.

One of the models that evolved from peer coaching is the reading coach. The significant difference between peer coaching and other coaching models is that the coach needs to be a content and instructional expert for teacher development with intentional coaching strategies and content knowledge rather than providing feedback only as a colleague. Anders et al. (2004) asserted that "[The] reading coach is a powerful intervention with great potential; however, that potential will be unfulfilled if reading coaches do not have sufficient depth of knowledge and range of skills to perform adequately in the coaching role" (p. 4).

In order to be an effective form of professional development, the reading coach model requires a coach to possess comprehensive content knowledge, experience in delivering professional development and working with teachers, and the ability to support instruction in the classroom (Anders, et. al, 2004; Cooter, 2003). Additionally, the reading coach must have a clearly defined coaching role, which allows ample time to develop collaborative relationships

with teachers and to provide systematic and intentional coaching to build instructional capacity (Al Otaiba, et. al. 2008; Gamse, et. al. 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

In this study, the coaching model to develop reading coaches is the Cooter (2004) Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD). This model focuses on distributed learning over time and combines acquired knowledge and practice components of professional development (Cooter, 2004). The purpose of the model is to improve teacher practices, build instructional capacity, and improve student learning. The model includes six stages of learning to describe the level of mastery for each participant. The stages of the CBMTD will be described in-depth as a component of the theoretical framework for this study.

Cooter (2004) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of the CBMTD. The CBMTD was implemented as a component of various literacy projects in four urban public school districts from 1997 to 2004 (Perkins & Cooter, 2013; Cooter, 2004). In one of the large urban districts, researchers targeted early literacy in 60,000 students, kindergarten through third grade, with the goal of 90% of students reading on grade level by the end of the implementation cycle. The coaches and instructors in the reading project provided 90 hours of training to 2,000 teachers and 150 school administrators. The content of the professional development was comprehensive literacy frameworks. The school leaders learned about building sustainable literacy systems within their schools. This model did yield some improvement in student achievement, but it varied between the locations due to various factors. In one of the reading project locations, teachers who participated in the reading project increased student achievement in literacy on the state assessment 14.9% (Perkins & Cooter, 2013). The factors that impeded implementation were fragmented instruction, transient student populations, large teacher

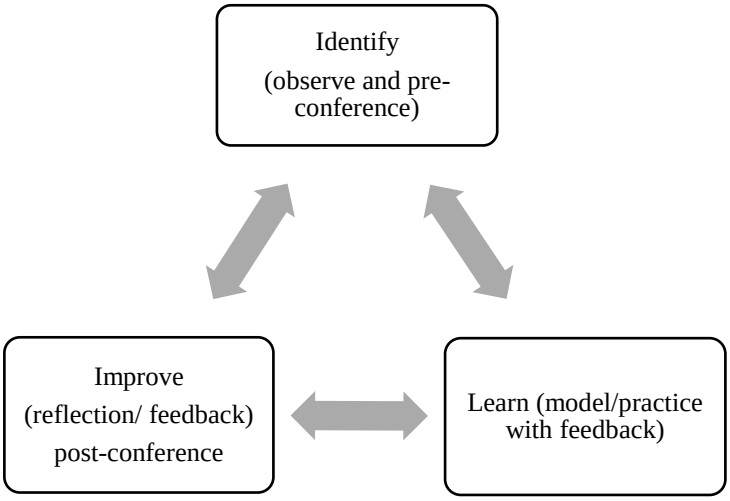
turnover, instability in school and district leadership, and lack of proper resources to provide instruction in balanced literacy in the participating classrooms (Cooter, 2004).

The researchers found that another essential component that contributes to the effectiveness of CBMTD in improving instruction and student achievement depends upon the participants' willingness to volunteer to participate in implementing the model; those who experience positive student outcomes inspire other educators to participate. Teachers' readiness to participate and willingness to alter their behaviors to implement new methods within their repertoires have implications for the effectiveness of this model. Additionally, the model requires time to implement since the deep training and coaching phase occurs over long periods to help teachers and includes a continuous coaching cycle to master and apply new skills.

Coaching Cycle

A coaching cycle is a key component of the coaching model that evolved through foundational studies on professional development with the support of a peer or coach. The guided learning the coach facilitates during the coaching cycle provides opportunities for teachers to learn from a more knowledgeable other (coach). A coaching cycle includes models of instructional practices, observation, and pre- and post-conferences with the teacher. Researchers identified the three stages of the coaching cycle: to identify (pre-conference); to learn (observed by a more knowledgeable other), model, or practice; and to improve (through reflection and specific feedback in post-conference) (Knight et al., 2015; Gallucci et al., 2010). The stages of the coaching cycle are interdependent upon one another in order to change practices.

Figure 2.2 The Impact Cycle for Instructional Coaching (Knight, 2005).



Identify: Pre-conference and Observe. During the pre-conference, the coach and teacher discuss long-and-short-term goal setting, mentally rehearse the lesson, develop the data collection tool to monitor outcomes, discuss teacher concerns and connections between "the relationship of the lesson to broader curriculum" (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 47). During this initial planning conference, the coach and teacher clarify goals, identify specific success indicators, anticipate approaches, establish personal learning focus, and reflect on the coaching process (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Following the pre-conference, the lesson and application of the skill occur through guided learning; the teacher observes the coach model the skill in the classroom, or the teacher practices the skill with specific feedback to guide change in practices.

Learn: Model and Practice with Feedback. "New learning developed over time and practice under the guidance of a more knowledgeable coach is the most effective practice" (Cooter, 2003, p. 199). Professional learning occurs when coaches model strategies for teachers; teachers reported that they learned and applied new instructional strategies, and they felt confident implementing the new methods after observing the coach model instructional methods (Knight, 1995). Teachers need the opportunity to practice the skill in their classroom with

ongoing feedback from a coach to change their instructional practices and adopt new evidence-based methods (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Joyce & Showers, 2002). The second stage of the coaching model includes modeling, applying the newly acquired skill, and engaging in ongoing practice of the instructional method.

Improve: Post-conference for Reflection and Feedback. In the third phase of the coaching cycle, the coach works with educators to implement research-based practices and to encourage reflective practices (Knight, 2007). Specific feedback during a coaching cycle improves teacher reflection and leads to self-improvement for teachers (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The coach facilitates the conference through questioning strategies to guide thinking and conversation, allowing the teacher to think through their instructional decisions, reflect upon student outcomes, and to evoke thinking and changes in practice; the goal is to build capacity and self-learners (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The coach encourages self-reflection about the event and future lessons; the teacher discusses his/her plan to apply this new learning to instructional practices and reflects on the coaching process in its entirety (Costa & Garmston, 1994).The cycle continues until the strategy is learned and the goal is met (Knight, 2005). The coach guides the participant through repeated practice of new methods, giving feedback until the teacher masters them.

In a study on the coaching cycle, Knight (2007) conducted a seven-year longitudinal study in a school district to learn how instructional coaches influence student achievement and teacher implementation of practices. The participants included instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators from nine middle schools and high schools in an urban Midwest school district. The researchers used pre- and post-tests; observations; ethnographic interviews with coaches, teachers, school and district leadership; and a comparative studies method. The

researchers found that when the teachers received professional development through the coaching cycle, they had a much higher rate of changing their instructional practices and implementation in their classrooms.

The significant component of the coaching cycle is the continual support throughout the course of new learning; professional development without the ongoing support of a coach is less effective (Fixsen et al., 2005; Smeele et al., 1999). The coaching cycle differs from other professional development models because the coach provides specific feedback, models skills, and encourages teachers to self-reflect, an element that promotes changes in thinking and behavior (Fixsen et al., 2005). Through this model, the coach is able to provide consistent support to develop teachers' instructional practices through collaboration and intentional feedback. The participants need opportunities for repeated practice and feedback. Coaching has an impact on teaching and learning (Costa & Garmston, 1994). There are various forms of coaching models, but all of them have coaching cycles and are successful under these conditions.

Conditions for Effective Coaching

Coaching is defined as "a process through which a coach works collaboratively with a teacher to improve that teacher's practice and content knowledge with the ultimate goal of affecting student achievement for the purposes of learning new skills or improving current skills" (White et al., 2015, p. 4). Coaching includes intentional content and pedagogical professional development to increase teacher learning and implementation through collaboration, self-reflection, and guided practice to improve classroom instruction (Anders et. al., 2004; Costa & Garmston, 2002). The review of the literature on coaching also indicates corresponding features of effective coaching, which include clearly defined roles, established trust and relationships for

effective collaboration, and coaching as a component of a systematic approach to improve teaching and learning.

Clearly Defined Role. Coaches are more likely to support teachers on a regular basis when they occupy a clearly defined coaching role, which increases the likelihood of improving implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in the classroom (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). The review of the literature on the coaching role highlights the vast differences between coaching roles and the conditions necessary for coaches to provide professional development in their role. The synthesis of research indicates that coaches lack a clearly defined role. This lack of cohesiveness within the roles establishes a significant need to identify the commonalities of successful coaches and coaching conditions.

One reason the coaching role varies greatly between schools is that the school or district leadership often determines the role of the coach based on the current need of the district or school, widespread initiatives, or for financial reasons (Mangin, 2009). For example, if the coaching position were funded by a grant requiring direct support to struggling students, the coach would possibly teach small daily intervention groups. Commonly, the coaching role is fractured into multiple roles within the school, and this reduces time spent on supporting instruction (Heineke, 2013; Cooter 2003). The following studies examined the coach's role and provide examples of the various coaching responsibilities that detract from the primary focus of the coach to improve teaching and learning.

Mangin and Dunsmore (2015) conducted a study to explore how districts and schools often use coaches for systematic change and the roles of the instructional coach. The participants included four instructional coaches. The data collection methods included 32 interviews, recorded coach conversations, observations, and document review. Data analysis included coding

to identify themes from the transcripts of the coaches. The researchers revealed that instructional coaches did not receive training to coach individual teachers, and the job description varied greatly between schools and districts. The researchers posited that coaches are unclear about their roles, that they lack confidence in coaching groups of teachers, and that they often spend their time as a resource to teachers, addressing an individual teacher's needs rather than building comprehensive instructional capacity. They also found that coaching can lack congruency between district goals and professional development for coaches, and that coaching practices can impede the ability for coaches to perform and be effective in their role.

Another reason the role remains undefined is the multiple roles of a coach and the expectations of the coach, which varies between schools. Hathaway et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the role of reading coaching by comparing the perception of the coaches and their role and the daily tasks they performed. The participants included 104 elementary school reading coaches in a large, urban school district; each coach supported nearly 30 to 40 teachers on average. The data collection method was a 2010 International Reading Association (IRA) Standards for Reading Professional survey and analysis was through Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests and open-ended survey questions. The researchers found that each reading coach indicated their role supported the four of the five survey components of learning environments, leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional learning but did not focus on diversity. The coaches felt that their daily responsibilities aligned with the role of the reading coach according to IRA reading coach standards. The researchers reported the actual role of the reading coaches varied greatly from one school to another, which differed from the perception of the coaches. The coaches' actual responsibilities included collaborating with administrators, ensuring implementation of the literacy curriculum, embedding professional

development for grade levels, modeling instructional practices, and school-wide assessments; these duties minimized the amount of time they spent directly supporting teachers.

In addition to coaches having clearly defined roles to support instruction, they first must develop rapport and relationships with teachers for effective collaboration. The teacher-coach relationship is essential to the coaching process; without an established relationship, teachers are less likely to engage in changing their behaviors or in altering instructional methods.

Established Trust and Relationships for Effective Collaboration. An essential element of coaching is collaboration between the coach and the teacher; the effectiveness of the coach can also be attributed to the personal connections and collaboration component and to the inquiry methods of coaching cycle (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimore & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2007; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In order for the coach to positively influence instructional change, he or she has to develop rapport and establish relationships with the teachers; this is a significant component of the coaching role. Coaching is naturally a collaborative process that creates opportunities for shared responsibility, with teachers on a regular basis developing a collective ability to build capacity in other teachers and to maintain improvement (Stringer, 2013). Professional learning is more successful when the teachers/coaches who are undergoing the change are able to discuss and share their experiences and to problem solve with colleagues; staff development is effective during transformation of former practices; and the staff (coaches and teachers) need high levels of support from knowledgeable coaches (mentors) (Guskey, 1986). If teachers have a positive professional development experience with a coach, they are more likely to implement better teaching methods and are more motivated to continue professional growth. The following studies examined the teacher-coach relationship and its impact on instruction.

Heineke (2013) found the significance of coach and teacher rapport and the correlation between the coach-teacher relationship and the coaching role. The researcher conducted a study to examine the interaction between coaches and the teachers in order to understand the impact coaches had on adult learning. The participants included four primary elementary literacy coaches and the kindergarten through third grade teacher they coached. The data collection method included participant interviews, observation logs, and recordings of conversations between the participants.

Additionally, Heineke found the coaching role has an impact on the relationship between the participants. The researcher found that instructional coaches spent over half of their time on activities not related to coaching such as administrative tasks, school-wide data management, participating in administrative meetings, and administering assessments to students. Coaches often functioned as resource teachers and did not complete the coaching cycle; coaches provided resources, created materials, and engaged in conversation about content-related questions and problem solving discourse. In turn, when coaches are unable to actively serve in the coaching role, the teachers and coach are less likely to develop and sustain a collaborative working relationship with one another, and teachers are less likely to change instructional practices.

Furthermore, the participants in the study shared they had a positive relationship with the current coach, but that negative experiences with coaches in the past had caused unnecessary stress and impeded their professional growth and willingness to collaborate with the coach. The teacher participants stated that trust and respect needed to be established to develop a positive working relationship. They were more likely to engage in behavior changes and collaborate with a coach who respected them professionally and who preferred to problem solve collaboratively rather than patronize them. Teachers also stated that availability and visibility of a coach is

important. The participants (coaches) indicated that building trust is essential to produce change in teacher behavior; this process, earning credibility, often takes time, they reported. However, without positive coach-teacher relationships, successful collaborative professional development is rare. The coaching role and relationships among constituents are interdependent upon one another, and they are a determining factor in the effectiveness of the coaching model and changes in instructional practices.

Active collaboration between the teacher and coach is necessary to encourage teacher buy-in and higher implementation rates, and to promote quality instruction. Teachers are more willing to change their behavior and their attitudes toward instructional methods and engage in professional development with support from the coach and shared experience (Heineke, 2013; Miller & Stewart, 2013; Guskey, 1986; Loucks, 1983). Researchers found that professional development did influence change in the instructional practice when teachers had personal connections and collaborated with coaches during the professional development. These findings led to a systematic method for instructional coaches to guide teachers in their learning toward changing their behaviors and applying evidence-based instructional practices.

Professional Development for Coaches. Over the past 30 years, the effort to improve student achievement and reading has relied on the coaching model; there are currently thousands of positions for reading coaches across the country (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). The quick expansion of the reading coach role often leads to inexperienced coaches unable to provide the adequate professional development to teachers. The coaches often enter the position without previous experience. This lack of experience influences their comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, their teacher leadership experiences and ability to facilitate various forms of professional development, and their experience with the coaching

others (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Anders et. al, 2004; McCormick & Brennan, 2001; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). As the role has evolved, the review of the literature has shown that when coaches receive professional development in the relevant content area and evidence-based coaching strategies, they are more likely to influence change in instructional practices.

A study conducted by Veenman and Denessen (2001) reviewed training for coaches and whether different groups in instructional leadership in education had provided any formal coaching training to individuals coaching teachers. The researchers also wanted to evaluate coaching skills of instructional coaches and the impact that providing training had on coaches. The participants consisted of 159 coaches, 93 trained coaches, and 66 untrained coaches. According to the study, despite the role grouping, each group felt unprepared to provide instructional support to teachers and reported receiving little or no training in coaching teachers. There was a control and a treatment group within each role group. The participants attended training workshops, received resources about the coaching cycle, and pre- and post-rating scale on coaches.

Additionally, Veenman and Denessen (2001) found that coaching training for coaches had a positive impact on teachers' motivation and instructional practices in classrooms; the coaches who had received professional development on how to coach teachers rated higher than any other role group who provided coaching to teachers. The researchers stated that trained coaches demonstrated leadership qualities and were intentional with the coaching cycle. These instructional coaches were more likely to empower teachers to reflect on their practices, provided them with better feedback, and had a positive impact on instructional methods. Untrained coaches often did not provide feedback after the coaching cycle.

To be effective, coaches must receive professional development in order to possess a vast knowledge of content, evidence-based instructional practice, and coaching strategies. In addition, coaching needs to be one component of a larger system of instructional improvement. Coaching will not influence teaching and learning if it is the sole method used to improve instruction.

Component of a Comprehensive System. The coaching model is not effective in isolation; it needs to be one component of a professional development system. King et al. (2010) asserted that:

> [Coaching] must be explicitly linked to other professional development opportunities and broader components of systemic improvement such as small learning communities or districtwide frameworks. If coaching is the only form of professional learning, it runs the risk of creating isolated pockets of effective teaching and learning in individual schools, rather than supporting improvement both school-wide and districtwide. (p.5)

Neufeld and Roper (2003) conducted a six-year, longitudinal study to review systematic implementation of the instructional coaching model to examine the design, implementation method, and influence coaching had at the school level. The study was conducted in four large cities. Participants included teachers who worked with coaches, instructional coaches, principals, and district administrators. The method of data collection included interviews with the participants and observations of coaches engaging in the embedded professional development model.

These researchers found that coaching is an effective, fundamental component of professional development within an improvement plan. They indicated that when the embedded coaching model is rooted within a system, it leads to differentiated school-based professional development. This development is designed to meet the needs of all stakeholders and to create

positive change in school culture leading to focus on instruction and data-driven decision-making. They also found that teachers were more willing to collaborate with colleagues and that the instructional coach positively influenced shared responsibility among staff. Notable findings also included the observation that teachers are more likely to implement new instructional methods into the classroom because of the coaching cycle and improvement in the principal as an instructional leader.

Summary

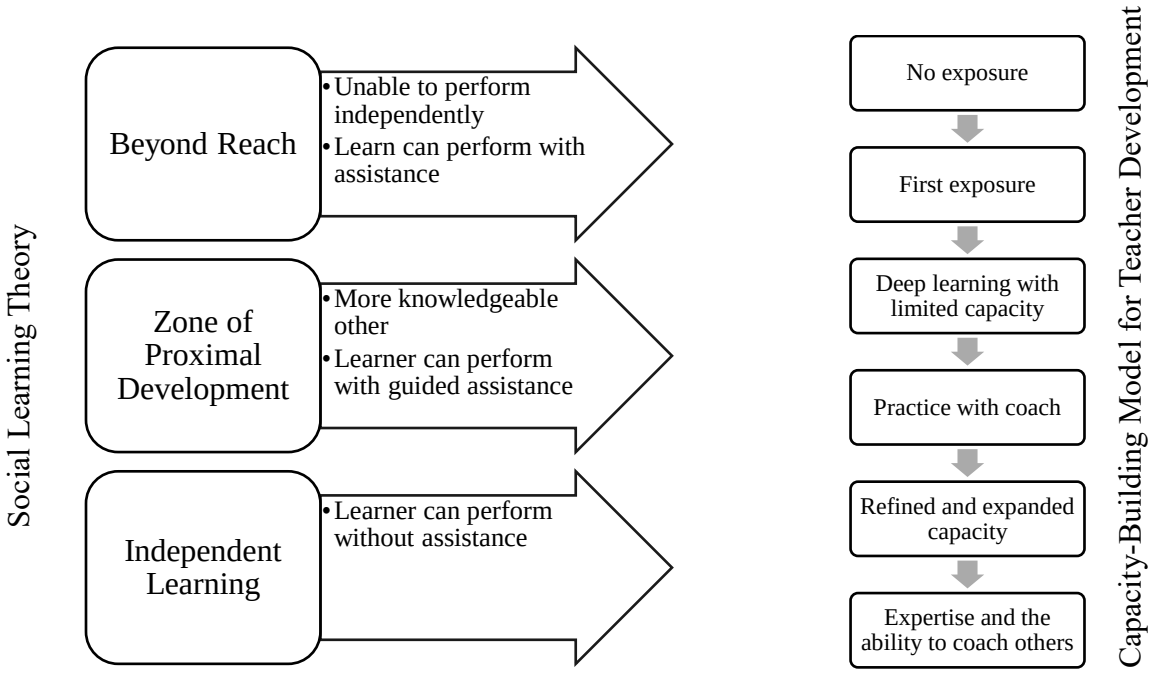
In summary, the coaching model is an efficacious professional development model when implemented under certain conditions; it is effective when the coach is able to work collaboratively with teachers in established coaching roles to support instruction. In turn, it is necessary for coaches to have established relationships with their teachers to be effective in their roles. Coaches are more likely to be efficacious in their roles and adept in content and instructional leadership skills when they engage in professional development to cultivate their content knowledge and coaching techniques. Moreover, the coaching model needs to be an integral component of a system to influence instructional change; it is not effective in isolation. The combination of a new, inexperienced coach in an unstructured role without support and professional development opportunities cannot produce a coaching cycle that fosters instructional capacity in teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The literature in the previous sections describes improvement in teaching and learning that occurs through intentional social learning interactions from a more knowledgeable other, building instructional capacity through a coaching model to improve reading. The theoretical frameworks relevant to these concepts and pertinent to the context of the study are the Social

Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and Capacity-Building Teacher Development Model (CBMTD) (Cooter, 2004). Vygotsky's lens of learning through social interactions and experience directly supports and offers the foundational premise for the study of the CBMTD model. Both of these frameworks include cyclical learning through guidance and collaboration from an expert with the outcome of self-directed learning and expertise and ability to teach others. The relationship between the Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the CBMTD are described in Figure 2.3.

Figures 2.3 Theoretical Framework



Social Learning Theory

In the Social Learning Theory (SLT), Vygotsky asserts that learning and transformation occur when individuals engage in social practices; social interactions are necessary for humans to learn. This reciprocal relationship encourages learning and evolving through collaboration (Gallucci et al., 2010; Daniels 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). The Social Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) encompassed his findings of learning through social situations, drawing from personal

experiences, and challenging the learner with guided practice under a more knowledgeable other to demonstrate understanding of newly acquired knowledge. “The underlying assumption behind the concept is that psychological development and instruction are socially embedded; to understand them one must analyze the surrounding society and its social relations” (Daniel, 2003, p. 171). The coaching model includes the collaborative and social interactions necessary to change behaviors and improve practices.

The coaching model embraces Vygotsky’s theory of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the SLT, Vygotsky suggested that interactive group learning and colleague morale cultivate a collaborative culture for learning. The coaching model provides opportunity for collegiality and professional learning to occur between coaches and teachers. Learning is scaffolded with guidance to help the teacher progress towards mastery of a skill (Heineke, 2013). Coaches are more likely to learn and implement instructional coaching strategies when supported by instructional coaches (mentors). The relationship between coaches and mentors in this study is an example of the social learning reflected in Vygotsky’s perspective.

The ZPD is the distance between a learner’s knowledge and ability to perform without assistance and potential development with assistance of a more knowledgeable coach or peer (Daniel, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD is a tool for instruction and an essential concept in coaching models (Aguilar, 2013; Hedegaard, 1990). The ZPD will be achieved through creating a social learning experience, thereby describing the coaching model, which embraces learning from one another and a more knowledgeable other. An example of ZPD in the embedded coaching model is the coaching cycle. The coaching cycle includes identifying (observation), learning (modeling/providing feedback), and improving (continual application until skills are

transferred into practice). The ZPD occurs in the learning and improving stages of the coaching cycle. The coaching model provides opportunity for collegiality and professional learning to occur between mentors and coaches.

Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development

In this study, the coaching model examined is Cooter's (2004) Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD). The CBMTD is derived from the fundamental learning stages of Vygotsky. The CBMTD has six stages, including no knowledge, first exposure, deep learning with limited capacity, practice with coaching, refined and expanded capacity, and expertise and the ability to coach others. The different stages allow for differentiated professional development for teachers. The stages within the model create opportunities for coaches to assist teachers to develop through collaborative learning and problem solving but also for individualized professional growth to improve instructional capacity in others.

Figure 2.4 Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development

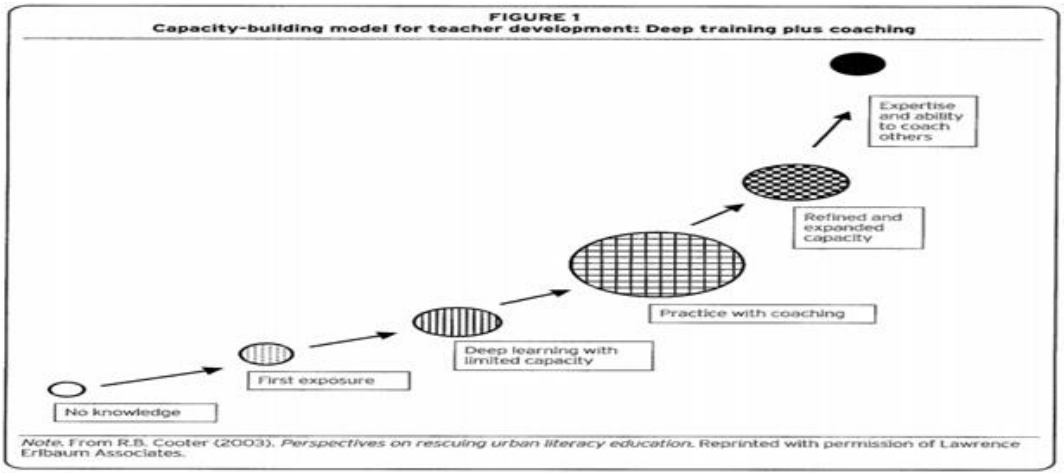


Figure 2.4. From R.B. Cooter (2004). Deep training + coaching: A capacity-building model for teacher development. In R.B. Cooter (Ed.), *Perspectives for rescuing urban literacy education: Spies, Saboteurs, and Saints* (pp. 83-94). Lawrence Erlbaum. Used with permission of the author.

The initial stages of the model are no knowledge and first exposure in which participants (teachers) are novice learners. Within the first exposure stage, the professional development method would include training to provide an opportunity for teachers to become more knowledgeable about a content area and awareness of pedagogy. Professional development in the initial stages would include lecture and readings over a short period in a workshop format or college course. This level of professional development (theory and rationale) is not likely to produce changes in classroom instruction but to increase content knowledge and basic understanding of theory and pedagogical practices; it is a necessary phase of professional development to cultivate foundational teaching skills and increase content knowledge (Fixsen et al., 2005; Cooter, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Smeele, et al, 1999; McCormick et al., 1995).

Following the no knowledge and first exposure stages, the third stage of the model is deep learning with limited capacity. For example, deep learning with limited capacity would include teachers who learn a new teaching strategy and practice the method in the classroom with students but without guidance from a colleague or coach. Deep learning with limited capacity stage is essential to promote change in teachers' behavior and attitude; the participants (teachers) are becoming confident in implementing a curriculum consistently and continually learning the content. The participants are novices in transference of new instructional practices without peer feedback or coaching, but this stage is an opportunity to build relationships and trust with the teachers as they are becoming more motivated to engage in changing instructional practices and in seeing the benefits of the model (Cooter, 2004; Guskey, 2002). There is minimal implementation of the newly acquired skill and no impact on student achievement during this stage of professional learning, but it is essential to improve content knowledge, teacher

confidence, and the coaching relationship (Cooter, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Smeele, et al, 1999; Ross, et al, 1991).

The fourth level of CBMTD is practice with coaching. Cooter states the fourth stage is an essential stage to build capacity in teachers. “This level of learning requires massive classroom practice over time with guidance from an expert coach” (Cooter, 2003, p. 200). This stage reflects components of the peer-coaching model where the coach is modeling instructional strategies (demonstration), observing the colleague practice the skill, and engaging in collegial discussion following the lesson to provide feedback and problem-solve with the teacher. The CBMTD differs in that the coach is the content and instructional expert and also facilitates and guides the learning of the teacher. This stage is essential to developing instructional capacity; teachers improve their practices and have positive impact on student outcomes when they engage in ongoing coaching from a more knowledgeable other (expert coach) (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimore & Pak, 2017; Kuijpers et al., 2010; Deussen et al., 2007; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Keatley, et al, 2000; Guskey, 1986).

Finally, the fifth and six stages of the CBMTD are the refined and expanded capacity and expertise and the ability to coach others. During the fifth stage (refined and expanded capacity), the teacher demonstrates understanding of most components of the instructional methods and implements the strategy with fidelity. Within the sixth stage (expertise and ability to coach others), the teacher has mastered the skill and has developed the instructional capacity to coach others. Rigorous professional development with coaching embedded into the teacher’s routine would occur consistently at this point in the model. Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 2002) components are incorporated in the final CBMTD stages to enhance the teacher’s instruction; the coach guides the cognitive processes of the teacher towards the independence of

self-coaching. Within this stage, the teacher will have the ability to share their expertise with their colleagues and to coach others.

Chapter Summary

The literature in this chapter is intended to describe the urgency of low reading achievement in America, the adverse long-term outcomes of poor readers, and the significance of providing quality reading instruction to rectify the problem. Additionally, the literature explained previous efforts in education to improve reading; the shortcomings of those efforts are attributed to poor reading instruction and ineffective teacher development methods. The synthesis of the research indicates that the efficacious way to improve quality reading instruction is through professional development with the embedded coaching model under certain conditions. Those conditions include a collaborative learning environment, shared responsibility and established relationships between coaches and teachers, and a clearly defined coaching role focused on the direct support of instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, the literature indicates that an essential factor in the success of the coaching model is the quality of the coach; coaches require professional development to be content and pedagogical experts to develop teachers. The frameworks in this study, Social Learning Theory and Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development, support building capacity (literacy content, instructional practices, and coaching strategies) through social learning (mentor-coach relationship and coaching experience) to develop literacy coaches to improve reading.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of the mentor and coach interaction to better understand effective coaching conditions and professional development to build instructional capacity in reading coaches. The intricate nature of the coaching role requires a method of research to study the complexity and unique phenomenon of the coach/mentor experience. The mentor-coach interaction occurs through professional development provided to the coaches through the Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD). The mentors are employed through the Literacy Center and provide support and professional development to the fourteen schools participating with the Literacy Center as a statewide initiative to improve student achievement in reading for kindergarten through third grade students. To further explore the Literacy Center and coaching interaction, phenomenology and case study design methods are used to examine the mentor-coach lived experience and to gain understanding of the Literacy Center project in its entirety. The case study will provide the opportunity to explore the model holistically, and phenomenology allows the researcher the opportunity to discern themes that emerge specifically around the coaching/mentor relationship.

This chapter will describe the phenomenological case study as the research method; each methodology and the relationship to the study will be explained. The following section describes the bracketing of the researcher's experiences and the researcher's role in the study to mitigate biases. The next section describes the context of the study, demographic information pertaining to the Literacy Center and the districts, schools, and participants, and the sampling method used. The remainder of the chapter will discuss data collection methods and data analysis to explain the processes utilized throughout the study to determine the emerging themes. The final section discusses trustworthiness, processes, and the limitations of the study.

Methodological Approach

Qualitative methodology allows the researcher the opportunity to examine the experiences, interactions, and perceptions of participants and to explore naturally occurring phenomenon in authentic settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 1999). Merriam (1998) asserted that qualitative methods emphasize individuals constructing their own reality and making sense of their experiences within their social environments. Therefore, qualitative research is relevant for this study in gaining "a deep understanding of a social setting as viewed from the perspective of the participant" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 38) and in providing a rich description of the experience of coaches and mentors with the coaching model. A phenomenological case study design was chosen to allow the researcher "to describe the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 39) and "to focus in-depth [on a case] to retain a holistic and real-world perspective to understand a complex social phenomenon" (Yin, 2018, p. 5). The focus of this study is the lived experience of the coaches and mentors through the evolution of the CBMTD throughout the school year.

Research Questions

The research questions are designed to evoke insightful responses to examine the experiences of the participants through qualitative research methods. The phenomenological case study design is to explore the experience of several individuals involved in the Literacy Center's embedded coaching model (Creswell, 1998) and to examine the in-depth situation of a case (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). In order to understand the lived experiences of the coaches, it is essential to examine the study through different perspectives to capture the phenomenon of the CBMTD coaching model.

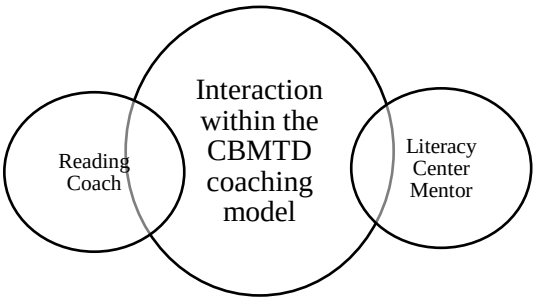
The framework of the study is guided by research questions aligned with phenomenology and case study methods; Moustakas (1994) posits two guiding questions of phenomenology: 1) What has the participant experienced regarding the phenomenon? and 2) What situations have influenced or affected the participant's experience? (Rockies Research Center, 2020). The research questions reflect case study methodology inclusive of the "how," "what," and "why" of a contemporary social phenomenon within a bounded system (Yin, 2018; Creswell, 1998). Both qualitative methods, phenomenology and case study, are necessary to examine the research questions guiding this study. These two methods are interwoven into the research questions to study the phenomenon of the CBMTD coaching model. This model provides a means of capturing the perspective of the coaches and mentors in order to understand the common meaning of their lived experience within the overarching case of the Literacy Center's CBMTD within multiple elementary schools. The study was designed to explore the following questions:

1) How does the mentor and coach experience change over time?
    a) Tell the story of an instance where you felt you had made progress with the instructional coaches this year.
    b) How do you feel the literacy program has evolved throughout the course of the school year? What challenges and successes did you encounter working with the instructional coaches? Please offer specific evidence.
2) What conditions facilitate effective coaching?
    a) Please describe the conditions you feel are supportive to instructional coaches to build capacity within teachers.
    b) Please describe the conditions you feel are a major deterrent to the success of the instructional coaches.

The research questions and sub questions reflect phenomenological case study methods and include discerning the experience of the participants. Qualitative methods are applicable to the research questions as they allow the researcher to explore the evolution of CBMTD and understand the phenomenon of the mentor-coach relationship

Phenomenology

Figure 3.1 Phenomenological Perspective of the Study

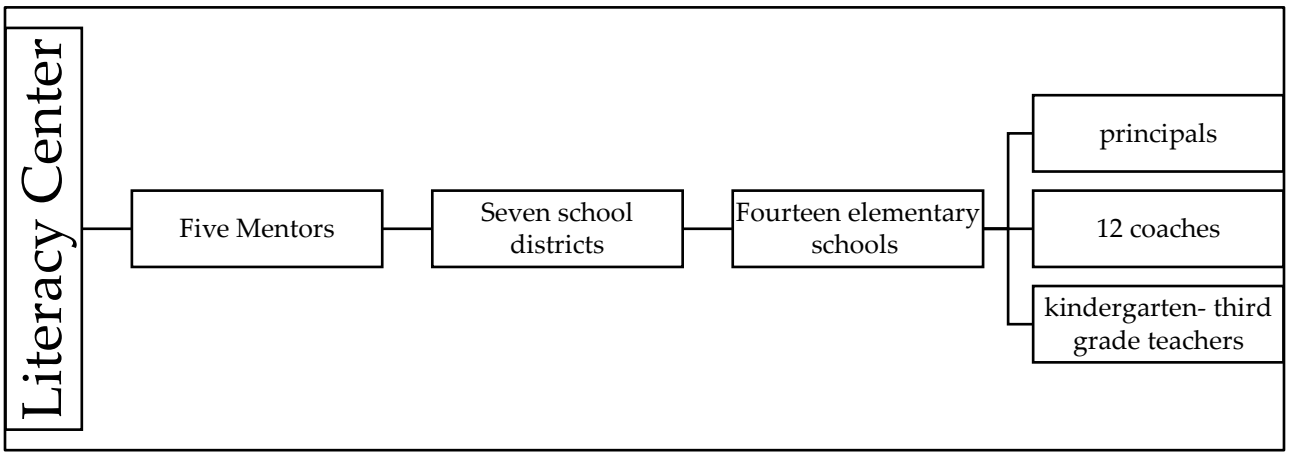


Phenomenology is designed to capture the essence of a phenomenon and tell the story of the participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Moustakas (1994) stated, "Phenomenology is concerned with wholeness and examining entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved" (p. 58). Unlike other qualitative methods, the purpose of phenomenology is to understand the commonality of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it; it is not intended to generate a theory, identify the culture and behavior of a group, or interpret meaning of an event (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The research design in this study is intended to evoke insights from the mentors and coaches to discern their lived experiences and

influences on their experiences through the first year of implementation of the phenomenon of the CBMTD.

Case Study

Figure 3.2 The Literacy Center Case Study



The case study design creates an opportunity to provide rationale for why situations or interactions occurred and to evaluate the phenomenon of the mentor/coaching relationship. This method describes a contemporary social phenomenon within a real-world context; it illustrates the complexities of a situation, captures a moment in time, and utilizes multiple data sources for triangulation (Yin, 2018; Merriam, 1998). Studies are intended to illuminate a phenomenon, highlight the intricacies of a situation, and be descriptive and heuristic in nature; they are not intended for experimental, problem-solving, or historical purposes (Yin, 2018; Merriam, 1998). The research questions are intentionally designed to incorporate the guiding questions of case study methods (Yin, 2018) and to study the "how" and "why" of the coaching experience. The framework in this study is structured to elicit the following responses from participants: How did the participants (mentors/coaches) experience the phenomenon (CBMTD coaching model), and how did their experiences evolve over time? What did they (mentors/coaches) perceive were successes and deterrents, and why did they (mentors/coaches) feel that way? Exploring the

phenomenon through this framework provides insight on the relationships between the mentors and coaches and captures the nature of the coaches' daily working conditions.

Furthermore, the case study method adheres to studying a small group of people within set boundaries over a fixed period of time and without predetermined outcomes (Yin, 2018). The boundaries of a case study are described in terms of location, setting, and time (Creswell, 1998); the Literacy Center's coaching model component is in fourteen selected elementary schools in one state with five mentors and twelve coaches over ten months of a school year. Therefore, studying the case of the CBMTD coaching model for reading coaches is a unique form of professional development that provides the researcher the opportunity to understand the inner working of the school culture, daily working conditions, and interactions between participants. Merriam (1998) asserts:

> A case study can explain the reasons for a problem, background of a situation, what happened, and why; explain why an innovation worked or failed to work; discuss and evaluate alternatives not chosen; evaluate, summarize, and conclude, thus increasing its potential applicability. (p.31)

Gaining an in-depth understanding of the coaches' and mentors' experience in the CBMTD coaching model phenomenon creates the opportunity to learn about barriers and successes through the experiences and perception of the participants (coaches/mentors). The case study method provides information relevant for replicating professional development for coaches and employing the model to directly affect building instructional capacity and improve reading.

Phenomenological Case Study

Concerning this study, both approaches are necessary to gain a deep understanding of the CBMTD coaching model. The research is examined through two lenses: the lived experience of

the participants and the entire case of the Literacy Center's coaching model. Figure 3.3 depicts the dual lens of the study. In phenomenology, the researcher learned from participants' reality, their experiences and perspectives, to reflect upon CBMTD for professional growth. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) assert, "The case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the richness and complexity of a bounded social phenomenon" (p. 49). The case study method allows the researcher to examine the conditions effective for coaches, such as relationships with the participants (teachers, coaches, principals), background of the working environment, and the ability to work in the coaching role. Phenomenological case studies illuminate the phenomenon, generate new meaning, and often expose unknown relationships that lead to rethinking the phenomenon due to the evolution in variables over time (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1981).

The combination of both qualitative methods is powerful in the sense that it allows the researcher a comprehensive view and in-depth understanding into the lived experience of the participants (coaches and mentors) and their environment. Integrating phenomenology and case study methods is necessary to capture the unique aspect of this study, the fact that the mentors are building capacity in the coaches through the coaching model; it is a rare occurrence since this model is ordinarily reserved for professional development of teachers rather than coaches. Equally unique are the boundaries of the study; the case explored in this study examined a contextually bound program (Literacy Center) to provide professional development to improve reading achievement in at-risk elementary schools in various school districts throughout one southeastern state. This is significant to the study because the method of professional development (Literacy Center mentors support/coach coaches and schools) to address student achievement (reading) is rarely approached to build instructional capacity in participants (teachers, coaches, principals) in this manner. The scope of the study requires both

methodologies in order to interpret an understanding of the relationships between the mentors and coaches and to capture the nature of the coaches' daily working conditions.

Role of the Researcher

"In a phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever she or he seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). My personal interest in professional development of coaching originates from my background and experience in education. In turn, the role of the qualitative researcher is to "acknowledge, examine, and understand [their] positionality" and assumptions related to the researcher's experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 46). Therefore, acknowledging my relationship with the study and bracketing methods is necessary to ensure trustworthiness of the research throughout the study.

Relationship with the Study

In my experience in education, I have held roles in coaching and mentoring that influence my approach to research. I have held teaching and coaching positions in various kindergarten through twelfth grade schools. My knowledge in these positions allows me to understand the experience of the mentors and the coaches. As a former coach, I believe the role of a coach is complex and requires a variety of skills. A coach encounters different dynamics, depending upon school culture and leadership. Coaches are in a unique position in that they are able to function fluidly with both role groups of administrators and teachers; transitioning between both groups can be complex in nature. Coaching focuses on building relationships and on the professional development of teachers. The perceptions of teachers and their current work environment influence their willingness to engage in suggested strategies and to implement them. The goal of

a coach is to improve learning conditions for students and professional development for teachers, and to provide consultation to administration.

Throughout my experience, I have always inquired about what conditions must be present for coaches to maximize their roles for professional learning despite the different work environments and leadership. I have worked as a coach in schools and at the district level. Coaching in these different environments allowed me to understand the variance in roles and responsibilities determined by leadership, culture of a building, and policies. Through this study, I have explored the recurring challenges that I have encountered in my roles. I believe that coaches are essential in school transformation and that the findings of this study can contribute to the field of professional learning of coaches in education. Previously, research and district professional development has focused on coaches building capacity in teachers to affect student learning. District administrative leaders have neglected to put systems in place to develop instructional coaches. An important question that emerged for me since the beginning of my career is who is coaching the coaches?

In my current position, I supervise coaches and support teachers and principals. The assumptions I have as a previous coach and supervisor of coaches stem from my experiences working in, and with, different schools. According to Merriam (1998) "Qualitative research is distinguished partly by its admission of the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researchers into the research frame" (p. 22). In some schools, I felt respected as a professional and felt that my knowledge was valued when I was in the coaching role. The school leadership gave me freedom to make decisions and to function as an actual coach, supporting teachers and students. In other buildings, I managed responsibilities of school leadership and

gave directives to enforce compliance. As a supervisor of coaches, I help them navigate through these same complex dynamics.

Due to my own experiences, I understand that the role of the coach is not uniform and therefore, does not produce similar outcomes. A majority of my coaching experience has consisted of on-the-job training, during which I have relied on colleagues with more coaching experience than I had to provide me with guidance. I work in a large, urban school district and have rarely received or been offered professional development in coaching. In six years of coaching, most of the professional development I have acquired specifically for instructional coaching has been focused on content, and not on developing coaches or coaching strategies.

My experiences have created a personal sense of urgency to understand the essential components of effective coaching. In my new role as a supervisor of coaches, it is a priority for me to build capacity in coaches and to ensure that they receive adequate training for coaching. Findings from the study can provide recommendations for professional development and mentoring for coaches and can contribute to future research on the coaching model. In order, to conduct a trustworthy study, the method of bracketing is used to remove my assumptions and preconceptions resulting from my coaching experience.

Bracketing

Bracketing involves setting aside presumptions and preconceptions to clear the way in "preparation of deriving new knowledge" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 87) and "suspending judgment to focus on the analysis" (Peoples, 2020, p. 31). The purpose of bracketing is for the researcher to demonstrate intentional consciousness to abstain from prejudgments or biases in order to focus on the reality of phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing is necessary to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Tufford and Newman (2010) assert that bracketing improves the

qualitative research process and enhances the researcher's data collection and methods of analysis; specifically, bracketing creates the opportunity for the researcher to increase reflection and self-awareness of biases and to improve the researcher's understanding of the research questions and perspective of the participants.

The bracketing methods in this study include memo writing and engaging an outside facilitator for focus group discussions. The method of memo writing was employed to acknowledge preconceptions and ongoing reflection with the data; it was utilized concurrently with summarization of the mentors' journals, document review, observation of focus groups, and analysis of transcriptions. Memo-writing permitted me to set aside my preconceptions to focus on the experiences of the participants.

The second bracketing method was to employ an outside facilitator to "serve as an interface between the researcher and the researcher's data" (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 8). The Literacy Center provided a trained facilitator to lead the focus group discussions. The focus group facilitator and I collaborated prior to the focus groups and reviewed the questions to align with the study's research questions and focus group procedures. This method allowed me to focus on the participants' responses and observe the focus group experience. These phenomenological reduction methods were necessary to align the comments made in the focus groups with qualitative phenomenological data analysis processes.

Participants, Purposeful Sampling, and Ethical Considerations

This phenomenological case study explored the work of the Literacy Center, a program funded by the state's Department of Education to provide professional development to improve reading achievement in primary students (kindergarten through third grade). The Literacy Center mentors provided support to fourteen schools in seven school districts, and the participants

included a partnership with district leadership, school principals, the reading coaches who supported the school, and the kindergarten through third grade teachers; each school was expected to have an established school-based literacy team as well. The primary goal of the mentors was to build instructional capacity in the reading coaches to create a sustainable literacy system in each school to continually improve reading achievement. The five mentors provided coaching to the twelve reading coaches through the CBMTD; eleven of the twelve reading coaches were new to the coaching role and/or school. This research will primarily be used to examine the lived experience of the mentors and their interaction with the coaches but also to analyze the perceptions of the other participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the Literacy Center project in its entirety.

Table 3.1

Participants

Mentor Pseudonyms	Years of Experience	Number of Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Coaches
AD	28	1	3	3
CC	14	1	3	3
HR	19	3	3	3
SS	25	2	3	2
LW	29	1	2	1

The participants were five mentors who identify as female and range from 40 to 60 years old; they were employed by the Literacy Center and hired to collaborate and support the implementation of the literacy framework within the selected schools in the targeted districts. All of the mentors had extensive experience as elementary classroom teachers and as coaches at district or the state level. Each mentor collaborated with two to three schools and at least one coach. The coaches' locations were predetermined by the school district as to whether they

supported one school or multiple schools. The study was conducted over a ten month period (length of a school year) from September 2018 through May 2019.

The method for participant selection and the number of participants selected was intentional for the qualitative design and insight to examine the research questions. Purposeful sampling is the method used to choose specific participants who meet the criteria to reflect the purpose of the study and to provide understanding into the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam, 1998). It ensures that participants meet criteria relevant to the study to ensure quality of the research design and dependability and transferability for replication and reliability of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The sample sizes for phenomenological studies "range from 3 to 10 participants" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 186). The experience of the participants (mentors) and the organization (Literacy Center) they represented were examined in the phenomenological case study.

As a researcher, it is my ethical responsibility to inform and protect the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I submitted information about the study to be reviewed by Bellarmine's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as a step in the research process to protect participants' rights. Upon approval from the IRB, participants were provided subject informed consent (Appendix A), which explained the study and ethical considerations. The subject informed consent documents described benefits, confidentiality, volunteer participation, rights as a research subject, and contact information. The participants read and signed the consent form prior to the interviews. Additionally, pseudonyms were used for each participant and for the Literacy Center to protect the identity of the participants and of the organization.

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection methods capture "people and institutions in their everyday situations" (Yin, 2018, p. 96). Data collection methods are intentionally derived from the research questions and reflective of the phenomenology and case study methodology. In a phenomenological case study, it is essential to examine the lived experience of the participants to analyze the phenomenon in its entirety; intentional data collection tools designed for this function included participants' journal entries, individual interviews (mentors and coaches), focus groups, and document review (Peoples, 2020; Yin, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Additional supporting data collection methods included observation and field notes. The researcher incorporated bracketing and memo-writing concurrently with data collection. The data collection section provides a description of the data collection tool, rationale and literature aligned to the methodology, and a narrative of the data collection phases. The analysis of each data collection method will be described in the following section.

Table 3.2

Data Collection Phases

Data Collection Method and timeline	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Document Review (September 2018-May 2019)	Monthly analysis of mentors' monthly journal entries	Literacy Center documents, state's education demographic information	Mentor/coach daily activity log for data collection form
Memo-writing (September 2018-May 2019)	Memo-writing	Memo-writing	Memo-writing

Data Collection Method and timeline	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Bracketing (September 2018; May 2019)	Bracketing	Bracketing	
Focus Group Semi-Structured Interviews Developed (March- May 2019)	Development of focus group protocols and questions	Each role group participated in the focus groups using the interview protocol; observation field notes collected	Transcriptions were created for each focus group interview; organization of data (May- August 2019)
Individual mentor Semi-structured interviews (March- May 2019)	Development of mentor interview question protocol	Mentors participated in individual interviews using the protocol.	Transcriptions were created for each individual interview; organization of data
Individual coach interviews (online questions) (December 2019)			Coaches participated in online interview questions replicating the mentor protocol

In the first phase of data collection, the researcher collected participants' (mentors) journals, reviewed Literacy Center documents, engaged in memo writing, and collaborated to create focus groups and interview questions and protocols. A description of each tool, rationale of data collection method, and the process of data collection is described in each phase. An in-depth description of data analysis is explained in the following section.

"Journals [can] provide a direct path into the insights of the participants" and "reveal how [the participants] are understanding the phenomena under investigation" (Hatch, 2002, p. 141). The Literacy Center's reflective mentors' journals (Appendix B) were completed monthly by each mentor and sent to the researcher electronically at the end of the month for analysis.

Ongoing journaling provides clear directions, incorporates guided reflection questions, and encourages the participant to fully engage in the study (Hatch, 2002). The purpose of the participant journals was to document the mentors' experience throughout the first school year of coaching and collaboration with coaches and school staff. “[Journaling] encourages individuals to process and reflect on experiences in different ways rather than thinking about them or discussing them with others” (Hatch, 2002, p. 140).

Each participant’s journal was reviewed and analyzed through coding and memo-writing, and a monthly summary of the journal entries was developed. The intentional design of the mentor’s journal was to elicit information about the status and progress of each school and the strengths and areas of improvement for each role group and school; it was also to evoke reflection from the mentors on their experiences and next steps for the upcoming month. The structure of the participant’s journal was segmented into the three sections and represented the stages of the impact cycle (identify, learn, improve). Each journal entry begins with reflection questions for a self-development component for the mentors, followed by guiding questions aligned with impact cycle stages, goals, and reflection. Participants’ journals are an essential form of data collection used to gain understanding into the experiences of the participants.

Next, the documents were reviewed. “Document review refers to the collection of data from written artifacts including policies, legislation, lesson plans, mission statements, letters, memos, posters, diaries, and other forms of written text” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p.99). Documents are created to describe the background, purpose, and processes of an organization to communicate a specific message; document review provides context to describe the phenomenon and the organization (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Yin, 2018; Hatch, 2002). This review permits the researcher to obtain authentic information representative of the culture and

natural research environment and to access perceptual information and experiences of the participants; the limitations of utilizing document review as a data collection tool are that the quality of the participants' entries varies, and the context of the entries could be misinterpreted by the researcher due to viewing the materials through differing lived experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary documents for data collection from the Literacy Center are *The Literacy Mentoring for Leadership Program: Literacy Promise Schools* and *Literacy Mentoring for Leadership Program: Language and Literacy Mentor Handbook*.

Both documents include an in-depth description of the Literacy Center's vision, mission, goals, background of the project, professional development and literacy framework, research centered around the early literacy intervention and professional development, and the responsibilities and commitment requirements of each role group (mentors, district leadership, administrators, coaches, school-based literacy teams, teachers). Data analysis of these documents was to establish context of the study and "provide information" and "corroborate evidence" about the Literacy Center and other data collection methods (Yin, 2018, p. 115).

Simultaneously with the other data collection methods, the researcher's documents were submitted for Bellarmine's IRB to review; these included focus group and interview protocols and subject informed consent. The researcher collaborated with the Literacy Center evaluators to develop a focus group protocol (Appendix C), interview protocol (Appendix D), and focus group agenda in order to elicit conversation about the different roles reflected in the groups' experiences and about their professional growth, challenges, and suggested improvements. During collaboration with the Literacy Center evaluators, the researcher ensured that the protocols were aligned with the research questions in the study. The focus group and interview question protocols were developed based on the research questions and deconstructed into four

sub questions; the protocol included a predetermined script for the interviewer to read to provide the consistency in data collection methods and interview experience in order to ensure dependability and transferability of the study.

In the second phase of data collection, the researcher was a participant observer during focus groups and conducted individual interviews with the mentors. The researcher continued to analyze mentors' journals and engage in document review during this phase as described in phase one. Focus groups are group interviews led by a facilitator to elicit in-depth discussion among participants with the discussion topic focused on a common theme (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Hatch, 2002). There are various uses of focus groups, many of which fit well with this study's purpose. As described by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) these groups "elicit a range of feelings, opinions, and ideas; [help participants to] understand differences in perspectives; uncover and provide insight into specific factors that influence opinions; and seek ideas that emerge from the group" (p. 221).

The focus groups were divided into three groups by their roles: kindergarten through third grade teachers, coaches, and Literacy Center mentors. Focus groups were chosen to provide an understanding of the experiences of the teachers, coaches, mentors, and administrators, and an overview of the first year of their partnership with the Literacy Center. The school administrators were interviewed individually by phone due to their limited availability. A Literacy Center facilitator led the focus groups by asking questions and prompted additional conversation between participants; the Literacy Center evaluators and the researcher also developed a focus group protocol designed to address program evaluation and to elicit specific feedback from each role group. During the focus groups, the facilitator introduced the researcher to each group as an observer participant.

The data collection methods included audio recordings of each focus group, and the researcher documented the experience through observation and field notes. Each focus group was recorded for later transcription. Observations and field notes provide the opportunity for a researcher to experience the participants' responses and group dynamics firsthand (Merriam, 1998). Field notes are defined by Merriam (1998) as "a written account of the observation; analogous to the interview transcript" (p. 104). The purpose of field notes is to draw the connection between the situation and reflection, involve the observer participant in the study, capture the story of the experience, and allow the lens of the researcher to be revealed (Van Manen, 2016). The observation and field notes methods were used to enhance the data collection process and to further ensure trustworthiness of the study.

Following observation of the focus groups, the researcher conducted semi-structured individual interviews with the mentors to gain insight on each mentor's individual experience and perspective on coaching the coaches, and to describe the evolution throughout the school year. A semi-structured interview was chosen in this study to provide the participants an opportunity to expand upon the questions and narrate their experiences in a personal setting. Van Manen (2016) stated that interviews in phenomenological studies serve specific purposes of "exploring and gathering experimental narrative materials that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon and [be] used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner about the meaning of the experience" (p. 66). The individual interviews of the five mentors were approximately 5 to 10 minutes per interview. The participants read and signed a consent form prior to participating in the individual interview and were informed that the interview would be recorded. The participants were provided a copy of the interview protocol during the interview process.

At the end of the second phase of data collection, the data were organized for analysis. The focus groups and interviews were transcribed and field notes were typed. The questions and responses from the focus groups and interviews were organized into matrices and sorted by role group.

In the third phase of data collection, the mentor and coach daily activity logs were added to the analysis of documents, and the coaches responded to individual interview questions. Analysis of journals, memo writing, and document review continued throughout this phase. The mentors' monthly activity log and data collection form (Appendix E) was for the mentors to record their daily activities and to document their work with the coaches; it was also used for the Literacy Center to gather information to understand the level of support each school and coach required and to indicate the frequency of coaching activities, the length of time for instruction, and professional development; it was completed every three weeks by each mentor. The mentors' log was selected for document review as a pertinent data collection tool for this study because it provided information relevant to the research questions and depicted the daily role of coach and evolution of the conditions within each school. The five main sections of the mentors' monthly activity log and data collection form included mentor activity, coaching the coach, classroom hours devoted to literacy, open-ended questions, and mentor-to-mentor calibration.

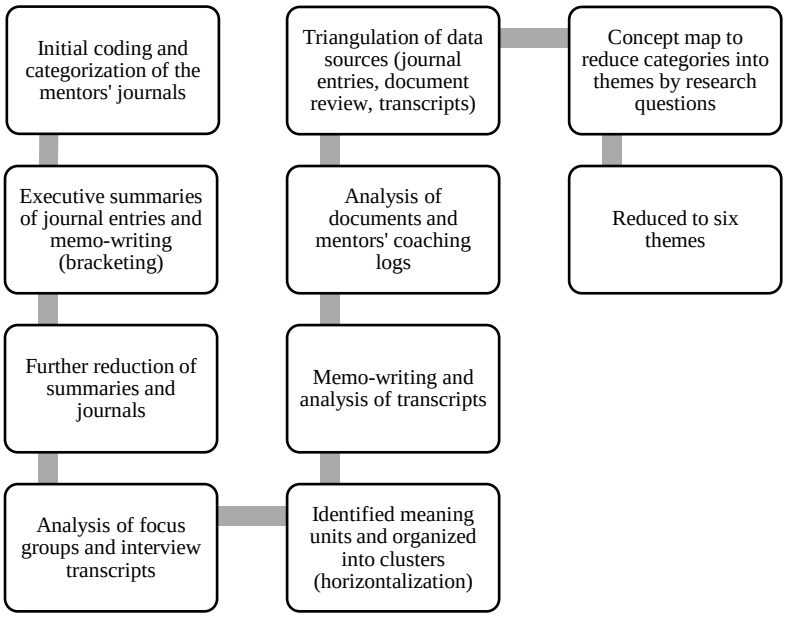
Following the mentors' individual interviews, it was determined that coaches should have participated in individual interviews for methodology purposes to provide a valuable data source for analysis and comparison with the mentors' responses. Due to access and location of the coaches, the coaches responded to interview question protocol through electronic written responses. The coaches' interview questions were similar to the mentors' questions but slightly altered to reflect the coaches' point of view. The participants were provided information about

the study and consented to the interview; they were informed their responses would be used for research purposes. The responses were organized by questions and examined by using the same data analysis strategy as in the focus group.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for a phenomenological case study "involves a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by analysis of themes" and "make[s] use of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and development of an essence description" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 234). The analysis process began with methods of phenomenological reduction that required the researcher to gain an overall view of the information and to engage in memo writing and bracketing to reflect on thoughts and experiences as a researcher; this was followed by coding of the data to identify statements and generate meaning units, and clustered into themes/categorical aggregation (Peoples, 2020; Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). A meaning unit is defined by Peoples (2020) as "the allocation piece that reveals a feature or trait of the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 60). The data analysis methods were holistic coding (Saldana, 2016) and categorical aggregation (Creswell, 1999) for in-depth analysis and further reduction to final themes. Holistic coding applies a code to an overall data set to capture emerging themes, and categorical aggregation is used to group complex data into categories to elicit themes to emerge.

Figure 3.3 Data Analysis Process



The first phase of analysis centered on coding mentors' journals. This provided the researcher further insight into the context of the study, an overall sense of the participants' experience, and an initial examination into the coach/mentor phenomenon. Holistic coding and categorization were used to produce themes and patterns from the journals, which were later compiled into an executive summary to identify commonalities among the written entries. The initial round of coding the journals included highlighting keywords and phrases from each journal entry while simultaneously writing anecdotal notes and reflection questions. This form of data collection was essential for the researcher to understand the culture of the schools, the progress of implementation, and the perspectives of the participants throughout the study since the researcher was not on location. Concurrently, the researcher made use of practices emphasized by Hatch, memo writing and bracketing as well as forms of reflection, and maintained awareness of her assumptions and preconceptions to ensure that she was open to new understandings and interpretations (Hatch, 2002).

In the second phase, the researcher focused on further analysis of mentors' journal summaries, coding the focus groups and interview transcriptions/matrices, and on the mentor activity coaching log. The monthly summaries of the mentors' journals were coded to further reduce key findings from the journals into clusters/themes. The focus group and interview transcripts were organized by participants' responses and interview questions, analyzed by identifying the meaning units from the transcripts, and organized into clusters; horizontalization was used to provide equal meaning to all clusters (Peoples, 2020; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher used highlighting and memo-writing with the transcripts and summaries for reflection and further reduction.

Furthermore, the mentors' daily activity coaching logs were analyzed. The researcher analyzed only two sections of the logs for this study, which included (2) coaching the coaches and (4) open-ended mentor reflection questions. These two sections were aligned with the research questions, and they were relevant to understand the interactions that occurred between the two role groups, how their relationships evolved over time, and to provide insight into effective coaching conditions. Data analysis for the mentors' daily activity log included identifying the number of coaching hours (coach/mentor) and compilation of the mentors' responses each month. The information was further analyzed into coaching sessions, communication between mentors and coaches, and identification of key themes of the mentors' responses by month. Meaning units were reduced into clusters for further analysis and comparison with the other data sources.

In the final phase of data analysis, a concept map was used to reduce the categories into themes and organized by the research questions. The final analysis of documents and mentors' activity coaching logs occurred during this phase. The method of concept mapping permitted the

researcher to compare the themes of the multiple data sources. Each research question had 20 to 30 meaning units and was reduced to six themes per question using the concept map; the researcher then further reduced these themes to three per research question. Triangulation of the multiple sources (document review, mentors' journals, focus groups, and interviews) led the researcher to identify the final six themes of the study.

Trustworthiness

The researcher used Guba and Lincoln's (1985) technique to establish trustworthiness of the study, the qualitative criteria used to assess the quality, significance, and value of the research, which is based on determining whether the researcher accurately represented the perspective of participants and the descriptions of the phenomenon and case in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The four elements of trustworthiness are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; these methods are embedded in the data collection and analysis process. Credibility ensures that the researcher interprets the findings without bias and accurately represents the participants' perspectives; this is achieved through admission of bias, triangulation of data, corroboration of findings from participants, thick description of findings, and reporting negative discrepancies (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Merriam, 1998). Dependability refers to a research process that is "clearly documented, logical, and traceable" and "the stability and consistency of the data over time" to demonstrate cogency of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 204). Conformability explains how the researcher demonstrated "neutrality" during the research process and that "the interpretations are clearly derived from data" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). Transferability refers to the ability to replicate the study and to generalize findings to similar populations or settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Additionally, the components of trustworthiness are achieved through qualitative research strategies; the strategies employed in this study included bracketing and memo-writing; triangulating data; thick, rich descriptions; establishing an audit trail; and members checking. The four criteria of trustworthiness are explained in the following sections by describing the research strategies and explaining the rationale underlying them.

"Credibility addresses the researcher's ability to take into account and explain all the complexities that present themselves in a study and address the patterns [and] themes" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 202). Bracketing, use of multiple data sources, and triangulation of data were used throughout the course of the study to reduce bias and to accurately identify themes in order to ensure transparency and consistency of research methods. The bracketing methods were memo-writing and use of an outside facilitator to lead the focus groups; both methods were previously described. Another method to remove biases from interpretation was the use of multiple data sources to corroborate evidence and provide various sources of evidence to support findings.

Triangulation of data ensured credibility, dependability, and conformability in this study. "In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence; typically, the process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 1999, pg. 202). The various forms of data sources within this study included interviews, participants' journals, participants' activity logs, observation/field notes, and several supporting documents. The triangulation of diverse sources enables the researcher "to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study; adds rigor, breadth, and depth to the study; provides corroborating evidence of data obtained" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 99). The

researcher used triangulation of data to confirm interpretations and representations of findings and to provide evidence for a rich description of the study.

Furthermore, rich descriptions of the participants and their experiences are portrayed and represented in the themes and ensure credibility and transferability. "A thick, rich description is used to convey the findings. Credibility is achieved when the researcher provides detailed descriptions of the setting [and] offer many perspectives about the themes" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). Examples of rich description in this study included the detailed description of the context through narrative and figures to illustrate the case study of the literacy project, demographic information about participants, and authentic responses from the participants to support themes. In addition, the researcher provided an in-depth description of the participants, purposeful sampling, and design of the study to be replicated; the demographic data of the participants and case provide relevant information for replicating an embedded coaching model in a primary elementary school with at-risk students.

Dependability and confirmability are "achieved through the process of auditing" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). The audit trail provides transparency of data and corroborates that researchers are willing to allow others to review their data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The records include mentors' journal summaries, memo-writing notes, interview transcripts, audio recordings, mentors' daily coaching logs, and observation/field notes. The transcripts and field note documents were shared with the Literacy Center for research purposes and are available for review. The data sources demonstrated consistency through the data collection and analysis process. The researcher also maintained an audit trail for transparency of findings for the participants, known as members checking.

Members checking is another method used to ensure credibility. Through members checking, participants have the opportunity to review findings and interpretations of the data that they provided and be able to verify if the data or report accurately depicts the descriptions and themes identified by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam, 1998). The summarization of the mentors' journal entries was shared monthly with the participants and the Literacy Center; they had the opportunity to provide feedback or to clarify information. Additionally, the field notes from the observations of the focus groups and transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups were presented to participants to view and to have the opportunity to discuss any discrepancies.

Limitations

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) define limitations as "constraints regarding transferability, applications to practice, and/or utility of the findings that are the result of the ways in which you chose to design the study. Limitations of the study expose the conditions that may weaken the study" (p. 207). The limitations for this study are access to the participants because of its location. The location was in another state; therefore, the researcher was unable to observe and actively participate throughout the entire course of the study in person. The researcher communicated monthly with the Literacy Center evaluators and completed a monthly summary of electronic journal entries to maintain continuous contact during the study. The researcher interacted with the Literacy Center employees and participants (mentors/coaches) through email or phone, but this method does not capture the complete experience of the mentors or their environment. Additionally, the boundaries of the case limited to the length of the school year for this study. The 2018-2019 school year was the first year of implementation of the

mentor/coaching model. The researcher's direct involvement and immersion in the environment on a regular basis would provide a different perspective of the coach/mentor phenomenon.

Chapter Summary

The methodological approach used in this study was a phenomenological case study to examine the "how," "what," and "why" of the phenomenon of coach/mentor coaching model. The researcher discussed her relationship to the study and described the role of a researcher, acknowledging bracketing methods to remove biases and misconceptions in order to accurately interpret and represent findings. An in-depth explanation of the design of the study and of the data collection and data analysis process was provided. The four trustworthiness criteria were discussed, and examples of how these components can be achieved were provided. The next chapter will provide a rich description of findings (themes) of the study.

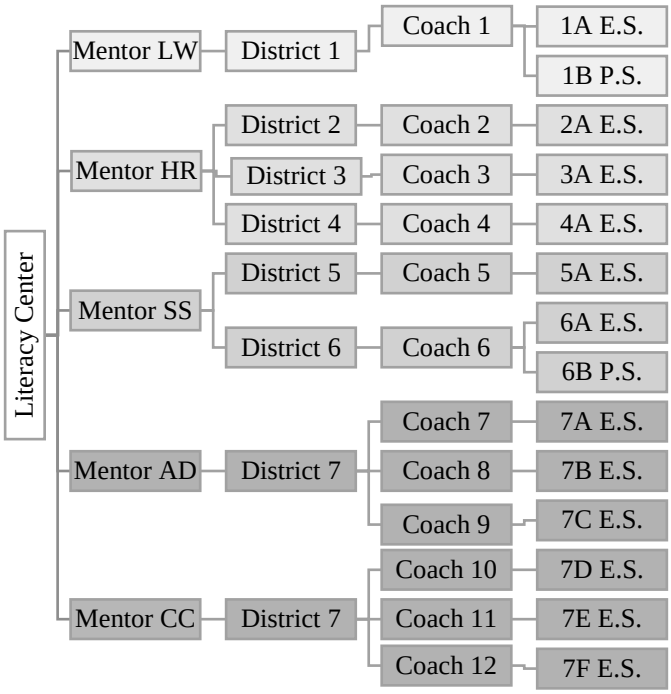
Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine the mentor-coach relationship and the lived experiences of both mentors and coaches in order to understand the conditions and the interactions coaches need to be instrumental in instructional change. In order to identify the overarching themes, the researcher engaged in a process of analysis of focus groups, interviews, participants' journals, and document reviews. A description of these themes reflects the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon and explains the supports and barriers for the coaches; it also explains how the coaching role evolved throughout the year in order to provide insight into the conditions necessary for effective coaching to occur. The chapter is organized to provide an overview of the context of the study (Literacy Center) and a description of the mentors' professional experience, their overall experience with the Literacy Center, and their interactions with the schools and with districts. The following section, which discusses the findings of the study, is organized by the two primary research questions (Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3) and by themes associated with each of these questions. Research question one discusses how the themes change and emerge overtime from the mentor-coach experience; the themes are significance of relationships, collaborative culture, and professional growth of coaches. The second research question discusses effective coaching conditions; the themes are school leadership, established school processes to support teaching and learning, and clearly defined coaching role.

The context of the study is described in detail in Chapter One. Figure 4.1 portrays the case of the Literacy Center in its entirety. The study took place in a southeastern state and included 14 elementary schools within seven school districts. Pseudonyms are used to protect anonymity of the university center, and of the mentors, coaches, and schools. It is important to

gain a comprehensive view of the boundaries of the study to understand the system of support, the environment, and the participants. The goal of the Literacy Center was to improve literacy and have students reading on grade level by the end of primary schooling (kindergarten-3rd grade) through implementing a coaching model, Capacity-building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD), and to build instructional capacity in reading coaches and school-based literacy teams.

Figure 4.1 The Literacy Center System of Support



Mentors' Experience

A description of the participants (Literacy Center mentors) is provided to facilitate an understanding of their backgrounds, experiences, and their role in the study. Figure 4.1 shows the number of districts, schools, and coaches each mentor supported. Each story the mentors told about their school year describes their previous experiences working as coaches and their leadership within the schools and districts. The mentors were able to describe their journeys

through education from past to present. Coupling their focus group responses with their initial journal entries from the beginning and end of the school year revealed an in-depth understanding of their involvement and their experiences with the coaches.

The first question the mentors were asked during their focus group was *What has been the most valuable experience you've had as a mentor over the past year?* Mentor CC had begun working for the Literacy Center during the summer of 2018. She attended all of the summer professional development training sessions required of the mentors. Mentor CC had 14 years of experience in education. She had worked in two southeastern states with 7 years as an elementary general education teacher, 3 years as an instructional coach, three years for the state, and one year for the Literacy Center. All of her experience had primarily been in large, urban school districts, and this was her first year to work with smaller, rural districts.

> Personally, my experience has been in large metro, large districts, so personal growth for me has been working in a different environment, in a very small county—for lack of a better word. It was a good experience to be able to get different experiences. But, more specifically on the work, as a coach and a mentor in the past, I never really had that extensive training where it made me the true expert. The amount of support we gained as mentors for learning this was very beneficial as a mentor. So, that was my take-away, getting an in-depth training that took time. It wasn't [rushed] and allowed us to dig deep in guided reading. … I've never gotten extensive training on anything, it's always been pieces. (Mentor CC, focus group, May, 13, 2019)

She described this year as her first experience working with smaller districts and learning from her new experiences. She discussed this as the first time in her career when she was provided

with the opportunity to engage in extensive training and to learn about the research, content, and her role.

Despite her roles as a teacher, coach, or state education employee, she had always received professional development in fragmented pieces and had to learn about her professional skills while on the job. She was able to fully understand her professional responsibilities and to feel confident as an expert. She felt she was more effective with a clearly defined role and the professional autonomy encouraged by her supervisors at the Literacy Center. She felt she would be able to focus on building relationships and developing instructional coaches instead of on figuring out her position, and to focus on professional responsibilities.

First, Mentor CC was assigned to one school district and to three schools within that district. Each school had an instructional coach. The instructional coaches were district coaches, and they served multiple content areas, grades, and schools. Mentor CC's focus the first month of school was to build relationships with the coaches, meet the teachers and administrators in her schools, identify the needs of each school and coach, and the needs of the literacy environment. An internal factor in Mentor CC's district that created a vulnerable culture in the district was the superintendent's abrupt removal at the beginning of the school year. When entering her new partnership and attempting to build relationships, she had to consider her approach to earn the trust of the academic coaches and the district leaders. In her initial journal entries, she noted that two of her instructional coaches were new to the role and were able to support their school only two to three times a month. Her coaches felt the Literacy Center would be beneficial for their schools, but they expressed concern for their ability to facilitate grade level professional development at the district level and their availability to support their schools.

Secondly, Mentor AD had 28 years of experience in education. She was a general education elementary teacher for 23 years, an academic coach for 4 years, and has 1 year of experience with the Literacy Center. Mentor AD worked in the same school district for 27 years. This had been her first year working outside of the district. Mentor AD and Mentor CC supported the same school district. Mentor AD said:

> I think for me because it was new—I've never been a mentor outside from being an academic coach, so it was different than being an outside mentor or coach from an organization as large or prominent as the Literacy Center, so for me it was the initial training and having opportunity to hear from other people collaboratively within our own group that was working in their schools—being able to pick the expert's brain. And working with CC and picking her brain about the workings of how mentorships go, so that to me was one of the most important things. Learning to mentor outside of the classroom, school setting. Also seeing inner workings of a school system, hovering above it and not being part of it. I'm not a part of this district, so I had to learn to step out, and it was hard. Because it was my school district. To see from the outside all the things that were going on the backside. A more political view, and I had to be very graceful in how I approached it because it was very overwhelming for me to see that aspect of how a school works. (Mentor AD, focus group, May 13, 2019)

Mentor AD described this as her first experience of being a mentor to a coach compared to being an academic coach in a school.

Furthermore, she also discussed this as her first time working outside of the school district, an experience that caused her to gain a much different perspective to provide support as an outsider. She described how she had to proceed gracefully in order to build relationships with

the coaches and leadership during the vulnerable time in the district. Mentor AD's interpretations of her observations and initial interactions with the coaches and the structure of the district depict the potential barriers for coaches to be able to function in their roles. She describes conditions that will directly affect the ability of coaches to build relationships within their schools and the time needed to support teachers in an effective manner.

Thirdly, Mentor LW had worked in education for 30 years. She had taught 15 years as an elementary teacher, 5 years as an academic coach, 5 years as a district academic coach, and 5 years at the state level. This is her first year with the Literacy Center.

Mentor LW expressed that "working with the same coach for all of my schools is definitely an advantage when setting goals." Because she was familiar with the teachers, administrators, and district personnel, she had significant insights to share with me as an outsider. She said:

> I think my situation is a lot different than everybody else's because I had two schools but my two schools equaled the same amount of teachers as everybody else had. Unlike the others, I was only dealing with one coach for both schools, same coach. (Mentor LW, focus group, May 13, 2019)

She recognized she was fortunate to support one coach in two schools and in one district.

Next, Mentor HR had 19 years of experience in education. She had worked in 3 states on the east coast of the United States. She had 6 years in the classroom as a teacher, and the remainder of her career had been in academic coaching roles.

> Exactly. I'll speak for myself. I've never gotten extensive training on anything, it's always been pieces. Typically, we'll spend the day to two days doing this—it's always been workshops. It's never been extensive training on a specific skill set aside from

> coaching. I've had coaching things before, but in a specific area of literacy, it's always been pieced out but not as put together. (Mentor HR, focus group, May 13, 2019)

She felt her professional development experience through the Literacy Center was an exception and that it significantly improved her content knowledge.

Lastly, Mentor SS had 25 years of experience. She had 12 years as an elementary teacher, 3 years as a literacy coach, and 10 years as an independent education consultant before working at the Literacy Center.

> I do have to reiterate that the amount of professional learning that we received … probably second to none – the most valuable part of what I had experienced with this. And then the other thing, I'm not exactly sure … but I think the Literacy Center giving us the opportunity to just kind of let us [talk] and revisit certain parts of the PD and being aware and willing to allow us the opportunity to use some professional judgment and realize that this is not where we need to be. We can't continue at this pace. We need to back up a little bit. To let them [coaches] know that they're heard was huge, I think, for me and my district. (Mentor SS, focus group, May 13, 2019)

She and the other mentors valued their professional development through the Literacy Center, and her experience with the coaches was a valuable experience for Mentor SS.

In brief, the mentors' backgrounds and professional experience demonstrate that each of these individuals has a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning. A few generalizations emerge from the mentors' description of their experience throughout the first year of implementation. They had positive professional experiences with the Literacy Center, but their coaching interactions and their ability to support schools differed. The mentors had a positive experience working for the Literacy Center. Despite the mentors' vast experience in

education, they felt they received superior, extensive professional development through the Literacy Center and that it had been the most valuable component of this school year; they all felt well-equipped to build capacity in coaches. Additionally, the mentors expressed a positive experience working for the Literacy Center; they were respected as professionals, supported by the Literacy Center leadership, and granted professional autonomy.

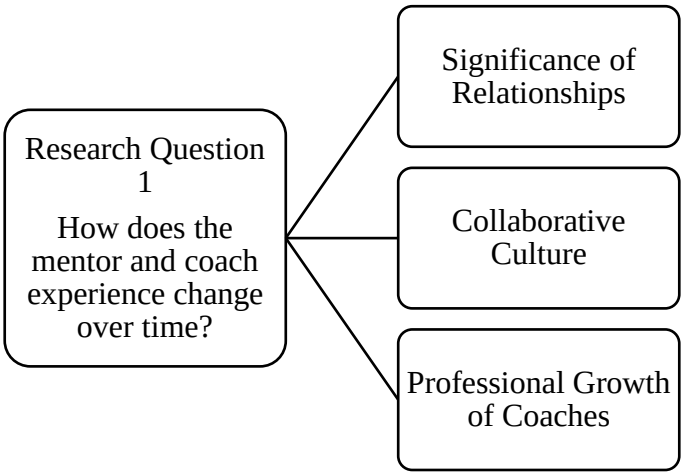
To conclude, the mentors' experience with supporting the schools and districts differed; this was a result of their cooperation with district leadership and of the leaders' willingness to partner and collaborate with the Literacy Center mentors. Three of the mentors (LW, SS, and HR) had support from the schools and district leadership to engage with coaches and school teams, and to assist with implementation of the literacy framework. These mentors regularly visited schools, assisted with professional development, and collaborated with each school staff. Mentor CC and Mentor AD were limited in their ability to support schools due to the revolving district leadership throughout the first year of implementation; this greatly restricted their support to schools. The following sections will describe the themes associated with each research question and participants' evidence supporting the findings of the study.

Research Question One: The Evolution of Mentor and Coach Experience

This section will explicate the mentor-coach phenomenon through research questions focused on 1) the evolution of the mentor and coach experience and 2) effective coaching conditions. Research question one (Figure 4.2) describes the progression of relationships and captures the transformation of the coaches; the emerging themes from research question one are the significance of relationships, the formation of a collaborative culture, and the professional growth of the coaches. The second research question (Figure 4.3) examines effective coaching

conditions (supports and deterrents); the themes are school leadership, established structures for teaching and learning, and clearly defined coaching roles.

Figure 4.2 Evolution of the Mentor-Coach Relationship



Additionally, the research questions are bifurcated into school culture (research question one) and organizational structures of the school (research question two); both of these factors are important to improving teaching and learning. The school culture (underlying norms, relationships, perceptions) "shape[s] the way people think, act, and feel [about school]" (Deal & Peterson, 2016, p. 9). The structures (schedules and time for collaboration) have to be aligned to increase instructional time and collaboration between colleagues. "All of these school-wide structures should be designed to maximize teacher and student flexibility, encourage in-depth teaching and learning, and integrate as many different resources as possible" (Danielson, 2002, p. 48). Hence, the culture of the school and the school structures influence the coaches/teachers' performance and student outcomes (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Danielson, 2002). Each of these concepts will be discussed in the correlating research question section.

The evidence collected in response to the first research question describes the evolution of the mentor and coach experience and the mentors' and coaches' lived experience of the

Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD). The three significant transformations that evolved throughout the course of the school year were the emergence of significant relationships, a collaborative culture, and the professional growth of coaches. This first section describes the significance of relationships that continually emerged throughout the study and played a significant role in the effectiveness of coaching and implementation; they include those established between the mentors and district leadership, between the mentors and school leadership, and between mentors and coaches, and coaches and teachers. These relationships all evolved, and in some cases, the individuals involved in them worked collaboratively towards improvement of teaching and learning; in others, the relationships became strained, and minimal coaching and implementation occurred. Various factors influenced the relationships. The initial challenges the coaches and mentors faced and their journeys of professional growth through this school year because of the mentors' coaching and supporting the schools are discussed in this section.

In order to gain perspective on the transformation of coaching and school culture, it is important to understand the state of the schools at the beginning of the year. Doing so enables recognition of the positive impact the mentors' implementation of professional development (CBMTD) had on coaches and schools by the end of the school year. The mentors' journal entries and individual interview responses vividly describe school cultures and their coaching experiences. Mentors focused on building relationships, problem solving to alter schedules to allow time for professional development, collaboration, and instruction (establishing literacy blocks) to implement the reading framework. They prioritized establishing trust and relationships and knew this was the initial groundwork needed to change practices and processes to improve teaching and student outcomes (reading).

Significance of Relationships

Relationships must be established to create a positive school culture and learning environment for teachers and students. The mentors' perception and evidence of their relationships with stakeholders (teachers, coaches, school administrators, and district leadership) were determinants of effective coaching, implementation of the literacy framework, and the professional growth of the coaches. Every mentor discussed the significance of developing rapport, and building and maintaining professional relationships was a continual emerging theme throughout the course of the school year; since the mentors and coaches were new supports to the schools, relationships needed to be developed over time.

In this study, relationships were essential to the effective coaching: the mentor-district leadership relationship, the mentor and school leadership, the mentor-coach relationship, and the coach-teacher relationship are discussed. Each of these relationships is described through the mentors' perspectives. Three of the five mentors had positive working relationships with district leadership; two of the mentors had a strained relationship, and there was minimal progress for coaching and implementation because of the lack of the collaborative partnership.

Furthermore, prior to successful collaboration, personal connections and relationships must be established between the individuals; relationships and collaboration are a significant component of the effectiveness of professional development (coaching) (Desimore & Pak, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Deussen et al., 2007; Knight, 2007; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Building relationships is the foundation for influencing change in one's behavior or actions; collaboration, respect, and trust must be established between colleagues prior to one being willing to learn from another and to increase their instructional capacity (Heineke, 2013; Miller & Stewart, 2013; Stinger, 2013). Additionally, coaches/teachers

are more likely to actively engage in professional learning and growth, and to be willing to change their practices, when they have a positive and shared experience during collaboration (Heineke, 2013; Guskey, 1986). Through data analysis, it is evident that relationships were the foundational factor in improving instructional practices and enabling effective coaching to occur regularly; the mentors and other role groups (teachers, coaches, principals) continually prefaced the significance of the relationships when they discussed the success of engagement and implementation. The next section describes the lived experience of the mentors and the relationship between the mentors and district leadership.

Mentor and District Leadership Relationship

The mentors had different experiences dependent upon their relationships with district leaders; this relationship was a determinant of effective coaching in this study. Effective district leadership should "adopt a broad but common framework for classroom instructional design and planning that guarantees the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in each school," one that is aligned with district goals for student achievement and instruction (Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 7). A dichotomy developed between districts' perspectives on aligning initiatives, and this division created different experiences for each mentor.

The mentors encountered different responses from leadership in various districts and experienced different interactions. For example, Mentor LW and Mentor HR had effective district leadership and were able to collaborate to align initiatives. In comparison, Mentor AD and Mentor CC had new district leadership that mandated a "single instructional model that all teachers must employ" for literacy; this impeded coaching, and it was not an example of effective district goal setting for student achievement or instruction (Marzano et al., 2009, p. 7).

The mentors described some of the ineffective leadership factors that hindered instruction and coaching: the misalignment of teaching and learning structures (professional development, multiple initiatives, curriculum alignment, coaching limitations). The mentors' narratives provided evidence of these obstacles to coaching and instruction. The District 7 leadership was unable to reach an agreement on aligning initiatives with the Literacy Center. However, Mentor SS experienced both of these situations with her two districts; she experienced a collaborative partnership and a reluctant partnership. This section will describe a specific situation (collaboration on alignment of initiatives) to portray the mentors' experience and relationship with district leadership; this interaction set the tone for their relationship for the remainder of the year.

To illustrate, common obstacles every mentor encountered in each of their districts were multiple and competing initiatives and differences in willingness to align district and Literacy Center initiatives. The mentors' experiences are described below to demonstrate the significance of the mentor-district leadership relationship in successful coaching and implementation.

First, Mentor LW and Mentor HR did not encounter resistance from their district leaders; they had positive coaching experiences and established professional relationships. It appeared Mentor LW's district leadership was supportive of the Literacy Center initiative and welcomed the partnership to improve literacy instruction and student outcomes in their district. Throughout the year, Mentor LW noted that she had a positive relationship with school and district staff. Mentor LW said, "The coach works very hard and district level leaders are very cooperative," and "At the district level, they are seeking help with aligning programs and assessments, scheduling, curriculum and the procurement of resources." These sentiments were represented

throughout her experience and provided evidence that LW had support and relationships with stakeholders and minimal barriers to coaching and implementation. Mentor LW said:

> District leaders, administrators, and coaches are committed to the program as can be seen through their participation in all workshops, purchasing of word sorts books for all K-3 teachers, allowing PD for K-3 to be done on district professional development days, and their willingness to provide funds for resources for implementation of the programs. Implementation of Word Journeys and Guided Reading is going as expected. (Mentor LW, journal entry, December 2018)

Positive relationships with the district leadership, school administrators, teachers, and coaches supported the implementation of professional learning structures, coaching, and instruction.

Likewise, the majority of the districts and schools understood the value of the Literacy Center practices and began to change school processes to implement the framework. Mentor HR's district leadership afforded autonomy to school leadership and collaborated with alignment of initiatives and goals; in her narrative below it is evident that the school leadership is interested in collaboration to improve reading. She described her experience with this situation and said, "There are too many initiatives in this district. All schools desire and welcome the support. Redelivery will be a welcomed change," and "They trust my commitment to improving teaching and learning." The support of the district and the autonomy of the school to inform instructional decisions concerning instructional alignment had a positive influence on coaching, teaching, and learning.

Similarly, Mentor SS supported two school districts; her relationships with district leadership differed from one another. In District 6, leadership was supportive and willing to collaborate. Mentor SS said, "This school system sees the need for consistency and the [Literacy]

Center initiative is fostering that for the K-3 teachers and students," and "Collaboration between admin at both schools is more focused on literacy and how Grade 3 can continue practices that are proving to be effective in grades K-2." This relationship improved coaching and implementation.

In her other district, Mentor SS described her interaction with school and district leaders; they appeared reluctant and less likely to abandon or compromise with their current district initiatives. Mentor SS said, "The admin agrees and believes the work of the [Literacy] Center is important, but doesn't seem to be a top concern," and "The building "spirit" doesn't seem to be as cohesive to foster a new initiative / learning of new strategies." She also provided an example of the resistance of district leadership to collaborate on aligning initiatives; this demonstrates coaching is less effective when district and school initiatives are not aligned. Mentor SS said:

> Teachers feel overwhelmed and feel that they are not able to implement fully due to constraints from [the] central office. It has been directed from the superintendent that the Reading Program is the MAIN Focus for instruction for 2018-2019. We have worked hard to correlate Word Journeys with the Phonic scope and sequence found in the reading series so that teachers can see the connection. (Mentor SS, journal entry, December 2018)

The multiple initiatives were a consistent barrier for this school the entire year, and they were a deterrent to improving reading instruction and coaching.

Similar to Mentor SS with District 5, Mentors AD and CC who supported District 7 did not have success in developing a collaborative partnership due to a strained relationship with district leadership; this district was currently in transition in district leadership. They described their experience and the district leadership's dearth of commitment to the Literacy Center program.

In District 7, Mentor AD and Mentor CC began the year supporting coaches and schools and assisted with all participants receiving the Literacy Center professional development. They succeeded in establishing trust and relationships with the teachers and coaches; school leadership slowly engaged in the program. District leadership was interested only in guided reading and not in the other components of the Literacy Center; this was an early sign of resistance from district leadership. Early in the year, Mentor CC said, "I have built relationships with my coaches that have resulted in their trust and openness to share weaknesses and areas needed for growth," and "In addition, the intentional and strategic alignment of District and [Literacy] Center initiatives will help ensure sustainability and school/teacher buy-in." This was a promising sign of collaboration at the beginning of the year. The mentors (CC and AD) experienced inconsistent messages from district leadership, but they remained hopeful.

As the year progressed, Mentor CC described their obstacles and lack of commitment from District 7 leadership. She said, "Some road blocks include the pushback at the District Level with Word Journeys implementation." In time, the partnership deteriorated, and by the end of the first semester when district leaders decided to change their literacy plan, it came to an end. Mentor CC said, "Unfortunately, all of this was halted by a shift in focus beginning in January." Mentor CC and Mentor AD were not permitted to coach or support schools the second semester due to district leadership's decision. Mentor AD had the same experience as CC since they supported the same district. The strained relationship with the district leadership led to termination of the partnership with the Literacy Center.

In summary, the mentors had different experiences with supporting the coaches and schools because of mentor-district leadership relationship; it is evident that the relationship with the district leadership is pertinent to implementation and coaching. The mentors who had

positive relationships with their district leadership were able to foster professional growth and collaborative cultures within the schools. It should be noted that district leadership met with the Literacy Center prior to school starting and committed to the Literacy Center Promise and had the opportunity to participate in professional development in the summer; the inconsistent support from the district leadership was somewhat unexpected since both parties had agreed to the partnership. District 7 (Mentor AD and Mentor CC's district) did have a superintendent vacancy and a transition in leadership after the agreement. The following section describes the relationship between mentors and school leadership.

Mentor and School Leadership Relationship

The school leadership was another essential element in efficacious coaching and implementation. The majority of the mentors had a positive relationship with their principals, and they felt most principals supported the program. Some of the principals were less involved and engaged than others; examples of this were demonstrated through attendance and engagement in professional development, school literacy team meetings, visible support of the initiative, and instructional walk-throughs and feedback (literacy block). The relationship between the principal and coaches and teachers was more influential in implementation than the relationship between the mentor and school leadership. If school staff (coaches and teachers) did not feel the principal was invested, and he or she did not actively participate in learning and implementation, there was less buy-in among staff, and the school culture was less likely to be collaborative and united on instructional goals. Evidence of this phenomenon was expressed through the coach and teacher responses during focus groups and the mentors' descriptions of their relationship with school leadership, school culture, and the consistency of implementation.

The mentors had similar experiences with principal engagement and relationships. The first example is a narrative from Mentor HR and her principals describing their relationship throughout the year:

> The coach and principal called me to request my assistance in helping them create a plan for improving instruction and student achievement to begin and continue this year and the next. The principal stated she relies on my support and expertise in helping the coach and teachers improve their content knowledge. (Mentor HR, journal entry, March 2019)

This example describes the positive relationship between Mentor HR and the coach and administration. The principals expressed their appreciation of the support and transformation Mentor HR has provided for their schools.

Similarly, the Elementary 4A Principal described the change in her staff over the course of the year. She said she noticed an improvement in motivation, engagement, and reflection on the part of her staff; they were focused on student learning. She said:

> And seeing the mentor actually leading us in professional development and having the staff actually participate in the development and willingness to have our whole team of teachers, you know, to sit there and grasp what she was teaching – our K-3 teachers. I think that was huge for us. That spoke volumes to our teachers, our other teachers – 4-5 – to say that this is highly important because we recognize the gap, the deficiencies, at our lower level. (Principal 4A Elementary, individual interview, June 13, 2019)

The principal's perception in collaboration with Mentor HR had a significant change on the teachers at her school, and they had positive experiences with one another.

Likewise, Mentor HR had similar experiences with her other principals; positive relationships were established between mentors, principals, and school staff. She said, "The

principal, teachers, and coach are appreciative of the support they receive from me and welcome my feedback and collaboration. They continue to see evidence of my support in all grades." These examples demonstrate efficacious collaboration and implementation. Mentor HR noted that the principal was pleased with the progress of his teachers and expressed his desire for continual support from her to continue his professional growth as an instructional leader:

> The principal stated he would like for this to continue this year and next year. He noted how pleased he was to see the most novice teachers take a more supportive approach to their paraprofessionals. The principal also asked that in the future, we create a checklist before we begin to support teachers. This, he says, will help him with observations and is something that can easily continue without me. (Mentor HR, journal entry, March 2019)

Positive relationships between the mentors and school leadership are influencing principals to exhibit characteristics of instructional leaders.

Overall, Mentor LW had support from her principals and established a working relationship. She described their relationships and said, "[District 1] is extremely cooperative at all levels. Principals at both [Elementary 1A] and [Elementary 1B] are easy to work with and want to see their teachers and students succeed," and "Principals observe in classrooms and attend PD to reiterate expectations." Additionally, she said both principals demonstrated support for implementation:

> The principal at [Elementary 1A] is not as involved as the principal at [Elementary 1B], but things are running very smoothly at this point with implementation. The [Elementary 1B] principal is very involved and runs a very tight ship. He will ensure [word study] and [guided reading] are implemented though he is facing some resistance from a few of his "veteran" teachers. (Mentor LW, journal entry, March 2019)

Mentor LW felt her principals were supportive and invested but differed in their level of engagement with the Literacy Center.

Likewise, Mentor SS had positive relationships with her principals, and they were supportive of the initiative. She had different experiences with her schools but that occurred due to competing initiatives and lack of alignment of district and school instructional goals. In her experience with one of her schools, she stated, "Redelivery [professional development] has gone well at this site due to 100% buy in from admin and the Lit Team," and "The school has received training and embraced the [social emotional learning program] belief so the environment and culture is conducive for student success." Mentor SS and the principals at these two schools collaborated well throughout the school year, and this improved teaching and coaching.

In regard to their relationship with the mentors, the majority of the principals were supportive of the Literacy Center program and felt it was beneficial for their schools, but their alliance was with district leadership. The school principal's responsibility is to support execution and implementation of district goals and alignment with the school's goals and initiatives (Marzano, Roberts & Waters, 2009). In this example, Mentor SS discussed the fact that school leadership was somewhat invested and understood the value of the partnership with the Literacy Center, but the relationship and directives from district leadership differed, and school leadership had to comply with district initiatives. This impeded the effectiveness of implementation and coaching. Mentor SS said:

> The biggest take away from this system / school is that too many initiatives are not a good thing. Teachers have bits and pieces and a fragmented curriculum is evident. This fragmented curriculum is not producing the results needed to reach the PEERS goals nor do I believe they will reach sustainability. The largest roadblock is the administrative

> demand to solely use the basal. (Which by Christmas for kindergarten had only introduced 12 letters and 2 vowels.) Teachers are doing word study and strategy groups etc., but not with support from the superintendent. School admin. is very supportive of [Literacy] enter initiatives; however, also understands the superintendent informs decisions. (Mentor SS, journal entry, February 2019)

This is an example of positive communication and support between the district leadership and school principals increased the likelihood of a positive culture and optimal environment for coaching and teaching; in contrast, little communication and minimal support between the district leadership and principals negatively impacted coaching and implementation.

In District 7, Mentor AD and Mentor CC primarily collaborated with the coaches and teachers on a regular basis; they provided support to the coaches to facilitate professional development and supported teachers with administering assessments and implementing guided reading in their classrooms. The interactions with the school principals and district leadership were sporadic. Mentor CC said, "The principal plans to send some teachers to [Elementary School 7D] to observe. The district will pick up with Word Journeys again in January." Additionally, she described her interactions with coaches and administrators:

> Each week I have a standing scheduled Monday meeting at the district office with Academic Coaches, as well as monthly meetings with the Principals and Assistant Principals/Instructional Specialists. These meetings are an opportunity for us to plan and collaborate with the administrators and Academic Coaches; however, 2 out of the 3 scheduled meetings were canceled. (Mentor CC, journal entry, October 2018)

Mentor CC expressed that the school leadership appeared supportive but did not demonstrate commitment.

In Mentor AD's journal, she acknowledged her experience with inconsistent participation and engagement. As participants in the Literacy Center Promise, school leadership or teacher leaders were not attending professional development, and implementation varied between schools. She said:

> I have expressed my concern with the teacher leaders not attending training because I worry about the sustainability if and when the coaches were to leave the buildings. I have begun to rely on the Instructional Specialists who are building level administrators so that continued sustainability will exist. (Mentor AD, journal entry, November 2018)

All of the staff involved with the Literacy Center were supposed to complete training within the first few months of the year; the principals did not complete their training until late fall.

This demonstrates inconsistent working relationships between school leadership and mentors and a lack of engagement and commitment to the Literacy Center initiative on the part of some principals. The school leadership was somewhat reflective of the district leadership at this point in the year. Mentor AD described her experience:

> During these conversations, it was revealed that some schools in the Promise Grant are not implementing with fidelity (all teachers, all grades) and that all leadership needed to be doing observations to check for program implementation. It was also discovered that "all leadership" had not received training and that in order for the process to be inspected and for the leadership to have the "eye" for what good reading instruction looked like they may need to visit an exemplary model classroom for baseline data. With all of these factors in mind, the academic coach at [elementary school] set a goal for all teachers in her school to be observed. (Mentor AD, journal entry, November 2018)

This is another example of inconsistent commitment from some of the principals on participation with the Literacy Center guidelines for school leadership.

Towards the end of the first semester, Mentors AD and CC and school leadership appeared to coexist in this district, and the mentors collaborated with the willing participants (some teachers and a majority of coaches) and coached these participants. District leadership eventually requested the Literacy Center to communicate only with district leadership and not with the schools; this superseded the communication between the mentors and principals. In this situation, the school leadership did not play an active role in supporting coaching or implementation.

In brief, the mentors and principals had positive relationships, and most principals were supportive of the Literacy Center initiative. However, the school leaderships' level of involvement and engagement influenced the school culture and implementation; the relationship between principals and staff (coaches and teachers) had a more significant impact on coaching and implementation than the support of the mentors. Despite the principals' willingness to collaborate with the Literacy Center to improve reading, the principals' responsibility is to support district leadership's decisions and directives on initiatives, and this determined the school leadership's commitment to the program.

Next, the experience of the relationship between mentors and coaches is provided from the perspectives of each of these groups. Additional supporting evidence of the positive influence on coaching and implementation due to the mentor and coach relationship is provided throughout the collaborative culture section.

Mentor and Coach Relationship

The perfect sentiment to describe this relationship is the shared experience of benefitting from it; the mentors and coaches exclusively shared that the mentor and coach relationship was one of the highlights and significant factors in the success of coaching this year. Every mentor had a positive experience and established a relationship with their coach regardless of the circumstance. The coaches expressed that their relationship with the mentors was the most valuable experience of the year; they shared that the mentors were imperative in helping them navigate through their first year of coaching. At the beginning of the year, the mentors were aware the content and framework would be overwhelming to inexperienced coaches and teachers learning new information. They prioritized relationships in order to improve knowledge and literacy practices. Mentor AD said:

> If you don't have that relationship with the person that you are going into coach; then it is very hard to build the plane while it is being flown. So you have to build that relationship and build that trust first. (Mentor AD, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

The mentors invested a significant amount of time in the beginning in developing relationships with their coaches, and it is evident this was a contributing factor to their professional growth as coaches.

In turn, every mentor continually discussed the significance of the mentor and coach relationship throughout the year. Mentor SS said, "I think there has to be some rapport built before you can begin with any information. Of course, they're going to get information. But before information, it is more well received if that rapport is established first." Similarly, Mentor LW discussed the significance of establishing relationships prior to building capacity:

> I am [a] firm believer you have to build relationships before you can teach anybody anything. They would not learn from me, same as the kids in the classroom, if they did

not know I love them, cared about them and it wasn't genuine. They weren't going to learn from me. (Mentor LW, individual interview, May 13, 2018)

The mentors expressed the significance of developing a relationship with a coach to build capacity (content and coaching).

One example to describe the relationship between the mentors and coaches is the evolution of the coaches' confidence. Many of the mentors stated that their coaches were not confident, due to their vulnerabilities as they were new to their roles; many of the coaches were new to their school, focused on developing relationships with school staff, and learning literacy content and coaching skills. Mentor LW said, "An area of growth for my coach would be self-confidence in her abilities." The mentors recognized this (absence of coaches' confidence) immediately as they were forming relationships with the coaches. The coaches expressed similar concerns about their coaching abilities at the beginning of the year; many of the coaches shared this during their focus groups. One coach described she thought she was prepared to be a coach until she assumed the role; she realized her lack of knowledge (literacy and coaching); she described her interaction with the mentor to improve her coaching abilities and said, "It has really made me grow in my knowledge of literacy. Especially coming out of the classroom," and "It was overwhelming the amount of knowledge." Another coach said, "If I didn't have her I wouldn't know anything about literacy," and "I would not have had a clue what I was talking about." The lack of confidence bonded the mentors and coaches quickly due to their dependency on the mentors.

Additionally, another concern that arose from lack of the coaches' confidence was that the teachers were mistrustful of the coaches' guidance at this point; both role groups relied on the mentors to clarify misconceptions and to problem solve. Some of the mentors expressed that

teachers were reluctant to engage with coaches. Mentor LW said, "[The] teacher/coach relationships, and understanding her various roles as a coach are areas for growth." This also speaks to the initial relationship between the coaches and the teachers; it was critical to develop relationships in order for the teachers to trust the coaches and to demonstrate they were a credible support. Each mentor encountered the coaches' need to develop confidence.

Specifically, the mentors and coaches engaged in the coaching cycle (modeling, practice, and providing feedback) to develop the coaches' professional competencies and build their relationship. These are the first stages of the CBMTD (no knowledge, first exposure, deep learning with limited capacity, practice with coaching); the purpose of these initial stages of the CBMTD are to build trust, to gain coach/teacher buy-in, and to increase motivation to alter behaviors (Cooter, 2004; Guskey, 1986). The mentors facilitated coaching activities to increase their (coaches) content and coaching knowledge; these actions are described in the next section to demonstrate how the mentors used their coaching interactions to increase the coaches' confidence, develop relationships between the coaches and teachers, and build capacity in coaches to earn credibility and buy-in from the teachers.

For example, Mentor AD and Mentor CC described the development of the mentor-coach relationship as a result of collaboration and coaching together. Mentor AD said, "Relationships have been fostered and grown through shared redeliveries." In regard to improvement, Mentor CC described the growth and said, "Relationships and content knowledge are continuing to get stronger; therefore, environment and literacy instruction is improving. This has improved the level of school buy-in and instructional knowledge." The mentors had a positive relationship with the coaches throughout the first semester and felt they made progress

with them; unfortunately, the district leadership requested that mentors cease communication with principals, coaches, and teachers in this district.

As described earlier, the coaches were grateful for their professional learning experience with the mentors. The coaches established relationships with the mentors early on because of the coaches' dependency on the mentors to learn their role; the trust developed in these relationships is evident in the manner the coaches described how the mentors provided support to them. In their focus group and individual responses, the coaches discussed their initial interactions with the mentors and discussed how the mentors demonstrated they were knowledgeable, dependable, reliable, and trustworthy. The majority of coaches said their relationship with the mentor significantly impacted their professional growth, particularly with content knowledge and learning their role. In the coaches' focus group, they shared the mentors were "hands-on" and willing to "step out of her role to help with whatever we needed." They also said "She [mentor] helped me to figure out what to do next," and "Anytime I have questions [she] was always available." These were some of the examples representative of the majority of coaches' lived experience with the mentors. The perception of the coaches and evidence from the mentors' interactions demonstrates the significance of establishing relationships with the coaches prior to focusing on building capacity in them. The next section will describe the coach and teacher relationship and the significance of this relationship in improving instruction.

Coach and Teacher Relationship

A significant shift that led to collaborative culture in schools occurred through the development of the coach and teacher relationship. Through data analysis, it is evident that teachers were more likely to change their instructional practices and to demonstrate engagement in the Literacy Center program and motivation for participating in it if they had a relationship

with the coach and trusted the coach's professional judgment to guide their practices. Additionally, consistency influenced the relationship between teachers and coaches; if coaches provided sporadic support due to involvement in multiple roles or other responsibilities, teachers felt they were unreliable. In these cases, collaborative partnerships did not evolve fully as compared to those with teachers who received consistent coaching.

An initial barrier that each mentor experienced was the phenomenon of a distrustful relationship between the coaches and teachers at their schools due to the experience of the coach; the majority of coaches were new to their role and/or building (11 out of 12 coaches were new coaches). In addition, the Literacy Center program was new to most of schools, and this factor was an additional stressor for teachers. Therefore, mentors and coaches made an intentional efforts to create relationships; they knew if trust and relationships were not established, teaching and learning would not progress.

The mentors shared similar experiences with this phenomenon between the teachers and coaches. Mentor HR stated this as an essential component (relationships and trust) to the success of coaching and she said, "And they have to have rapport with the teachers. They have to be seen as trustworthy. Like I'm a confidant. Whatever I say or see in the classroom, you won't go and tell the principal on me." In turn, Mentor SS discussed this initial challenge of the teachers' reluctance to trust or seek guidance from the coaches and stated, "The coach's feelings of not being prepared enough to inspect the expectations has allowed teachers to not implement with fidelity nor consistency." A relationship based on trust was essential to effective coaching and instruction.

To address this concern, the mentors intentionally supported the coaches towards developing positive relationships with the teachers. The mentors coached the coaches

independently to teach them content, and they used gradual release though the coaching cycle to develop the coaches' knowledge and coaching ability through modeling. The mentors guided the coaches through facilitating school-wide professional development to build relationships and credibility with staff. Additionally, the mentors also encouraged the coaches to explain the rationale behind reading instruction and how these instructional changes would improve student learning outcomes to gain credibility among their colleagues and inspire buy-in; teachers are more likely to change practices when they see improvement in student outcomes in their classrooms (Guskey, 2002). Mentor LW said, "Providing that for the teachers and for the coaches was very helpful and she needed to have a why. Before she gave anything she needed to have a why because teachers are going to balk you on things. That's what they do." As coaches became independent through the mentors' coaching, this independence helped them to establish relationships and credibility with teachers.

For example, Mentor AD helped build the relationships between the coaches and teachers through modeling active listening and collaborative problem solving. Many of the teachers felt overwhelmed by the new content and multiple initiatives; this was an opportunity for the coaches and mentors to provide support, model implementation that is possible, and navigate through obstacles (time, grouping students, and completing literacy assessments). Mentor LW said, "We are seeing more and more buy-in as we move further into implementation and the teachers are seeing student engagement improve," and "The literacy coach is doing a fantastic job preparing for PD redelivery and assisting teachers as needed." She described these examples of the coaching activities to demonstrate the coaches' willingness to support teaching and learning:

> We are beginning to see K-3 buy-in with word journeys and continue to address teacher concerns with the implementation of adding guided reading to all of their other grade

> level initiatives. We are currently addressing concerns with how to group students for both guided reading and word sorts. (Mentor LW, journal entry, December 2018)

The mentor and coach worked collaboratively throughout the year to support teachers and this improved teachers' engagement with the Literacy Center initiative.

As the relationships evolved, and teaching and learning improved, teachers were more motivated and willing to learn and to implement the new reading practices; all of the mentors shared this experience if the coaches were permitted time to collaborate with teachers and to support them on a regular basis. Mentor SS stated, "Teachers are seeking support from coaches," and "Classroom instruction continues to improve with effective practices and newly learned strategies being implemented. Teachers' willingness has grown and they are more willing to "try" new practices." The teachers and coaches wanted to participate in initiatives and did not feel mandated to do so; this increased motivation occurred out of the growth of relationships and increased shared responsibility among staff, and it developed a collaborative culture within the schools. Mentor CC said, "Academic Coaches are growing and transferring knowledge to teachers. Teachers in all schools are expressing that they are feeling more comfortable with Guided Reading implementation, but still cite "time" as an issue." The relationship between the coach and teachers was essential in increasing the likelihood of teachers adopting new practices.

Similarly, Mentor SS and Mentor HR provided another example of the evolution of the coach and teacher relationship. Both mentors stated that as their coaches felt more comfortable in their role, they were able to use perceptual information to understand the dynamics of the teachers and culture of the school; they would use this information and collaborate with the mentors to differentiate and adjust their coaching. The teachers were accepting of feedback and willing to make changes to their practices.

> The coach continues to improve her ability to provide feedback to teachers after her observations. She takes detailed notes to provide examples of what the teacher did well and what can be improved to best meet the needs of the students. (Mentor HR, journal entry, February 2019)

The teacher-coach relationship evolved as coaches demonstrated professional growth in content and coaching.

Furthermore, this made the teachers feel supported and heard, and it demonstrated the progression of the coach-teacher relationship. Mentor SS provided an example of a situation when the coaches' credibility had been established and they recognized the needs of their teachers and how to adjust their coaching. She discussed an experience that illustrated the shift in the staff and increased engagement and motivation among teachers:

> I think a specific instance was when we realized the teachers were not ready to move forward. And the coach and I just had to have some conversations and hear their concerns and realize we needed to back up and almost do like a retraining. And we pretty much did a point blank retrain. Start to finish. Let's roll this out again. Let's do some more modeling and such as that. It was just knowing and being aware [of] that and we would've not been aware of that if we had not been going [into the classrooms]. (Mentor SS, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

Mentor SS felt this demonstrated that they (the coach and school leadership) understood their obstacles and were willing to change the course in order to make progress and support teachers.

One factor that did cause a strain on relationships or hindered them from evolving was when the coach provided inconsistent support to the teachers. During the focus group, teachers provided examples of not receiving support from coaches due to the coach's additional

responsibilities. One teacher said, “She is doing her thing and I’m doing my thing in my classroom, she can’t offer me support. You know what I’m sayin? So we don’t have any extra help.” Another teacher said, “She does everything, that’s all she does all day long. We don’t have an instructional coach to come in and offer us help so we’re on our own,” and “So, we don’t have somebody that can walk in my room and offer me assistance. There is nobody.” When coaches were unable to serve in the coaching role due to other responsibilities, it caused indignation between the teachers and coaches; teachers are less likely to develop a collaborative relationship with the coach under these conditions (Heineke, 2013). Some of the teachers’ perspectives demonstrated that they understood a given coach performed several tasks outside their role but were annoyed by the lack of support from the coach and resentful that the coach was not serving the primary purpose of supporting instruction.

All of the mentors experienced this--the coaches’ limited time to support teachers at the beginning of the year, and they communicated this concern. Some of the mentors were able to collaborate with the schools to put structures in place to create time for coaching, and this minimized the issue and led to improvement in relationships between coaches and teachers. Mentor HR provided examples of the mentor and coach working with teachers to navigate these barriers and she said, “This month was a very productive month in terms of capacity building. I was able to meet with all teachers K-5 to explain, in detail, guided reading, reading development, scheduling and grouping,” and “The coach made changes to the schedule to allow more time for guided reading. The coach will have to support all teachers monthly with guided reading.”

Additionally, Mentor AD and Mentor CC experienced this with their coaches initially since they had multiple schools to support and were able to make some adjustments in their time supporting coaches. The mentors assisted with coaching responsibilities in the schools due to the

coaches' limited availability. An example of the mentors supporting schools to increase instructional time was described by Mentor CC, "Schedules were modified to help support consistent instruction." They also developed a support plan to increase coaching time with the coaches and the amount of time coaches were in schools, and Mentor CC said, "[They] created a monthly work plan for the Academic Coaches, as a visual to help them conceptualize the tasks needed to be done. Our weekly meetings will also be helpful in collaborating and planning for each week's support." This improved some of the coaches' availability to collaborate with the mentor and support teachers.

Similarly, the other mentors (HR, SS, LW) worked with their schools to create time to coach. Mentor HR reiterated an essential factor to coaching is "They need time to plan. They need time to support teachers." She was able to work with her schools and problem solve and to create additional time for coaching and instruction. Mentor SS discussed this throughout the year and she said, "As far as supporting the teachers, they have to have the time to be able to do that. So I know time restraints were a huge barrier for our schools this year specific to the [Literacy] Center." She was able to create time for some of the coaches but was not as successful with another coach due to her multiple roles and job requirements (RTI Lead and Literacy Coach). This phenomenon of inconsistency of coaching can be a deterrent to the coach and teacher relationship and can impede improvement in instruction.

In summary, the coach and teacher relationships were significant in improving teaching and learning in the classroom. The mentors supported the development of these relationships through creating coaching opportunities for coaches to establish trust and credibility, to demonstrate their willingness to support the teachers in the classroom, and to engage in collaborative problem solving to instructional barriers. The mentors worked to eliminate

hindrances to the relationship between the coaches and teachers as well. Teachers were less likely to adopt new practices or have a positive attitude towards collaboration with a coach if they did not have an established relationship.

In conclusion, established relationships were significant determinants in the effectiveness of coaching or instruction. The mentors had different experiences with coaching due to their relationships; the relationships within in a building were a determinant in the culture of the school. The mentors who established collaborative partnerships with district leaders were able to align district initiatives with the Literacy Center initiatives, and this increased coaching and implementation within the schools. The majority of mentors and school leaders had a positive relationship, and principals were supportive of the Literacy Center. However, the district leadership could deter the collaboration of the mentors with schools regardless of the relationship that developed between the mentors and principals; ultimately, the principals supported district goals and initiatives. The level of principals' engagement varied between schools; school leadership's engagement influenced the relationship between the principals and school staffs and school culture. The mentors and coaches had positive relationships, and these relationships were demonstrated throughout the year through their responses about collaboration with one another. The relationship between the coaches and teachers was significant in improving instruction; this relationship was dependent upon various factors. Coaches had to demonstrate their competency in reading knowledge and coaching abilities to develop trust and credibility with teachers. When a positive relationship existed between the coach and the teachers, teachers demonstrated increased motivation and engagement, and they were more likely to adopt new reading practices and participate in coaching activities. If they did not have a positive experience with the coach, they were reluctant to change their instructional methods; this occurred when coaches were

unable to provide consistent support to teachers due to performing in multiple roles. The next section discusses the second overarching theme, a collaborative culture.

Collaborative Culture

Collaborative culture is one of the themes that emerged through research question one (the evolution of mentor-coach experience and the literacy program throughout the year). The evidence from data analysis supports the development of a collaborative culture during the course of the literacy program. This culture in a school evolved over time as relationships were established, opportunities were created for colleagues to collaborate, professional learning was viewed as a priority, and stakeholders were united in their efforts (alignment of goals and vision) and focused on student learning. "[A] collaborative culture is a team's shared values and beliefs about the organization's support for adaptability, open communication, and encouragement of respect, teamwork, risk taking and diversity" (Barczak, Lassk & Mulki, 2010, p. 334). The participants attributed the development of a collaborative culture to the partnership with their mentors and implementation of the coaching structure.

The culture of the schools and districts varied depending on leadership, established processes and procedures, and working relationships. Evidence from data analysis demonstrates that a culmination of relationships and shared responsibility create a collaborative culture and lead to improvement in coaching and implementation. "[A] collaborative culture or community leads to higher levels of trust and respect among colleagues, improved professional satisfaction, improved instructional practices, better outcomes for all students, and school change that is maintained over time" (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010, p. 59). A school's culture flourished when positive relationships and shared responsibility were established between the mentors and stakeholders. Deal and Peterson (2016) noted that positive school culture improves collegiality

and commitment (shared vision and collaborative problem solving), improves teachers' attitudes (motivation, perseverance) and performance (instructional practices), and focuses on student learning.

In this section on collaborative culture, it is evident that when positive professional relationships were established and intentional collaboration occurred, the continual emerging concepts were shared responsibility and shared vision. Each role group (teachers, coaches, principals) reaffirmed this through their responses. "People in collaborative environments feel appreciated, valued, and respected; the system brings out the best in them. There is a shared sense of mission and goals" (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001, p. 67). The following sections will describe the mentors' experience of shared responsibility and shared vision as a result of collaborative culture and the implementation of professional development structures in schools (coaching and literacy team).

Shared Responsibility

One of the significant transformations over the course of the year was a shift in school culture and the emergence of shared responsibility among teachers, coaches, and school leadership. Nollkaemper (2018) defined shared responsibility as "the responsibility is allocated to two or more [people] that work together with a view to achieving a particular outcome… an important application of the concept of shared responsibility is to situations where responsibility is based on multiple [people] contributing to each other's acts and thereby to the eventual outcome" (p. 528). This definition describes the evolution of relationships and school culture over the course of the year. The significance of shared responsibility in the evolution of coaching and teaching throughout the year was the transformation of teachers or grade level teams from "working in silos" (independently from one another) to increased collaboration, cohesion of

reading instruction, and shared responsibility to improve student learning. The evidence in participants' responses prior to collaborating with the mentors and implementing collaborative professional development structures (coaching and school literacy) described minimal collaboration between teachers and alignment of instructional goals and inconsistent reading instruction.

The majority of the mentors (LW, SS, HR) noticed shared responsibility and an increase in a positive culture and collaboration in situations where relationships were established and the environment was conducive to learning. One significant collaborative structure that fostered shared responsibility was the school literacy team; an analysis of evidence indicated that effective school literacy teams improved collaboration, increased knowledge (of both reading and instruction), promoted engagement, increased implementation of reading practices, cultivated teacher leaders, and improved school leadership involvement in the Literacy Center initiative.

To illustrate, the Mentors (LW, SS) collaborated with the school literacy team as an opportunity to build capacity in the coach, leadership, and teachers and to create a sustainable professional learning structure to foster shared responsibility (collaboration, coaching with support from the Literacy Center). Mentor LW described her experience with her school's literacy team:

> We are working with the individual literacy team members to discuss and model the components of [word study] and [guided reading] in an effort to build sustainability. The intended outcome is for those teachers to serve as models for their grade level team when full implementation begins. The literacy team members are also meeting with their grade level team to discuss aspects of their schedule they would like for them to try

> implementing in the first phase of implementation. (Mentor LW, journal entry, December 2018)

This approach (mentor and literacy team collaboration) encouraged commitment and supporting colleagues, elicited feedback, and promoted distributive leadership to teachers. The literacy team members fostered shared responsibility within the team and inspired this concept through collaborating with grade level teams.

Likewise, in Mentor SS's experience, she described the commitment of the literacy team members and their determination to improve the implementation of the Literacy Center initiative. She felt this core group of teachers was essential to improve coaching and instruction. At one of her schools, the majority of the staff members participated in guided reading and word study; in this school, the paraprofessionals (instructional assistants) also engaged in professional development to facilitate learning activities (word study) with the students. This is evidence of a collaborative commitment to improve reading by assuming additional responsibilities to assist during the literacy block:

> As [mentor], I am able to meet often with the full literacy team and 100% implementation and fidelity is evident in their classrooms. Pockets continue to be in place in other classrooms with strong pieces evident in each. The school committed to redeliver pieces of Guided Reading training to paras who work in K and 1st grade classrooms during the ELA block. (Mentor SS, journal entry, February 2019)

In her example, the different role groups within the school committed to professional development and assisted with guided reading instruction to improve student outcomes.

In Mentor HR's experiences, her interaction differed between schools due to the different school environments. At one school, there were teacher vacancies, new teachers, and new

leadership; the participants at this school demonstrated shared responsibilities, initiating implementation of the Literacy Center program regardless of their teacher shortage. They created materials and taught in vacant classrooms during the literacy block despite their barriers. Mentor HR noted that "The coach and administrators work together to support teachers with navigating through hurdles that arise in planning, time and behavior management, and the acquisition of material." The hindrances to instruction and coaching in this school encouraged collaboration and the coalescence of the participants to improve teaching and learning.

In her other school, Mentor HR described the ways in which the administration, coaches, and teachers demonstrated shared responsibility through their continual commitment to improve reading and supported one another to ensure consistent implementation and navigate through obstacles to instruction. "The literacy team will be expected to take more leadership responsibilities on days the coach is out of the building to build continuity and maintain momentum," said Mentor HR. In another example, she described her experience with one of her schools and provided evidence of shared responsibility between participants and their dedication to improve reading:

> The coach, administrators, and I continue to see promise in our team driven approach to supporting teachers. This approach involves the planning and execution being the shared responsibility of all of us. Our primary focus for the year, as quoted by the principal is, "To Improve Teacher Practice." The principal continues to request that in all coaching conversations, the [mentor] and coach project the idea of "one voice" as we provide feedback and strategies. Hearing the same message from everyone fosters a shared sense of ownership and an additional layer of accountability. (Mentor HR, journal entry, December 2018)

The intentionality of "one voice" and a "shared sense of ownership" were additional evidence of a collaborative culture at this school.

Additionally, one of HR's principals echoed her description of the shift in her staff (shared responsibility), and Principal Elementary 4A said, "For them [teachers] to see that they can learn from her, it's opened up a new dialogue in our building." Mentor HR's schools had varying levels of shared responsibility, which could be attributed to involvement of leadership, the consistency of the school literacy team (collaborations and teacher leaders), and school culture.

In District 7, the other mentors (CC and AD) were limited in their ability to support schools, so they prioritized establishing relationships, built capacity in teachers and coaches to effectively implement guided reading, and encouraged sustainable collaborative structures for further professional development (regular coaching sessions, collaboration with grade level teams). They did not indicate the emergence of shared responsibility during their interaction with the participants.

Due to their limited time to collaborate directly with the schools, Mentor AD and Mentor CC were not able to help the schools develop a fully implemented Literacy Center program and collaborative culture in every school. However, they were able to foster a positive reading environment, which evoked a collaborative culture (shared responsibility and shared vision) within grade level teams in pockets of schools; they had success with some administrators, coaches, and teachers. Mentor CC had the same experience as Mentors AD due to the limitation within District 7.

In her experience, Mentor AD described her interaction with one of her schools and said, "Teachers K-5 are meeting daily with groups to further student reading competencies through

small group guided instruction focused on reading strategies and comprehension," and "Administrators are laser-focused on data to drive further instruction and have developed a plan to move teachers forward with their creation of groups and advanced lesson structure using that data." She did experience an increase in implementation when the teachers, coaches, and mentors collaborated.

Unlike the other mentors, Mentor CC's experience differed concerning the development of shared responsibility; it was significant to influence the staff at her schools to begin collaborating and implementing guided reading. She shared throughout the first semester that her teachers were not teaching literacy through guided reading, coaches were providing minimal support due to supporting multiple schools, and several teachers had not participated in the Literacy Center professional development; collaboration and implementation were priorities.

In commenting on her experience, Mentor CC said, "In all three schools, teachers have been trained on all components of Guided Reading rolled out thus far by the [Literacy] Center (Pre-A, Emergent and Early)," and "Additionally, there has been differentiation and front loading taking place between the teachers and Academic Coaches to allow for teachers to move on when ready." It was a slow start, but by December, the teachers and coaches had been collaborating on a more regular basis; they had all completed the professional development, and the majority of teachers had begun implementing guided reading. Mentor CC said, "This is a large growth area for schools, especially considering that [guided reading] was not being implemented in most classes at the start of this program," and she stated, "Academic Coaches content knowledge are continuing to get stronger and the environment and literacy instruction is improving." In mentors CC's and AD's experience, they did not indicate the emergence of shared responsibility in their

schools; they did have increased pockets of collaboration and implementation of guided reading among some grade level teams.

In conclusion, a collaborative culture and shared responsibility emerged as a result of increased opportunities for teachers and coaches to interact and engage in professional learning through collaboration. The mentors indicated that shared responsibility was an essential component of a collaborative culture. Each role group (teachers, coaches, and administrators) indicated that the mentors were instrumental in influencing staff unification and in renewing their focus on student learning. The evidence of shared responsibilities components (opportunities for sustained learning, collaboration with mentors, teachers, coaches, and professional development with clear goals) is presented through the narratives of the mentors. Shared responsibility improves implementation, instruction, collaboration, school culture, and the likelihood of improving student outcomes.

Shared Vision

Shared vision is the notion of an individual's "[participation] in the decision-making process on issues that directly impact their job, they embrace the decision as their own and feel a positive emotional connection with their [supervisor], job, and organization" (Cohen, 2015, p. 1). The concept of shared vision is a concomitant of a collaborative culture, relationships, and shared responsibility. "A work group can accomplish [shared vision] when people are committed to achieving a common goal. A shared vision creates a sense of purpose and direction….It provides coherence to the diverse activities that occur within a work unit and establishes a group identity" (Cohen, 2015, p. 1). Evidence of shared vision is demonstrated through participants' shared understanding of common goals to improve reading practices through a collaborative effort.

Data analysis of the mentors' perspectives provides evidence that a shared vision of instructional practices and development of a positive reading culture occurred after relationships were established and the participants (teachers, coaches, and leaderships) transformed into a collaborative culture focused on improving reading. These concepts are interdependent. Shared responsibility and vision are unlikely to emerge in initial stages of a collaborative culture. The significance of shared vision is teachers, coaches, and administrators abandoning previous individual practices for the greater instructional goal of the school (to increase student achievement in reading); this demonstrates that the participants believed in the goal and were collectively willing to change their attitudes and behavior to improve reading.

Some of the Mentors (HR, SS, LW) experienced shared vision with participants in their schools, but it was inconsistent between schools and inconsistent between teachers. This shared vision depended upon an established collaborative culture; some teachers demonstrated compliance but not shared vision. Other mentors (CC and AD) experienced pockets of collaborative culture but not significant evidence of shared responsibility or vision. The mentors experienced shared vision among staff at schools with higher participation, engagement, and implementation among teachers and coaches; administrators were also highly involved with the Literacy Center program at these schools. Examples drawn from comments made by participants show that they adopted new reading practices, believed in the common goal of improving reading, and altered school structures to increase time for literacy instruction, coaching, and professional development (literacy teams or redelivery). Their experiences are provided to demonstrate the evolution of shared responsibility and vision as a concomitant of a collaborative culture.

Mentor HR provided evidence of a shared vision of the participants through the commitment, collaboration, and consistent implementation and focus on guided reading and word study and said, “Teachers are learning and instructing Word Journeys with nearly 90% implementation and Guided Reading implementation is 100%. This is as a result of teachers having materials and guides readily available,” and she added, “This is a result of the committed work of the coach and administrators in co-creating schedules and weekly meetings with the coach.” The administrators were involved in the Literacy Center initiative and emphasized the significance of shared ownership to improve reading and consistent implementation of reading practices.

Likewise, Mentor SS described the dedication to coaching, teaching, and learning as a collective group and said, “Collaboration between admin at both schools is more focused on literacy.” She provided an example of shared responsibility and vision of the teachers through vertical team meetings, “Vertical alignment meeting with teachers, coaches, and administrators to discuss commonalities among the curriculum,” adding, “This month more instruction was provided for the team with running records and teachers and admin practiced these with support of the [mentor].” This is evidence that the teachers’ shared vision (understanding) was essential for commonality of instructional alignment to ensure consistency of reading between grade levels.

In Mentor LW’s experience, shared responsibility and vision were inconsistent among teachers. She and the school leadership relied on the literacy team and coach to implement goals, provide feedback, and act as teacher leaders to encourage engagement from their grade level colleagues. An example of this is, “Using the K-3rd literacy team to implement [word study] and [guided reading] to work out any issues, prior to the other grade level teachers implementing, is

going well." The literacy team members were committed and dedicated to improve reading, and this was demonstrated in their collective actions throughout the year.

However, levels of commitment varied with the other teachers. The evidence in her journal indicated compliance more than shared responsibility and vision at times. For example, she described the entire kindergarten through third grade teachers who had participated in professional development and implemented guided reading and word study but did not provide evidence of shared understanding and commitment among all of the participants. She stated, "Redelivery of all required professional development is being planned and completed on schedule," and "We are seeing more and more buy-in as we move further into implementation and the teachers are seeing student engagement improve [word study] is being implemented in all K-3 classrooms." Analysis of the evidence demonstrates that the schools she supported had established collaborative cultures, and literacy team members consistently demonstrated shared vision, but the other teachers (non-literacy team teachers) demonstrated either dedication, or compliance, or in some cases, demonstrated neither of these qualities.

Additionally, Mentors (AD and CC) collaborated mostly with coaches and teachers, and the engagement of the administrators varied between schools. In their experience, they indicated collaborative cultures in some of their schools but did not indicate shared responsibility among staff at their schools. However, Mentor AD experienced that collaborative culture depended upon the engagement and leadership style of the principals; the school's leaders had varying impacts on the development of a collaborative culture, depending on their approach to ability to obtain teacher buy-in and promote implementation. Her experience is representative of Mentor CC's experience with collaborative cultures in her schools.

In her description, she discussed the authoritative approach as antithetical to a collaborative culture and noted that teachers did not respond well to this method. Mentor AD said, “I think like, you know, for [Mentor CC], she had a principal who said, “You are going to do this.” And then she had teachers who were like I am going to go this way” and “Whereas, we had principals who were like, “Let’s try it within this core team and work out the kinks. Use them as our model and then move forward that way.” She added, “I guess that kind of had a more positive effect because they saw success in that other person’s classroom.” Their experience of a collaborative culture depended upon the school leadership’s motivation of teachers and on consistent support from the coach that increased the teachers’ consistency in implementing guided reading. They did not experience many examples of shared responsibility and vision due to their limited time to support the teachers and coaches.

Equally important, the perceptions of the participants indicated that prior to collaborating with the Literacy Center, most of the teachers were less likely to engage in collaboration across content areas or outside of their grade levels, and some teachers taught in isolation and did not collaborate with the other teachers on their team. However, each role group (teachers, coaches, principals) noted that through collaboration with the mentors and other participants, they experienced shared responsibility and vision. Collectively focusing on improving reading united the teachers, coaches, and principals.

In one example provided by teachers in the focus group, they discussed how the science and social studies teachers assisting in English Language Arts (ELA) instruction and teaching reading/word study groups removed barriers from student learning. They described the difficulty of teaching guided reading and word sorts during their literacy blocks independently. One teacher stated, “We were able to get our science and social studies teachers in helping us with

word journeys, so it kind of became a collaborative effort. So, I felt like our whole team was kind of literacy-based this year." The other teacher described the rotation between the third grade teacher and the science/social studies teacher to "work together" to accomplish reading instruction during the literacy block. This is evidence of shared responsibility through collaboration, and both teachers acknowledged the positive consequences of focusing on reading instruction.

Moreover, the participants noticed a shift in the culture of their school and the emergence of a collaborative culture and a concomitant shared responsibility; one of teachers provided an example of the unification of teachers' and administrators' instructional shared vision to improve reading. In her example, the teacher described the shared vision through collaboration of her school literacy team because of the partnership with the mentor:

> I feel like we're always on the same page now. I felt like we always had a literacy team, … but we were all bringing different things to the table. Now we have the same vision, the same plan. We're all working together in our school and we've been meeting every past month and we recognized different components and compiled an ELA notebook for the entire school so that anybody who works in the school can flip to the word journey section and it will have copies that need to be made for the test, the scoping sequence, everything you need. If you want it done and know what's best, you have to do it. (Teacher, focus group, May 13, 2019)

In the teacher's example, it is evident the unification of teachers and coaches for instructional purposes (shared responsibility) had a positive influence on collaboration, engagement, motivation, and on implementing methods to improve reading.

Additionally, the coach expressed that the mentors were instrumental in transforming participants' mindsets and encouraged them to engage in new reading practices. One of the coaches described her experience of collaborating with the mentor as influential on improving self-reflection and focused on student learning. She said:

> Well, I think overall it has made our culture, there has been the same unity there. But, I think it has made the teachers self-reflect more. Um, you know how, there was a while, where we would get out and go see the school system and look at their strengths and weakness and bring back to our school to try to strengthen our school. We are not doing as much as that and this program has helped all of us reflect on our strengths and weaknesses and realize there are some important, even in the content areas, strategies and things we need to be implementing and using more to help our children become more fluent readers and comprehend better. (Coach, focus group, May 13, 2019)

This is evidence that the teachers' commitment to embrace new practices to improve comprehension and fluency demonstrated a shared vision among the staff for instructional purposes.

Similarly, Principal Elementary 5B (one of SS's principals) described the shift in her staff and their renewed commitment and engagement to student learning; she noticed a change in teachers' dialogue in their meetings that reflected (shared responsibility) and a student-focused and goal-oriented effort to prioritize reading instruction:

> And our teachers have brought into it our community has got engaged into it, and the literacy team is even willing to come during the summer to go through books and try to work through stuff. So the sustainability is buy-in from my teachers. When they buy in,

then we create success, and we're talking about it through all our meetings and as our goals for moving forward. (Principal 5B Elementary, individual interview, June 13, 2019)

Teachers' engagement and their willingness to exceed their regular responsibilities and assume additional tasks to foster a positive reading environment in their schools is evidence of shared responsibility among staff members.

In summary, participants who demonstrated an increase in shared vision and instructional goals for reading consistently collaborated with the mentors, and teachers received consistent coaching. Through the mentors' experience, shared vision was revealed to be inconsistent between schools; some schools demonstrated a shared understanding or compliance in implementing particular methods. It is evident that established relationships and a collaborative culture increase the likelihood of unity and shared vision among the participants in focusing on student learning; this was a significant shift in the culture resulting from collaborating with the mentors and receiving consistent coaching that improved engagement, motivation, and teaching and learning for students and teachers.

To conclude, a collaborative culture creates optimal conditions for teaching, coaching, and learning. It is evident that the mentor, coach, and literacy team relationship had a positive impact on collaboration and shared responsibility, and on implementing reading practices and monitoring teaching and learning. The mentors expressed that shared vision emerged in some schools, that it was more likely to occur with participants who engaged in consistent collaboration and coaching, and that it indicated a unification of staff and alignment of instructional goals. Deterrents to a collaborative culture were a dearth of commitment by school leaders, the misalignment of goals and initiatives, and limited collaboration and coaching opportunities for participants. In the next section, the third overarching theme of the evolution of

coaches and culture is the professional growth of coaches; the section will describe the impact of professional development (mentor-coach CBMTD) for coaches.

Professional Growth of Coaches

The first research question discusses how coaches change and evolve throughout the mentor/coach phenomenon. The professional growth of coaches can be attributed to the phenomenon of the mentor-coach experience. The significant findings indicate that when coaches receive professional development through a coaching model and are able to dedicate their time to coaching, they experience professional growth in their knowledge and their coaching abilities; this leads to improvement in their self-confidence. These concepts are the subthemes of professional growth of coaches. In this section, the professional learning commonly experienced by the majority of coaches compared to the intentional professional development (CBMTD) for the coaches in this study will be discussed. This discussion will be followed by narratives from each mentor describing their lived experiences with the coaches and the professional growth these coaches experienced over time.

Professional Development for Coaches

The absence of quality professional development for coaches contributes to coaching not having as great an impact on instruction as intended; this is a common occurrence and often results in inconsistent coaching, teaching, and learning (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). During the mentors' focus group, each mentor shared that they had not received professional development specific to coaching early in their coaching career. Veenman and Denessen (2001) assert the majority of coaches received professional development for a content area, but they got minimal training or support for coaching. A considerable amount of funding is dedicated to coaching positions through federal grants and state and local school district funds; this fact is significant in

pointing out the correlation of the funding spent on an investment to improve instruction (coaching positions) but no investment (professional development) to build capacity of the staff (coaches) in the position. An example of this would be the initial introduction of reading coaches into schools without research to support their positions or training specific to coaching for these coaches; as a result of insufficient professional development specific to coaching, the effectiveness of coaches has been inconsistent (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009).

The experience of the participants (mentors and coaches) in this study reflects this phenomenon. An example is provided in the description of the mentors' professional development (coaching content/strategies) experience; the literature also provides evidence that professional development for coaches increases the likelihood of effective coaching. The following experience of Mentor CC is representative of the mentors and of most coaches in general; coaches receive minimal coaching professional development and often learn to coach through on the job experience and without guidance or support. The coaches in this study were new to coaching and had not received any training prior to interaction with the mentors. Mentor CC described her experience of professional development as a coach prior to becoming a mentor. She said:

> I was a coach for three years prior to getting any coaching training. I mean I think I did, I hope that I did a decent job but it wasn't until I was three years into the role and then at the state level, basically at the governor's office that I got any type of coaching training aside from the content piece of it. (Mentor CC, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

This example reflects a common experience of most coaches entering the job and remaining in the coaching role without professional development specific to coaching.

Additionally, when coaches receive ongoing, quality professional development, they are more likely to have developed professional competencies (content knowledge and coaching abilities) and more likely to influence instructional practices (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Anders et al., 2004; McCormick & Brennan, 2001; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). As stated in the literature, coaches often do not receive professional development, especially through a coaching model; the coaching model is typically used as a form of professional development for teachers. The dearth of professional development for coaches often leaves inexperienced coaches to attempt to build instructional capacity in teachers and results in inconsistent coaching practices between schools and districts. These are some of the factors embedded in research to explain inconclusive findings about coaches' impact on instruction. The findings from this study clearly support the positive impact on the professional growth (content knowledge and coaching competencies) of coaches when they receive coaching (professional development with the mentors) within an embedded coaching model (CBMTD); this leads to improvement of teaching and learning.

The next sections will highlight the findings in this study associated with professional development for coaches. An analysis of the perceptions of the mentors provides evidence that the coaches who were able to regularly engage in coaching activities with the mentors and to coach/support teachers increased their knowledge, skills, and confidence; the coaches who were unable to participate in frequent coaching activities with the mentors had less professional growth. Each mentor shared their experience of the evolution of the coaches' professional growth over the course of the school year.

Experience and Knowledge

The coaches' content knowledge in reading and coaching skills improved because of the mentor/coaching experience. At the beginning of the coach/mentor journey, an initial obstacle faced by the majority of coaches was that they were new literacy coaches. All of the coaches except one (11 out of 12 of them) were new to the role or to the school or the district. The coaches lacked coaching experience, content knowledge (reading), did not have established relationships with school staff members, and were navigating unknown school environments. Only one mentor (LW) was consulted by the school/district prior to hiring a coach; many of the coaches were teachers the previous school year and entered the role without coaching experience. Mentor LW said, "This is the first year either school has had a coach so there is a learning curve for the coach, teachers, and administrators." The mentors realized this was the first year of the partnership with the Literacy Center and that there would be challenges to initial implementation, but it did appear that they were surprised by the coaches' skill level and the substantial amount of support and coaching the coaches would need to be effective in their roles. Mentor AD said, "Coaches did not have that experience of how to be a coach. They were trying to finagle how to be a coach along with trying to learn the content." The coalescence of inexperience and lack of knowledge was a hindrance to coaching at the beginning of the year.

However, the mentors often described one of the successes of the first year of implementation as the professional growth of the coaches. In the first few months of school, all of the mentors indicated the competency of the coaches as an area of improvement. Mentor AD posited, "One thing is a coach has to be knowledgeable about instruction. They have to feel confident. So, I feel like when they are first starting to be a coach they have to have that support for instructional coaching." The coaches were heavily reliant on the mentors for guidance in supporting teachers and facilitating professional development; they lacked the knowledge and

confidence to independently lead professional development sessions and coaching conversations. Mentor HR said:

> My consistent roadblock at each school is the content knowledge [literacy and coaching] of the coach and her ability to teach, train, and provide ongoing support to teachers. Their need for modeling of guided reading is evident in their need for additional support, which delays the redelivery of guided reading. My next steps will be to provide one-on-one modeling and support to the coach in a 2-3 hour PD just for the coach followed by a PD that includes modeling for the literacy team. (Mentor HR, journal entry, October 2018)

Mentor HR was very reflective throughout the year on the ability of her coaches, teachers, and principals. She demonstrated intentional coaching methods with the participants to build their capacity.

When the mentors realized that the new coaches had deficits in their knowledge of reading, improving their content knowledge was the first priority. "The coaches need to be well-equipped meaning that they have a little bit of prior knowledge already. A stronger literacy background versus a teacher," said Mentor SS. The majority of the coaches entered this role without background in literacy. One of the coaches was even new to elementary school and had previously taught high school science. Mentor SS said, "The LC [coach] is new as well with a high school background and very little if any primary language knowledge." The mentors focused on teaching the coaches reading content and pedagogy through individual coaching sessions when they planned and prepared for monthly redelivery (professional development) for the teachers. Mentor LW described an example of this:

> The coach is essentially having to learn the content at the same time she is presenting it so we spend a great deal of time preparing her and building her knowledge in preparation

> for the redelivery. Outside of the redelivery, the coach and I usually meet at least once a month with grade level teams or individual teachers to discuss questions about schedules and/or content that has been provided in PD. Most of the discussions are around data and the grouping of students. (Mentor LW, journal entry, October 2018)

This was an initial challenge for the coaches to learn the content and to simultaneously facilitate professional development for the teachers.

Furthermore, the new coaches had inadequate coaching skills. The mentors did experience the coaches may have been excellent teachers, but they needed assistance to transition from the teacher role to a coaching role and to learn how to coach others. This was another focus area of the mentors to help the coaches understand their role and change to a coaching mindset. Mentor CC felt the transition from a teacher to a coach is an initial hurdle, and she said, "You could be a wonderful teacher but that does not mean that you are a good leader and able to support or share. There is a level of leadership that has to be embedded in order to effectively support." Mentor HR experienced this with her coaches who were inexperienced and new to coaching.

Likewise, Mentor HR described her coaches and said, "Both of them are brand new to coaching. And they just came from the classroom. Well, one was a special ed teacher. One was just a regular classroom teacher. So, they don't have a content specific knowledge base." Mentor HR further explained her coaches were inexperienced and initially operated with a teacher mindset before evolving into their role as coaches and said, "So, at the beginning of the year they would just provide feedback that would say, "The classroom was disorganized. The class was noisy. She was fifteen minutes off her schedule." It was just real superficial."

Fortunately, both coaches were allotted time to coach and did not serve in multiple roles compared to other coaches, and both of them demonstrated growth after receiving coaching with Mentor HR. She described the professional growth of her two coaches over the course of a year and said, "So with the both of them [coaches], I saw them grow in terms of their abilities to observe teachers and provide feedback that was not superficial." She described their growth by the beginning of the second semester and their ability to coach the teachers on specific skills, "So I just saw a lot of growth in them, in terms of their ability to go in, make an observation, provide specific, succinct feedback that was key to instruction. Not so much, management," said Mentor HR.

By the end of the year, Mentor HR's coaches evolved and demonstrated significant professional growth in their content knowledge and in coaching skills. She said, "The coaches continue to grow in their ability to make note of pedagogical strengths and weaknesses as they observe classes. This is an improvement from the more technical notes as to systems and structures they noticed initially during observations." The coaches developed an understanding of their role and purpose and of how to influence change. Throughout the year, their coaching ability increased exponentially and had a positive impact on instruction in the classrooms. All of the role groups in HR's schools noted the progress made as a result of collaboration with the mentor and Literacy Center partnership; this sentiment was expressed in her last journal entry of the school year and. Mentor HR said:

> During our reflection meeting, the principals and coaches were about to use specific examples to pinpoint areas of growth and support for students and teachers. They all expressed the ability of the coach and literacy team members has increased tremendously

> and they are engaging in several capacity building activities now and will continue them next school year. (Mentor HR, journal entry, May 2019)

This statement from HR describes growth of the participants she supported throughout the year.

The coaches acknowledged that the mentors were instrumental in increasing their literacy knowledge and in supporting them to transition into the coaching role. One of the coaches described her professional growth experience in the increase of her content knowledge due to her experience with the mentor; it helped her transition from a teacher to a coach and to better support teachers.

> It has really made me grow in my knowledge of literacy. Especially coming out of the classroom. And you know, I thought I knew these are the techniques, these are the ways. It was overwhelming the amount of knowledge but yet now that I see that and I am able to go in do the techniques in the classrooms and put that into place. So I see that and know I should've done things different. It is like just the difference of how the knowledge base has really helped. And I went back and I was like oh I should've have done things different in my classroom now as a teacher. (Elementary 6A Coach, focus group, May 13, 2019)

This is evidence of the coach's professional growth through working with the mentor.

Another way the mentors developed the coaches was through the coaching cycle (CBMTD). The mentors planned and co-facilitated professional development to staff with the coaches, modeled coaching strategies, and guided coaching conversations with grade level team meetings. This training was followed by a debriefing coaching session to reflect and plan for future coaching. The findings indicate that coaches who consistently received coaching (professional development) with the mentors made progress. Three out of five mentors were able

to regularly meet with their coaches and to support them. Each mentor's experience was slightly different from that of the others; some of their coaches had better content knowledge than others, and each coach had to learn their role prior to developing coaching skills. Additionally, the culture of the schools and districts varied, and that factor played a role in the effectiveness of coaching as well.

The statement below from Mentor LW describes her positive working relationships established with the schools and district when discussing the best strategy for hiring a coach; secondly, she was fortunate enough to focus on building capacity in one coach who was dedicated only to functioning as a literacy coach. This is a significantly different experience from the other mentors. Mentor LW said:

> Unlike the others, I was only dealing with one coach for both schools, same coach. And when the district hired the coach at the beginning of the year when we started that was my suggestion when they asked me. Do you think we need to hire half-time coaches or one full-time coach? I said I prefer one full-time coach and for you it would be beneficial because my school is a pre-K -1st and the other is 2nd-5th. So they are already at different locations. So to build continuity across, have one coach carrying it all the way across was going to be better. And that worked for me and I was better able to support her because I was not working with two different coaches at two different schools. One coach. One school. When we delivered everything I was able to meet with just that one coach. She is just literacy. So we actually had time to sit down and go through the redelivery of everything. So if she had questions we talked it through. We would walk through it. (Mentor LW, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

Mentor LW's input, based on her experience, created an ideal coaching situation due to the collaboration with the district/school on hiring a coach, and she had one full-time coach for two schools. Her coach demonstrated professional growth over the course of the year.

In terms of coaching a new coach, Mentor LW had the same experience as the other mentors. Throughout the year, the coach had difficulty feeling comfortable in her role. In her journal entry, Mentor LW said, "My coach is also new to her current position and is now coaching teachers she once worked with so she is adjusting to this new role," and "She continues to struggle with her role as coach and not teacher or administrator. I am working to build her confidence and lessen her dependency upon me so this will be sustainable." By the end of the year Mentor LW said, "[She] is learning to look beyond "right now" and planning for the future." She also provided an example of her coach presenting to district leadership about their work with the Literacy Center. She said:

> My coach delivered a presentation to the Board of Education with an overview of the progress and implementation of word sorts and guided reading. This presentation went very well and we had them complete a sort and word ladder. They were very engaged and receptive to the work that has been done. (Mentor LW, journal entry, May 2019)

This is evidence that as the coach developed professional competencies, she developed self-confidence in her coaching abilities.

Likewise, Mentor SS noticed that as the coaches improved, so did their confidence; the teachers reflected this phenomenon as well. Mentor SS described the growth of the coaches and the change in the professional relationship between the coaches and teachers. In her journal entry she said, "Coach and teacher knowledge is definitely growing. Teachers feel more confident in selecting sorts and assessment of the weekly skills," and "There is more confidence even in

conversation about the terms as well as teachers being willing to even communicate and have discussions." Relationships evolved, professional competencies increased for all role groups, and the confidence of the coaches and the teachers was on the rise.

Unlike the other mentors, Mentor AD and Mentor CC had a unique coaching experience due to their relationship with their coaches and the structure of the district they supported. These two mentors were unable to consistently coach their coaches in District 7; the coaches they supported were district level coaches, who had minimal interactions with the schools and limited availability to meet with the mentors. Mentor AD said, "The coach serving this building was available to support the school on [only] three days this month." She also stated, "More support is needed from the coach, in the school setting, to assist teachers with planning as well as collaboration through the coaching cycle to identify goals, learn, and focus on improvement." The coaches' limited amount of time to participate in professional development with the mentor and to coach the teachers impeded their professional growth.

Indeed, both mentors experienced limited access to the district level coaches. Mentor CC said, "Coaches still spend more time outside of the schools than directly supporting [them] in the building." The mentors' inability to support/coach the district level coaches and the limited support the district coaches provided the schools continued to be an issue in this district throughout the school year.

In fact, the Literacy Center's framework is designed to provide professional development at the school level to build capacity in coaches, school-based literacy teams, administrators, and teachers. The mentors who supported this district had to be creative and offer alternative options to try to get the school staff trained and initiate implementation of the framework; they facilitated district-wide professional development, and representatives from the different schools attended

and were tasked with sharing the information with their colleagues after the training. This is important to note in order to demonstrate that the foundational premises of the program (to build capacity at the school level) were not implemented as they were intended to be from the beginning, and to describe the nature of this experience. This experience also explains why the coaches in this district demonstrated minimal professional growth compared to coaches who regularly interacted with the mentors.

Despite these unforeseen circumstances, the mentors were flexible and continued to focus on developing relationships to further support implementation and training. Mentor CC said, "Although [the Literacy] Center work has not been the center of the conversation, I am working to maintain relationships and communication with coaches." The mentors visited schools to support teachers and maintained regular communication with the coaches during the first semester.

Regardless of these barriers, the mentors provided the components of the program to teachers and coaches and supported them as much as possible. They did notice progress in the content knowledge and increased interest in implementation of guided reading. In a journal entry, Mentor CC stated, "Coaches content knowledge are continuing to get stronger and the environment and literacy instruction is improving." Towards the end of the first semester, Mentor AD said, "Teachers are beginning to apply knowledge gained through redeliveries [professional development] and this is evident in lesson plans, observations, and conversations had with teachers," and "The academic coach is much more knowledgeable about the guided reading format and the knowledge of literacy has increased as well." The mentors were able to support teachers and coaches, and both of these groups demonstrated some growth in content knowledge; implementation varied between teachers.

By the beginning of the second semester, the relationship between District 7 and the Literacy Center had slowly deteriorated until there was no longer a partnership; members of the district leadership indicated they were not interested in the support and essentially rescinded the Literacy Center Promise. The district coaches were directed to focus on another initiative and not to participate in coaching sessions with the Literacy Center's mentors; additionally, the district did not permit mentors to facilitate district-wide literacy professional development at this point. The Literacy Center and District 7 did not engage in collaboration in the following months (second semester). Mentor CC said, "There has been no collaboration with coaches this month. Therefore, they will likely not be available to attend any redeliveries or coaching/mentoring activities." Regardless of their efforts, neither of the mentors was able to collaborate with this district.

Despite not being in schools, Mentor AD indicated her most recent knowledge (based on her experience/communication with teachers and coaches) about the outcomes of first semester, where some teachers had completed training and were implementing the guided reading framework and literacy assessments with minimal support from the coach. Mentor CC stated, "Due to not [having] a presence in schools, nor having any contact with coaches, it is unclear as to whether or not participants are improving reading instruction." It is likely the coaches and teachers from District 7 did not make as much progress compared to other districts in which leaders and staff members were fully invested in coaching and implementing the literacy framework.

The significance of describing this coach/mentor experience demonstrates the dearth of professional growth for a coach when coaches do not engage in ongoing professional development with a more knowledgeable other (coaching with the mentor). Based on the

statements from the mentors, District 7 coaches increased only their content knowledge because of their minimal interactions with the mentors. The literature indicates that without consistent coaching following professional development, the participants will improve their content knowledge but more than likely not implement new practices; without changes in instructional practices, coaching will not have a significant impact on student learning (Fixsen et al., 2005; Joyce & Showers, 2002). The District 7 coaches were unable to build sustainable capacity in teachers due inconsistent coaching and inadequate time dedicated to effectively support their schools and teachers; it can be inferred that some teachers implemented guided reading but did not create a sustainable reading system to have a significant impact on student learning. Statements from the mentors indicate that the coaches and the majority of the teachers from the schools in the partnership would have preferred to continue their relationship with the Literacy Center.

At the end of the year, the mentors reflected upon their experiences of the professional growth of coaches; they also discussed barriers and generated solutions and recommendations for year two of implementation during their focus group. They felt deterrents to the professional growth of coaches were the quality of their relationships/partnerships with schools and districts; the lack of time for collaboration, coaching, teaching and learning; the implementation timeline of the Literacy Center's framework; and the lack of clearly defined responsibilities for each role group. The consensus of the mentors was the need to be proactive and forthcoming with the expectations for each role group and for the group's commitment, and thereby to create optimal conditions for effective coaching and avoid obstacles they had encountered during the past year. Mentor CC encapsulated the opinion of all of the mentors when she said, "It [the coach] has to be someone that is available to support and also have a literacy background." The mentors felt

strongly that a knowledgeable coach dedicated solely to the coaching role in a supportive environment could have a significant impact on building capacity in school staff and improving student achievement in reading.

To conclude the professional growth of coaches section, the professional development of coaches through a coaching model (CBMTD) with the mentors demonstrated professional growth in reading content knowledge, coaching skills, and confidence. This is significant because the majority of the coaches who entered the role were new to this role and inexperienced, and most coaches do not receive professional development for coaching. Coaches who experienced limitations to collaborating/coaching with the mentors did not demonstrate growth compared to coaches who worked consistently with the mentors.

Summary of Research Question One: The Evolution of the Mentor and Coach Experience. To conclude, relationships, collaborative culture, and professional growth of coaches emerged as a result of the mentor-coach phenomenon. Established relationships among stakeholders (teachers, coaches, principals, district leaders, mentors) were significant to the effectiveness of coaching and to implementing the Literacy Center initiative (reading instruction and professional development); the complexity of some of the relationships (mentor-district leadership and teacher-principal) was a deterrent to coaching, teaching, and learning.

As relationships evolved, a collaborative culture emerged among the school staff. The teachers, coaches, and principals developed a sense of shared responsibility to improve teaching and learning. The partnership between the mentor and the school literacy team had a positive influence on shared responsibility, teacher leadership, increased engagement, and implementation of new reading practices. At times, shared vision emerged in high-functioning collaborative cultures, which usually included a significantly involved principal. Some of the

hindrances to a collaborative culture are misalignment of vision and initiatives, lack of school leadership's engagement, and insufficient school structures to support intentional collaboration and professional learning. The participants indicated that a collaborative culture improved conditions for working closely with colleagues, providing effective reading instruction, and professional development (coaching and redeliveries).

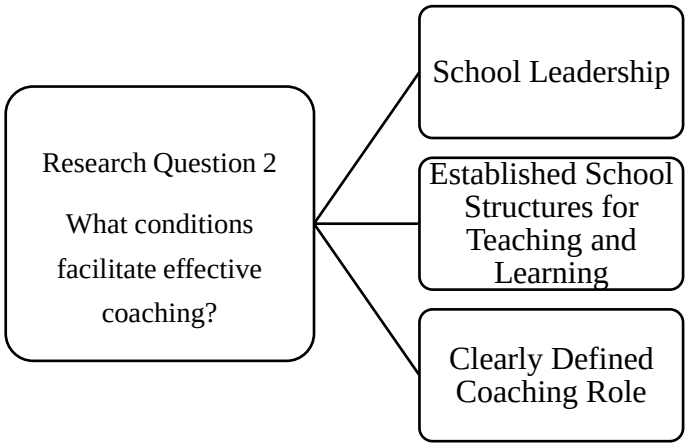
Furthermore, the professional growth of the coaches was one of the significant emerging themes of the evolution of coaches throughout the school year. Evidence through data analysis indicated that coaches who engaged in continuous and consistent professional development (CBMTD) with the mentors demonstrated increases in their reading content knowledge, coaching skills, and confidence. The coaches who had minimal engagement in coaching activities with the mentors increased their content knowledge, but they did not demonstrate significant improvement in their coaching abilities. Some deterrents to the professional growth of coaches were their availability to engage in professional development with the mentors, the coaches' ability to consistently support/coach teachers, and dysfunctional relationships with district leadership. The next section will discuss the second research question and describe effective coaching conditions. The subthemes are school leadership, established school structures for teaching and learning, and a clearly defined coaching role.

Research Question Two: Effective Coaching Conditions

The evidence collected in response to the second research question describes effective coaching conditions and supportive and deterrent factors in the implementation of CBMTD (mentor-coach experience). Research question two will specifically focus on school leadership, established school structures for teaching and learning, and a clearly defined coaching role (Figure 4.3). Relationships, collaborative culture, and professional growth of coaches are

important to effective coaching conditions, but these factors pertain to research question one (evolution of the mentor-coach experience) and are explicated in the previous section.

Figure 4.3 Effective Coaching Conditions



To obtain an in-depth understanding of the significance of these themes (school leadership, established school structures for teaching and learning, and a clearly defined coaching role) in relation to effective conditions for coaching, it is important to gain insight through the perspective of the mentors into their initial collaboration with school staff (leadership, coaches, and teachers). At the beginning of the school year, the mentors had two contrasting school environments: some of the schools had established school leadership, fully staffed (no teacher vacancies), and instituted structures to support teaching and learning; the other schools had new leadership, new teachers and teacher vacancies, and lacked structures to support professional learning and cohesive instruction.

However, the commonalities among the schools were new coaches (to the role and/or to the school), the majority of school staff lacked content knowledge (reading pedagogy), and the absence of an established literacy block focused on guided reading and word study. Additionally, each school had participants exhibit inconsistent levels of engagement and implementation and

meagerness of professional learning structures for teaching and learning designed to maximize instruction. The mentors collaborated with principals and focused on supporting change in these areas to build instructional capacity and to develop sustainable systems within each school to improve reading (teaching and learning).

In this section, the discussion is focused on the leadership engagement and visibility, principal's knowledge (of reading), and instructional leadership capabilities of school leaders and on the impact these factors had on coaching conditions. Additionally, the perceptions of the teachers are represented throughout this section since they have a substantial role in collaborating and engaging with the coach and in implementing the Literacy Center initiatives, and they are the individuals responsible for providing literacy instruction to students in the classroom. The teachers' attitude, motivation, and readiness to change practices impacted school culture, instruction, student outcomes, and coaching conditions.

School Leadership

The school leadership was a determinant in the effectiveness of coaching and implementation of new reading practices. Data analysis revealed that the participants' perception of minimal involvement on the part of the principal was a determinant of teachers and coaches' participation and engagement. In terms of working with the Literacy Center Initiative, a principal's active engagement influenced the teachers' participation and classroom instruction. Every teacher in the focus group discussed their principal's level of involvement, and they expressed disapproval if the principal did not demonstrate reading content knowledge or was uninvolved in curriculum and instruction.

The school principals had a significant role in creating a positive culture in the school, but they were most influential as instructional leaders. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005)

asserted that an instructional leader is visible, provides resources for instruction, and clearly communicates goals and vision; the responsibility of an instructional leader is to embed professional learning structures into the school culture and provide current research and theory on curriculum, pedagogy, and effective school practices.

Instructional Leadership: Engagement and Visibility

School leadership's engagement and visibility were factors in effective teaching, and these factors influenced teachers' willingness to engage in changing their practices; the teachers continually expressed in their responses how it was important to them for the principals to be involved in teaching and learning. In the focus group, one of the teachers said, "I love having an administrator who's right there with us," and "Having her in the trenches with us, and when she says things to work on, she's given herself things to work on too." Another teacher said, "My principal was with us every training." In contrast, the teachers noted when a principal did not attend training; one teacher said, "My AP and principal did not come. My curriculum director came, and my coach came. So they [coach and curriculum director] will do whatever it takes." Teachers and coaches noticed the level of a principal's involvement.

Moreover, the mentors experienced varying levels of principal involvement, and they all expressed that this had an impact on the effectiveness of coaching; some principals may have attended professional development but did not participate in implementation, some were active in all settings (professional development, literacy team, and classrooms), and some disengaged from the project and participated minimally. An example to describe the significance of the principal's involvement and support is provided in this statement from Mentor CC; it was reflective of the teachers' perceptions as well as her personal experience with the significant role of school leadership in the effectiveness of coaching and teaching and learning:

> There is also a level of leadership that has to be embedded in order to effectively support. Also, as you heard earlier without the support from leadership, the instructional coach is not going to be effective. Those are some examples of conditions that can either hinder or help when supporting. (Mentor CC, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

Mentor CC is referring to her colleagues corroborating the significance of leadership engagement and support.

In Mentor CC and Mentor AD's experience, they had positive relationships with the majority of the school principals; in their district, some of the principals engaged and supported the initiative. Mentor CC said, "Without the support from leadership, the instructional coach is not going to be effective," and "Leadership involvement has been instrumental in the shift in teachers being the knowledge getters (sitting in redeliveries) and knowledge givers (implementing what is learned)." Both of these statements demonstrate the change in staff when leaders are participating in teaching and learning. Despite the engagement of school principals in this district, the Mentors (AD and CC) faced an ongoing barrier with the district leadership and conflict of interest.

Over time, they (AD and CC) both expressed that the school leaders were impuissant in their ability to continue to collaborate with the Literacy Center. Mentor AD said, "If your principal's district [leadership] didn't get on board, you can forget anything." Additionally, she said, "The principals wanted it. Our principals wanted it. It had nothing to do with that. It had to do with this person wanting to be in control. That was the issue," and she added, "With the coaches, the teachers, the principals—I think they would've been more open to it if there [was better] leadership." There was uncooperative district leadership and varying levels of school

principal involvement, which led to inconsistent implementation and minimized opportunities for coaching and collaboration.

In Mentor SS's experience, she had two different interactions with her school leadership, but she did have a positive relationship with all principals and said, "Leadership has been positive at all three sites." The different levels of principal support and engagement led to different outcomes for teaching and learning.

In District 6, Mentor SS described the rift between school leadership and teachers and attributed this to lack of involvement on the part of the principal or to the disgruntled instructional culture of the school. She said, "The relationship with the Literacy Team and the [mentor] at this school is solid; however, there is evidence that there is not the same relationship between teachers and admin, etc." The strained relationship between the school leadership and teachers was a barrier to coaching and implementation, and she noted, "The admin agrees and believes the work of the [Literacy] Center is important, but doesn't seem to be a top concern. The AP is present for most meetings; however not the principal." Additionally, she said:

> Redelivery continues to be more of a struggle at this site due to the lack of teacher buy-in and admin devotion. The school climate doesn't seem to be as cohesive to foster a new initiative / learning of new strategies. (Mentor SS, journal entry, October 2018)

However, the assistant principal at this school did engage in the Literacy Center initiative, and this did somewhat improve coaching and implementation.

In this experience, it is evident that leadership engagement is a determinant in effectiveness of coaching and implementation. The dearth of principal involvement decreased the likelihood of teacher commitment to the implementing the Literacy Center program. In this district, the superintendent did not agree to align district initiatives with the Literacy Center

initiatives; this was another issue that overwhelmed the teachers and coaches (too many initiatives). The presence and engagement of the assistant principal did improve teachers' motivation and engagement, but it did not have the same impact as the active involvement of the principal.

However, in her other school she had a different experience. Mentor SS said, "Admin is strong and supportive of the initiative 100%," and "Collaboration between admin at both schools is more focused on literacy and how Grade 3 can continue practices that are proving to be effective in grades K-2." In this experience, the principals were dedicated to the Literacy Center, and they actively engaged in professional learning to support teachers; one of her principals said, "I would say that, personally, me being able to participate in the trainings was valuable as well, so that I would know what the expectations were of the teachers." Additionally, Mentor SS described her experience with collaboration with the principals at two of the elementary schools:

> Elementary 5A assistant principal leads the Literacy Team with the [coach] and is a positive role. The school has completely embraced the model and will move forward with as much fidelity as possible but at a slower pace to ensure understanding of content.
>
> At Elementary 5B admin team is all new and has high school backgrounds. They are however willing to learn and support the initiative. (Mentor SS, journal entry, September 2018)

In both of these schools, the teachers were more likely to teach guided reading and word study with fidelity during their literacy block and were eager to change practices and problem solve to improve implementation. The principals collaborated with the mentor to create professional learning structures for collaboration (school literacy team) and were involved in instruction.

Both Mentors (LW and HR) had positive experiences with their principals, and the majority of their school leaders were supportive and had varying levels of involvement with the Literacy Center initiative; all of their principals were encouraging, but some engaged more than others did. Mentor LW said, "Administrators, and coaches are committed to the program as can be seen through their participation in all workshops." Additionally she said, "The principal at [Elementary 1B] attends all professional development and works with the coach and I to address scheduling of Word Journeys and Guided Reading, curriculum, and time issues," and "The principal at [Elementary 1A] has struggled to attend redelivery of PD this month." In the second semester she said, "Administrators have attended all [Literacy] Center professional development and have been very cooperative and open to change as needed for implementation." Both principals supported the mentor and literacy team collaboration and encouraged professional growth (reading content and instructional strategies) of teachers. The evidence from data analysis indicated that when principals provided consistent support for teaching and learning and actively engaged in the initiative, this support increased the likelihood of effective coaching and implementation.

Comparatively, in Mentor HR's experience, she consistently collaborated with the coach and school leadership and said, "The coach and administrators work together to support teachers with navigating through hurdles that arise in planning, time and behavior management, and the acquisition of material," and "The coach, administrators, and curriculum coordinator have worked collaboratively to support teachers with learning and implementation." Additionally, she described their consistent involvement in professional learning and instruction, and she said, "The coaches and administrators are being more autonomous in their decision making as it relates to planning and executing ways to hold teachers accountable and supporting them

between my visits." The school leadership demonstrated that they supported the coaches and teachers, which increased the likelihood of teacher buy-in and change of practices when they perceived the school leadership was invested in teaching and learning.

To conclude, the engagement and participation of the school leadership influenced the effectiveness of coaching and implementation. The evidence supported the point that the principal's involvement was important to teachers and that it determined their attitude towards collaboration and willingness to change their practices. The coaches were less likely to have effective coaching conditions (culture of the school, professional learning structures, alignment of curriculum and instructional initiatives) if the school leadership was not actively involved in the Literacy Center initiative. The next section will discuss the impact of school principals' content knowledge (reading), professional experience (elementary), and instructional leadership competencies in instruction and coaching.

Content Knowledge and Instructional Leadership

In addition to the importance of a principal building positive relationships with school staff members and being actively involved in teaching and learning, evidence revealed additional factors that influenced coaching and teaching (changing practices). These included a principal's content knowledge (reading) and engagement with instructional practices (literacy block). The content knowledge and professional experience of school leadership and coaches were important to the teachers. This factor is significant because it demonstrated teachers are more likely to have a positive response and to change their instructional practices when coaches/principals are able to demonstrate elementary content knowledge (reading) and have had experience as elementary educators; it is evident that established relationships and credibility influence teachers' attitude, and instructional methods.

Through their conversations, it appeared that teachers valued the principal's feedback if they had a similar experience in education (taught elementary school and were familiar with the content). This was also a factor in teacher buy-in to school initiatives. The teachers provided examples of school leaders with experience as previous elementary teachers or examples of school leaders with minimal experience in education or high school background, and they had the same perception about coaches. In their focus group, the teachers described the professional experience of their principals and their understanding of elementary content and instruction.

One of the teachers said, "[Our principal] went back to school to be a teacher and then he worked a very few years and then became an administrator. Great administrator. But does not know anything about elementary grade school level whatsoever." In some of the other schools, the school principals and coaches had their professional experience in high school, and the teachers appeared skeptical about their instructional opinion. One teacher said, "It's a little frustrating if I'm being honest being led by people that don't know [elementary content]," and "Supportive but they don't know. I respect them and they're supportive but they just don't know." However, the teachers did respond well when the principals (without extensive elementary experience or content knowledge) acknowledged that their job was difficult, and they expressed appreciation of their work as elementary teachers; one teacher said, "I think they have gained a lot of respect for what we do now. I think they support us with whatever we need and say they can help us." These examples demonstrate that teachers value an instructional leader with similar experience (elementary educator).

Furthermore, the teachers provided examples of principals who were previously elementary educators and noted that they were more likely to adhere to their principal's instructional vision and implement the school's initiative. One teacher said:

> Our administrator was previously a kindergarten parapro, then went back to school and became a first grade teacher, so she has the knowledge already. So it brings a lot of validation in the way she was taught when she was with an exceptional kindergarten teacher. So it's been really interesting. (Teacher, focus group, May 13, 2019)

This provides evidence of the principal's established credibility to obtain teacher buy-in to motivate instructional change.

Another teacher communicated they were looking forward to their new principal the upcoming year since she had elementary experience; she said, "That we have a principal now who's taught fourth and fifth grade, she'll know more." This perception of the teachers indicates they value school leadership with similar elementary experience and content knowledge and feel these are examples of instructional leaders.

In fact, many of the principals noted that the reading knowledge and pedagogy they received through the Literacy Center was invaluable to them as instructional leaders, and that it enhanced their ability to support teaching and learning. One principal said, "Well I'll tell you, I was afforded the opportunity to learn a lot more about the research of reading and how we're going to implement that in the future." The majority of the school principals mentioned that one of the most valuable experiences of collaborating with the Literacy Center was the opportunity to receive extensive professional development in reading research and practices; they felt that this enhanced previous literacy systems they had in place and increased their ability to support teachers and provide instructional guidance. One principal described her experience:

> I think another big thing is, like I said, we were already doing Guided Reading, and we were already doing some of these things that we had learned from the [Literacy] Center. So to me, the validation that it was really good research-based strategies and things to

implement as an administrator. To me, that was of high value importance to me. (Principal 5B Primary, individual interview, June 13, 2019)

This is evidence of the principal's perceived professional growth as an instructional leader as a result of collaborating with the mentor and professional development through the Literacy Center.

Comparatively, another principal described her experience with the Literacy Center as advantageous to her as an instructional leader. She discussed the improvements she observed in her staff; she noticed that the teachers flourished with their reading content knowledge and improvement in self-confidence in their abilities to teach reading:

> So being able to offer access to the right type of training was very valuable for me as an administrator. To see my teachers learn how to teach reading, and to see them feeling successful when the students are becoming successful. I think everybody all around starts to feel good about themselves. (Principal 3A Primary, individual interview, June 13, 2019)

The experience of this principal illustrates that working in conjunction with the Literacy Center improved their (principal's and school staff's) content knowledge and had a positive influence on the teachers' attitude and willingness to alter instructional practices.

Furthermore, it is evident that the principals demonstrated an increased level of support for teachers and reading instruction when they engaged in professional learning with teachers and coaches. The principal's engagement in professional development improved their instructional leadership skills (content knowledge, instructional practices). All of these factors (leadership engagement, principal content knowledge, teacher buy-in, positive school culture,

and participants actively involved in reading professional development with follow-up support) had a positive impact on effective coaching conditions and implementation.

Moreover, the majority of the mentors felt that the school principals demonstrated growth as instructional leaders, but that this growth varied among schools due to the principals' level of engagement in instructional activities.

In the three schools Mentor HR supported, the principals were actively involved in teaching and learning, and this was communicated consistently in her journal entries throughout the year. She discussed that the school leadership demonstrated they supported instruction, but some of the principals were learning along with the coaches and teachers, and she noted, "In our administrative meeting it was brought to attention that the leadership team members are the least experienced or need the most support with instruction in comparison to their grade partners." The principals made progress (knowledge in reading and in instructional practices) and demonstrated their professional growth over time. They facilitated professional learning, modeled instructional practices, engaged in regular walk-throughs and provided feedback, and created and monitored instructional goals. Mentor HR described this experience:

> As we focus on improving execution, teachers were led in an activity by both administrators and the coach, to list what good instruction looks like. As we meet as a team after this meeting, I suggested they use the characteristics provided by each teacher as an observation look for. To help the teachers move from understanding to execution. Immediately, the leadership team moved into action to make this plan a reality. Lastly, in following up with the principal on the 100 day goals, he tasked the coach and I with aligning the [Literacy] Center initiatives with the 3 school wide 100 day goals. (Mentor HR, journal entry, October 2018)

The school leadership continually immersed themselves in instructional activities with school staff, demonstrating they were instructional leaders and exhibited professional growth (reading); this had a positive impact on coaching, teaching, and learning

Similarly, in Mentor LW's experience, the principals demonstrated qualities of instructional leaders. She communicated that district leadership, principals, and the coach were committed to the Literacy Center program, participated in all professional development, requested support in aligning curriculum and initiatives, purchased resources for guided reading and word study, and created time for professional development. Mentor LW said, "Principals at both [elementary schools] are easy to work with and want to see their teachers and students succeed. Principals observe in classrooms and attend PD to reiterate expectations. They seek guidance with scheduling and curriculum alignment," and "The administrator is very supportive and has reiterated, to teachers, the expectation for full implementation of word sorts and guided reading. He, along with the coach and I, completed walk-throughs to ensure all teachers were implementing GR [guided reading] and WJ [word study]." The principals actively participated in academic initiatives.

In Mentor LW's experience, these actions provided evidence that the principals were instructional leaders (knowledgeable in reading), and they modeled their professional expectations of the teachers. They managed curriculum and instruction through providing resources, attending professional development and school literacy meetings, and demonstrating support to improve reading, and they made themselves visible in classrooms to provide instructional guidance, improve practices, and motivate teachers. The principals' actions in these schools positively influenced school cultures, coaching, and teaching practices.

Likewise, Mentor SS stated that she had strong instructional leaders at two of her schools and that the participants (principals, teachers, coaches) were committed to the Literacy Center initiative. She said, "Admin. is committed to seeing the strategies implemented. It is evident that at these two schools, teachers are committed 100% to the implementation," and "It was clear that more consistency is being provided through the [Literacy] Center initiative." Additionally, Mentor SS described the collaborative effort of school leadership in professional learning, dedication to creating school processes to improve reading, and she said:

> Each week this month and through the first two weeks of May, the Literacy Team is meeting with the [mentor] and admin until 4:30 (Some days 5:00!) to create and establish the non-negotiables and to create the "[District 6] ELA Curriculum" for ELA K-2. (Word Study and Guided Reading as well as the phonemic awareness continuum will be embedded into this document). (Mentor SS, journal entry, April 2019)

This is evidence of the principal's level of engagement and willingness to change practices to positively impact instruction, and it demonstrates that these two principals were instructional leaders. When principals demonstrate content knowledge and engage in instructional processes, they foster a collaborative culture, effective coaching conditions, and increase the likelihood of consistent implementation.

In contrast, Mentor SS did not have the same level of instructional leadership with the principal at her other school. She described how the assistant principal positively influenced instruction (reading) and how she demonstrated content knowledge and instructional expertise, and she said, "The leadership and knowledge of the assistant principal is phenomenal. She is constantly supporting teachers, working on new work plans embedding word sorts and guided reading into existing initiatives." Despite the assistant principal's collaboration with the Literacy

Center, the meagerness of the principal's involvement impeded instructional progress. Mentor SS described her overall experience with this school:

> [Elementary 6A] shows some signs of weaker support from the admin due to restraints with other initiatives etc. He does not seem to show capacity to the extent of the others on the Literacy Team. The Asst. Principal is taking the main lead for the initiative from the [Literacy] Center and is the contact person; however, at times ultimate decisions are through the Principal. (Mentor SS, journal entry, September 2018)

Even though the assistant principal was supportive, the dearth of the principal's commitment to the Literacy Center and lack of instructional leadership skills (did not participate in professional development or instructional walk-throughs) had a negative impact on the school culture, teacher buy-in, and on the coach's ability to support teaching and learning.

Mentor SS provided examples, to describe the experience and said, "Goals are being adjusted and the [coach] and Asst. Principal do not seem to be willing to push the initiative," and "Teachers have been reluctant and admin has allowed them to resist." Additionally, she said, "The school environment continues to struggle due to many initiatives in place and new administration," and added, "The largest roadblock is the administrative demand to solely use the basal." The principal supported the district initiatives. This was an obstacle to alignment with the Literacy Center, and it served as a deterrent to coaching, teaching, and learning.

At the end of the school year, Mentor SS shared that there is new leadership at this school, and she implied that the new principal had demonstrated a renewed commitment to the Literacy Center and had engaged in collaborative planning to create professional learning structures. Mentor SS said, "A new principal who is familiar and attended all [Literacy] Center workshops is in place and will continue to support the program," and "The new admin a previous

literacy coach and hopefully will support the literacy coach with more of those duties versus admin responsibilities." In her April journal entry, she discussed her interaction with new leadership and said, "The literacy coach and admin are working to provide 2 days' professional development to foster teachers with a clear plan for components of the ELA block." Mentor SS felt this was a positive outlook for the upcoming school year and would lead to a collaborative partnership, improved coaching conditions, and to a supportive literacy environment for teaching and learning.

In District 7, the mentors (CC and AD) noted that some of the principals demonstrated characteristics of instructional leadership in their collaboration with school leadership; the level of principal involvement in instruction and curriculum varied between schools. They both did experience, however, that school leadership demonstrated commitment to improving reading instruction. Mentor CC said, "In all three schools, administrators continue to increase involvement, as they have been going on focus walks with the Academic Coach and I. This has improved the level of school buy-in and instructional knowledge." In her experience, the majority of the principals were invested in improving teaching and learning, and they demonstrated this through their visibility in the schools.

Similarly, Mentor AD had positive collaborative experiences with school leaders who were committed to improving reading. Mentor AD said, "I have begun to rely on the Instructional Specialists who are building level administrators so that continued sustainability will exist." Mentor AD described her experience:

> [Elementary 7B] administrators are currently hyper-focused on improvement of instruction in reading and will be conducting additional observations as well as scheduling further training. (Mentor AD, journal entry, December 2018)

In their interactions with their staff, these principals demonstrated that they were prepared to provide instructional guidance to teachers through their actions (walk-throughs, attended Literacy Center professional development). However, the collaboration with school leadership ended abruptly due to strained relationships with district leadership.

In summary, principals who demonstrated that they were knowledgeable in reading content and had experience as elementary school educators were perceived as more qualified instructional leaders by teachers, and this perception increased the likelihood of teacher buy-in and willingness to change their practices. The principals observed that their professional development provided through the Literacy Center improved their content knowledge and instructional leadership skills to provide instructional support and guidance to coaches and teachers. They also noticed a significant increase in their teachers' content knowledge, instructional practices, and confidence, as well as the development of a unified staff to improve reading; this improved coaching conditions and implementation of the Literacy Center framework. The mentors also experienced school leaders who participated in professional development and professional learning in schools (literacy team meetings, coaching sessions, walk-throughs in classes). These leaders were knowledgeable in reading practices, and they were more likely to create a collaborative culture and establish school learning structures to support coaching, teaching, and learning. In the next section, the relationship between established school structures to support teaching and learning and effective coaching conditions is examined.

Established School Structures for Teaching and Learning

Organizational structures should be intentionally designed to create a school environment focused on teaching and learning, and they should provide opportunities to maximize student

learning (Danielson, 2002). This discussion of school structures for teaching and learning is bifurcated into collaborative learning structures (professional development and school literacy team) and teaching and learning structures (scheduling and instructional alignment). Through data analysis, the evidence indicated that these school structures were determinants; they either contributed to a supportive coaching environment, or else they served as a deterrent to coaching.

Each mentor experienced the obstacle of inadequate time for coaching, teaching, and learning, and understood the significance of structures to negate this barrier. "If there is not a structured plan right there in the beginning with parameters in place, you might as well call it," said Mentor LW. Additionally, Mentor HR stated that there is a difference in the quality of professional development and instruction dependent upon the amount of time dedicated to it. She said, "Challenges, just time. Not enough time for the teachers to get to a full knowledge of anything." Data analysis provided evidence showing that when school leaders created structures that intentionally dedicated time for professional development, coaching, and collaborative learning, and this time improved the consistent implementation of reading practice. This use of time also improved school culture, motivation, and the engagement of teachers and coaches.

This section is organized into a format representative of the mentors' approach to establish school-wide structures (collaborative structures and professional development) to support individual classroom instruction (scheduling and instructional alignment). The section is structured in this manner to recount the progress of the development of teaching and learning structures within the school. The impact of these structures on teaching and coaching will be explained.

Collaborative Learning Structures

Collaboration is an essential part of professional learning and development. Danielson (2002) asserts "Teacher collaboration and teaming have shown that students benefit when teachers work together to promote student learning" (p. 43). Through data analysis, evidence indicated that effective coaching and implementation occurred when participants (teachers, coaches, and principals) collaborated with the mentors to modify schedules to create time for coaching, professional development, and the use of professional learning/collaboration structures (school literacy team and grade level team meetings). The mentors described their experience in supporting the establishment of school-wide professional development structures and explicated the significance of these structures for effective coaching and instruction.

School-wide Professional Development. The purpose of collaborative learning structures is to provide professional development and regular opportunities among colleagues to improve professional learning for teachers, coaches, and principals. Data analysis reveals that when school principals created structures for ongoing professional development (redelivery and school literacy teams) and participated in both of them; these structures improved school culture and teachers' consistent implementation of reading practices, increased content knowledge (reading), and improved coaching conditions.

Initially, the mentors' priority was to establish professional development (redelivery) that was embedded in the school schedule. This was essential for teachers/coaches needing professional development in teaching reading prior to beginning instruction (reading assessments, guided reading groups within a literacy block). Each mentor recounted their experience of how they navigated the obstacle of time for professional development and prepared the coach to facilitate redelivery.

In District 7, the Mentors (AD and CC) had the same experience with the minimal time that coaches supported the schools and the limited time for redelivery. Mentor AD described the teaching and learning structure of District 7; she felt that the issues of time stemmed from the district structure:

> As a district, [District 7] struggles with a cohesive structure. They are redelivering training using a whole group model. They are a system of academic coaches rather than a school based academic coach model. This presents problems with the redelivery as well as the support for schools. We are working on a plan for changing the model and through collaboration with the district have already put some changes into place. (Mentor AD, journal entry, September 2018)

The district's structure for disseminating the coaches to support schools prohibited them from providing adequate support to the schools; it created conditions for hastily delivered professional development with minimal follow-up to model implementation or to provide feedback. This also created scheduling issues because of the limited availability of coaches.

Likewise, Mentor AD shared that her coaches communicated apprehension about scheduling. She said, "Regarding improvement, the literacy coach expressed concerns about redelivery rollout time constraints and training/implementation gaps," and "her concern of time and redelivery and her inability to be on campus more often in the month of October [and] much of her time this month was spent in professional development or creating common assessments for the district." This was an ongoing issue throughout the school year, and the Mentors (AD and CC) provided supplemental support to schools and teachers.

Comparatively, Mentor CC shared that her coaches expressed concern about the structure as an obstacle to coaching and implementation, and Mentor CC said, "They are concerned with

the amount of time that is needed for redelivery and support of this particular program, considering that they are responsible for all areas of curriculum." Mentor CC herself was equally concerned and said:

> They are their own team, as opposed to being part of the school-based team. This influences our work because of the level of support received at each school. As a result, for the month of September, while all teachers met the redelivery outcome, little time was spent in the actual school building. (Mentor CC, journal entry, September 2018)

The mentors offered supplemental support to teachers due to the absence of the coaches.

To circumnavigate this obstacle, Mentor AD and Mentor CC facilitated the redelivery to Literacy Center participants in one district-wide professional development for the schools involved in the project; the Literacy Center's professional development is not intended to be facilitated in this manner. Mentor CC said, "We were able to maintain the "district level" redelivery format this month, due to the district calendar having a PD Day." Follow-up professional development was delivered at the schools by the coaches.

In Mentor HR's experience, all of her schools were able to develop professional learning structures to support collaboration and professional development; one school progressed at a much slower pace than the other schools because of a lack of school-wide systems when several new teachers were hired, and classroom vacancies occurred for the first few months of school.

The initial barrier she discussed was creating time for professional development for the staff, "Redelivery of 6 hours is not feasible within each schools' time constraints." She added, "Redelivery is limited to twice weekly collaborative planning." To resolve this issue, Mentor HR and the coaches and administrators developed a professional development plan, and she said, "They informed me of their training schedule for October and we are planning to prepare for

guided reading redelivery on the 29th," and "Administrators are all on board with providing coaches and teachers more time to collaborative plan lessons each week." This is evidence that when schools intentionally create professional learning structures, professional development is organically embedded in the schedule. This created regular opportunities to improve teachers' content knowledge and instructional methods, and it encouraged collaboration between teachers.

Mentor SS described these schools as having preexisting structures, and this example demonstrated the ease of providing professional development to staff with additional support from a coach. She said, "Redelivery has gone well at this site due to 100% buy in from admin and the Lit Team. The school is already in the practice of assessment (data) driven instruction," and "Fortunately, redelivery has gone well because this school only has Grade 3 participating and all teachers are able to attend the [Literacy] Center training."

Unlike her experience in two of her other schools, Mentor SS continually expressed concern that there was limited time in the schedule for professional development and for coaching the coach. She said, "The most pressing roadblock will be the amount of time required for redelivery," and "Group collaboration and additional time for group redelivery is needed." The time was limited because teachers' planning time was consumed with training for other initiatives or with school-based meetings; this was a deterrent to teachers' motivation and attitudes. Mentor SS said, "Teachers are frustrated when pulled during planning times and continue to seem overwhelmed with other initiatives in the building," and "A large percentage of the teachers are not receptive to losing a planning time for redelivery and approach sessions with a negative spirit." She noted, "After school is very limited / if any and planning times are not the best time for professional learning for teachers to buy in because of the reluctance of taking teacher planning time." This demonstrates that meagerness of professional learning structures to

support teaching and learning negatively influences the culture of the building and increases teachers' reluctance to change their practices.

In this experience, Mentor SS described how the teachers continually felt overwhelmed and bombarded with too many initiatives and were not provided with enough time for training or practice in between redelivery. Mentor SS said, "The redelivery continued to be overwhelming and more time is needed for schools to digest and implement the learned material," and "Each month, an entire day is spent planning the redelivery as the coach has felt overwhelmed trying to keep up with each grade level." To address this issue, the mentor collaborated with the school team to develop a professional development structure differentiated to support the needs of the school. Mentor SS said, "Revisions to the redelivery were made to make some information clearer or allow more time for teachers to process. The information was mostly given in small chunks of time," and "This month allowed us to catch up because of the amount of information that has been required to redeliver." Slowing the pace of implementation and delivering less content during each training did alleviate some of the tension associated with limited time for professional development and created more time for Mentor SS and her coach to collaborate in coaching sessions.

Comparatively, Mentor LW faced the same issue of time for delivering professional development. Mentor LW described her collaboration with the literacy team and discussed this concern. She said, "After meeting with the literacy team throughout the month and completing the PD redelivery for October we identified the timeline for implementation as an area of concern," and "We learned from the literacy team that teachers were overwhelmed with all of the professional development." The literacy team and mentor adjusted the professional development

schedule to allow more time for practice with the coach and implementation in between sessions.

In summary, professional development (redelivery and coaching) was an essential part of the Literacy Center initiative to build instructional capacity in coaches, teachers, and administrators. It was evident the school leaders who created time for professional development and allowed ample time for the teachers to implement and practice the reading content with the support of a coach were more likely to have a positive experience with coaching, and teachers were more likely to implement guided reading with fidelity.

School Literacy Team. The school literacy team is an important learning structure to support collaboration among school participants (principals, coach, and teachers) and to provide a recurring opportunity for collaborative learning; the evidence from the perceptions of the mentors indicated that the school literacy teams influenced implementation of reading practices, teacher engagement, and motivation, and that they increased school leadership participation. The purpose of the school-based literacy team structure is intended to be a collaborative professional learning structure that is "[designed] to differentiate professional learning," and to "ensure ongoing engagement and participation" (Magpuri-Lavell, 2018, p. 14). Data analysis provides evidence that three of the five mentors had established school literacy teams in most of their schools, and literacy team members were instrumental to implementation and contributed to effective coaching conditions; two of the mentors relied upon redelivery and grade level team meetings to provide professional learning and coaching to teachers.

Specifically, the mentors (LW, SS, HR) collaborated with the literacy teams on a regular basis. Mentor LW said, "We meet monthly to discuss progress of implementation and troubleshoot any issues with the literacy team member." The literacy team and mentor

partnership was significant in building capacity in staff and minimizing obstacles to teaching and learning. The mentors felt that the collaboration with the literacy team improved relationships and coaching, increased content knowledge (reading practices), improved instruction and implementation, fostered teacher leaders, monitored implementation, and addressed barriers to coaching and instruction.

In Mentor LW's experiences, she felt her literacy team members were instrumental in implementing guided reading or word study; they also provided feedback on their experience with reading instruction. She said, "The kindergarten literacy team member is implementing a new schedule and will share pros and cons. We will meet as a literacy team to discuss any changes needed," and "Using the K-1st literacy team to implement WJ and GR to work out any issues, prior to the other grade level teachers implementing." Mentor LW also noted consistent implementation of reading compared to teachers not involved with the literacy team and said, "Implementation of word sorts has begun in all K-3 classrooms and guided reading has begun in the classrooms of literacy team members." Additionally, she noted, "The coach and I were able to observe in the classrooms of the literacy team members and work with them on implementation." Mentor LW collaborated with her literacy teams frequently to improve reading instruction and implementation.

Furthermore, the literacy team created opportunities for distributed leadership. The members of the literacy team often served as school leaders, modeled for other teachers, and provided the information from the literacy team meeting to their grade level team with the coach. Mentor LW described literacy team members modeling for peers to develop a sustainable literacy system in their school:

> We are working with the individual literacy team members to discuss and model the components of WJ [word journeys] and GR [guided reading] in an effort to build sustainability. The intended outcome is for those teachers to serve as models for their grade level team when full implementation begins. The literacy team members are also meeting with their grade level team to discuss aspects of their schedule they would like for them to try implementing in the first phase of implementation (Mentor LW, journal entry, November 2018)

Mentor LW felt this is an essential process to build instructional capacity in teachers and sustainable professional learning structures.

In addition to acting as instructional leaders in the school, the literacy team members were important to monitoring the tone of the teachers in the building. During these meetings, the mentors and team members would often discuss obstacles and solutions to improve conditions for teaching and learning. In one example, Mentor LW described the staff was concerned about the pace of implementation, and teachers were overwhelmed with the amount of information. She said, "Teachers are concerned with the implementation of two programs simultaneously and the time for PD." To address the issue the mentor collaborated with the literacy team and coach to develop a solution to improve conditions for instruction and said, "We used this information to redesign our PD redelivery to include reasonable expectations for implementation." In addition, she noted, "We decided to slow down the process and are implementing WJ first with the intention of [guided reading] beginning after Christmas. This will also allow some time to assess students with [an assessment] in preparation for [guided reading]. The example provided by Mentor LW is evidence of literacy team members presenting barriers and developing solutions to improve professional learning structures.

Additionally, Mentor HR felt the school literacy team was significant to re-teaching content and clarifying misconceptions. She said, "I was also able to meet with the Literacy Team Members one-on-one to support them with firming up their understanding of Guided Reading, help them work out all the kinks and support them with collaborating with their colleagues." She also noted, "My next steps will be to provide one on one modeling and support to the coach in a 2-3 hour PD just for the coach followed by a PD that includes modeling for the literacy team."

In fact, she used this collaborative structure often to intentionally target reading instruction and felt it was an effective method. Mentor HR was describing her coaching plan to address the content deficit in her coaches and teachers. Her solutions were to "train the coaches in content so they can better support teachers" and to make "revisions to redelivery and classroom practices." She indicated she retaught content to the literacy team members and noticed an improvement in instruction and said, "Since I modified the content of my support this month with the coach and literacy team, changes were evident and immediate in classes because they were relevant and targeted." As a result of collaborating with the mentor and participating on the literacy team, the team members demonstrated an increase in content knowledge and implementation of teaching methods.

Moreover, the literacy team also provided an ongoing professional learning opportunity for principals since they participated on the team. Mentor HR said, "All administrators participate fully with data analysis and are more confident in their ability to observe classes and make note of differentiation evidence based on what the teachers and students are doing and saying." This improved their instructional leadership skills and their ability to support coaches and teachers.

Furthermore, Mentor HR felt the school literacy team afforded an opportunity to empower teachers to highlight their instructional strengths and to share knowledge with their colleagues to learn from one another. She described one of her experiences and the positive influence the literacy team has had on teachers, and she said:

> Teachers have been able to develop a schedule and receive continued support from the coach and myself as they increase their level of efficacy. This teacher has a vast knowledge of literacy content that will be shared in future Literacy Team meetings. (Mentor HR, journal entry, December 2018)

Mentor HR encouraged teachers to share their effective instructional practices or solutions to minimize instructional time within the literacy team meetings.

Equally important, she also developed leadership skills with the teachers by providing opportunities to present content to their colleagues in grade level meetings and professional development. Mentor HR said, "Next month I will plan PD to co-present guided reading and word sorts with the Coach, Literacy Team member and myself." The school literacy team was an important structure to improve content knowledge and leadership skills for teachers and the coaches.

Similarly to Mentor HR, Mentor SS often discussed the difference in instruction and implementation in literacy team members' classrooms and said, "Word sorts are in place in the literacy team member's classroom in all three groups. Needs to be extended to [all kindergarten-third grade classrooms]." Additionally, she said, "As [mentor], I am able to meet often with the full literacy team and 100% implementation and fidelity is evident in their classrooms. Pockets continue to be in place in other classrooms with strong pieces evident in each," and "A comparison by teachers who participate on the literacy team is being reviewed against the growth

of teachers who are not attending [Literacy] Center training." The mentors noticed an improvement in reading instruction in literacy team members' classrooms when compared to their peers who were not engaged with the Literacy Center initiative.

In District 7, the Mentors (AD and CC) collaborated with grade level teams of teachers and the coach and administration at times. Due to time constraints in supporting the schools in this district (the first semester of school), they did not have an established school literacy team at their schools but rather pockets of invested grade level teams or teacher leaders. Similar to the other mentors, they collaborated with the coach to teach reading content, guided reading, and word study strategies, and they addressed barriers to implementation in the team meetings. In one example provided by Mentor AD she said:

> The academic coach has redelivered information to foster growth and build theoretical background knowledge on early language and literacy development. [Elementary] teachers have begun to implement [word study] by administering the [assessment and beginning to analyze data. Several teachers at [Elementary] have also begun to utilize [guided reading] approach through the use of creating groups and creating lesson plans. Guided reading work has begun to be implemented in some classrooms. At [Elementary] teachers have administered formative reading assessments for the purposes of differentiated instruction in the area of both [word study] and Guided Reading. (Mentor AD, journal entry, November 2018)

This is evidence of the mentor's role in building capacity with the staff through grade level teams; Mentor AD supported the coach in facilitating professional development on reading content and strategies; the teachers were engaged in these practices and demonstrated implementation in some of the classrooms.

Without an established literacy team, the Mentors (AD and CC) were able to make progress with some teachers, but without this structure in place, they did not influence as many teachers as they had hoped. In Mentor CC's examples, she provided evidence that teachers attempted the new instructional practices for guided reading, but her examples also illustrated the lack of consistent implementation without a literacy team structure in their schools:

> While each teacher is on track with the expectation of using the Guided Reading Lesson Plan for guided reading, the level of fidelity varies by teacher. Now that observations have been completed, next month's goals will be much more specific to the FIDELITY of implementation. Thus far, the commonality of glow and grows are as follows: Glow- Teachers are attempting all components of the LP; Grows- Clearly and sequentially following all components of the plan in its entirety. (Mentor CC, journal entry, November 2018)

As demonstrated in Mentor CC's example, it is evident that without a literacy team, effective reading instruction is less likely to be implemented on a regular basis. Irregular reading instruction does not have a significant effect on teaching and learning. Coaching in this district was also sporadic due to the coaches' assignments to multiple schools, and it can be inferred that the teachers were receiving less support to improve their instruction as well.

In conclusion, the evidence in response to effective coaching conditions demonstrates that professional development and school literacy teams are determinants in coaching and in teaching conditions. Teachers were more likely to implement new instructional practices with fidelity in their classrooms when professional development (redelivery) was a priority of school leadership and when it was embedded into the school professional learning structure with sufficient time for learning, practice, and implementation in between redelivery sessions. This

improved coaching conditions and created time for coaching sessions to occur and coaches to support implementation. If teachers felt they did not have ample time in between redelivery, this negatively impacted instruction and led to inconsistent implementation. Furthermore, when school literacy teams were established and collaborated regularly, this collaboration improved school culture, engagement, and implementation.

Specifically, literacy team members demonstrated improvement and consistent implementation of reading practices; they also developed leadership skills and fostered growth in their colleagues. Teachers who were not on the literacy team were less likely to engage in regular collaboration with peers, and they demonstrated inconsistent implementation of reading practices. In the next section, teaching and learning structures specific to reading instruction in the classroom are described and the ways in which these structures influence teaching and coaching are explained.

Teaching and Learning Structures

Teaching and learning structures (scheduling and instructional alignment) are significant to the effectiveness of coaching conditions and instruction. Throughout the school year, time restraints were a deterrent to collaboration and coaching. Analysis of the data provided evidence to support that the determinants of effective instruction and coaching were scheduling, time to coach, instructional time in the literacy block, and alignment of initiatives. Each role group (principals, coaches, teachers, mentors) expressed that these were barriers, and the professional learning structures (schedules and alignment) either improved coaching and teaching conditions or remained a hindrance to instruction. Equally important, it is evident through the perception of the role groups that teaching and learning structures (scheduling and alignment) influenced school cultures and the relationships between principals and teachers.

Intentional Scheduling. A common deterrent to coaching and instruction was time. Many of the mentors spent the entire first semester collaborating with the participants to adjust schedules to create time for instruction and coaching. Through analysis of evidence, the allocation of time for literacy instruction, collaboration, and coaching was shown to be a determinant of effective coaching. Some of the hindrances that limited flexibility in modifying schedules were multiple initiatives, departmentalization, the reluctance of teachers to alter their schedules, and collaboration times with support staff (special education, English Language Learners (ELL), intervention teachers). Each mentor encountered this issue (time for coaching and instruction), but the mentors had different experiences with their ability to collaborate on schedule modification with the schools to remove barriers to coaching and instruction. Mentor AD and Mentor CC described the common experience of all of the mentors concerning schedules and minimal time for coaching and instruction. Mentor AD said:

> One thing that could be improved school-wide is the consistency in which guided reading is being done by setting a firm schedule and monitoring that schedule to ensure that guided reading is taking place every scheduled occurrence. (Mentor AD, journal entry, December 2018)

Mentor AD noticed some teachers did not adhere to the established schedule, and that this was a deterrent to instruction and coaching.

Moreover, Mentor CC discussed the teachers were not implementing guided reading with fidelity because of time constraints and said:

> Teachers are finding it difficult to see every group, every day. We discussed that they have the flexibility to make things work for their students. If they need to see 2 or 3 groups that day and another on the following day, that is fine for now. We have looked at

schedules to help determine how to better organize the instructional day. (Mentor CC, journal entry, October 2018)

Inconsistent instruction is unlikely to improve student outcomes. The mentors assisted teachers in providing solutions to encourage daily instruction in guided reading groups.

In order to address this issue Mentor CC said, "Schedules were modified to help support consistent instruction." She and Mentor AD primarily supported the teachers with adjusting their schedules because the District 7 coaches only made it to the school once or twice a week. Each mentor supported changes to the schedule to create time for instruction.

In Mentor LW's experience, she collaborated with her schools and each grade level schedule to implement their literacy block and said, "The coach, literacy team, teachers, and myself to discuss scheduling for implementation of Word Journeys and guided reading in daily schedules." The kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers would begin implementing their schedules prior to third grade teachers due to barriers to third grade teachers' schedules. They adjusted schedules to increase literacy time for teachers and said, "Grade level will begin adjusting and practicing [a] new schedule with students," and "The kindergarten literacy team member is implementing a new schedule and will share pros and cons. Schedule is being adjusted to have 80 minutes for [a] small group." Furthermore, the mentor and coach continually modified schedules to address issues and maximize instructional time during the literacy block. For kindergarten through second grade teachers, Mentor LW said, "Schedules are a challenge and teachers seem to waste time or lose time in transition, therefore not "getting to" to small groups every day," and "Schedules were adjusted to accommodate seeing the lowest [guided reading] group every day."

By February, she shared her experience with the kindergarten and first grade, and she said, “Teachers are adjusting to the schedule change.” Mentor LW expressed that there were still scheduling issues with second grade and said, “Second grade seems to struggle because they are the only self-contained grade so the same teachers are involved in all initiatives as they teach all subjects.” However, Mentor LW had a completely different experience with changing the schedule for third grade teachers than for the other grades since they presented different challenges to scheduling.

Moreover, Mentor LW described the hindrances to the third grade teachers’ schedule changes as departmentalization, students receiving services outside of the classroom (special education, ELL, RTI interventions), and instructional requirements for state assessments; these factors reduced flexibility in changing the schedule and the ability to create an 80 to 90 minute literacy block (guided reading and word study). Mentor LW discussed the situation of third grade at one of her schools. She said, “There are approximately 200 students in this grade so working with their schedules is difficult because their students are being pulled for SPED, ESOL, Intervention, etc… at various times,” and “Integrating Word Journeys and Guided Reading into already established schedules is difficult when students are being pulled for various services.” She additionally said, “Third grade team-teaches so some of their schedules have been difficult to work with because students are pulled during their AM class for intervention,” and “Third grade is also tested grade so we are being careful not to interfere with required district mandates.” These scheduling conflicts prolonged implementation for third grade teachers.

Likewise, Mentor SS described a similar experience with schedule conflicts stemming from departmentalization and other student support services, and she said, “Second grade schedules lend themselves and seem to be more conducive as opposed to third grade even though

both are “departmentalized.” She had a comparative experience with Mentor LW with limitations to altering schedules. Additionally, Mentor SS experienced a constant struggle with scheduling at some of her schools throughout the year. She said, “Continue to “tweak” their schedules to ensure Guided Reading groups are in place everyday,” and “Adherence to schedules (a lot of time is wasted in whole group instruction) and created schedules that provide the most time for language instruction and that will provide time for small group instruction.” Mentor SS encountered school processes that hindered her ability to suggest modifications to the schedules; various initiatives consumed time in the schedule, and these impeded instruction and coaching.

Furthermore, Mentor HR’s experiences differed between schools. In one of her schools, she described her obstacles to instructional time as limited time in their schedules and the reluctance of some of the teachers to adhere to the schedule change. She said, “Literacy Block Teachers and coaches also need more time and support with creating an outline of an effective literacy block and support with the components of the literacy block as well,” and “All schools, based on guided reading observations, made changes to their literacy block to make for more guided reading time.” Mentor HR did acknowledge that some of the school staff who were not embracing the change in schedule to increase instructional time during the literacy block were not as successful with implementation, and she said, “Progress is not being made because of scheduling and time concerns.” It was evident there was less buy-in among this staff due to inconsistent implementation and the proclivity not to alter their schedules; these factors created a less conducive environment for coaching and instructional change.

In her other experience, Mentor HR collaborated with principals to create time to support learning in the classroom. She said, “We are working on a schedule to help teachers with establishing better routines and transitions to help with guided reading and word journeys,” and

"Establish a schedule and train teachers on how to implement the schedule." Additionally she said, "The schedule has been introduced. Now the teams have been given the task of outlining their schedule minute by minute." She provided additional supporting evidence of the positive influence of intentional scheduling for teaching and learning and said:

> Teachers are learning and instructing Word Journeys with nearly 90% and Guided Reading is 100% implementation. This is a result of the committed work of the coach and administrators in co-creating schedules and weekly meetings with the coach and teachers having materials and guides readily available. (Mentor HR, journal entry, December 2018)

In this example, the collaboration of participants and modifications to schedules improved the fidelity of implementation.

In fact, Mentor HR shared that the coaches and teachers also reported or demonstrated that the intentional scheduling (time for coaching and increased time for reading instruction) improved their performance. Mentor HR shared one of her coach's experiences and said, "The coach continues to prioritize observations amid testing. She stated the schedule she created keeps her accountable to her time." Mentor HR described the improvement she noticed in teachers and stated, "Their implementation of guided reading has improved because of their new schedule," and "Teachers reported their literacy station rotation schedule is now firm and has allowed for better guided reading lessons." Intentional scheduling is an important school process to improve teaching and coaching conditions.

Given these points, instruction and coaching are more effective when instruction, collaboration, and coaching opportunities are intentionally embedded in the schedule. If school participants adapted their schedules and adhered to the schedule changes to increase time for the

literacy block and coaching, implementation and the teachers' and coaches' performance improved. It was evident that implementing reading instruction was more likely to be inconsistent in grade levels or schools that were unable to establish a schedule conducive to learning. The next section will discuss school structures to support curriculum and instruction and the significance of the assessment process and alignment of initiatives to improve student achievement.

Instructional Initiatives and Alignment. Another hindrance to instruction and coaching was the alignment of initiatives. It is evident that aligning initiatives increased engagement and motivation from teachers and created more time for literacy instruction and coaching to occur. The mentors' experience with aligning initiatives was previously discussed in the mentor and district leadership to describe their relationship, but it is revisited again in this section because initiative alignment is significant to establishing school structures for teaching and learning (curriculum, assessment, and instruction). To reiterate, the ability of the mentors and school participants to collaboratively align initiatives stemmed from the partnership of the Literacy Center with district leadership; some of the district leaders did not support the idea of compromising their current initiatives and were reluctant to align with the Literacy Center program. Instructional alignment improved instructional practices, teacher motivation, and created conditions conducive to teaching and coaching. The mentors described their experiences in supporting school staff with instructional alignment at their schools. Each role group expressed that scheduling, initiatives, and the amount of time allotted to instruction were major deterrents to teaching and coaching.

In the teachers' focus group, the teachers noted that the amount of time in the schedule and multiple initiatives were challenges throughout the year. One teacher described the teachers'

struggle to abandon previous practices and employ new methods embedded in the Literacy Center initiative, and she said, “My challenge is that I had to drop a lot of things. you know when you’re in that routine and you know what you like, telling us we have to drop it and do something else is difficult,” and “When they started doing it, they could see it was good. It was better.” Another teacher described the difficulty in altering her schedule for the time for small guided reading groups in the literacy block due to the other initiatives they were responsible for, and she said, “The most we could come up with is 15 minutes because there’s non-negotiables in our school. So we cut out as much as we could cut out because there were county wide there are things we can’t cut out.” Sufficient time for teaching and learning and alignment and amount of initiatives were determinants in the effectiveness of teaching and coaching.

Additionally, Mentor SS had different experiences with aligning initiatives between the districts she supported. Mentor SS described District 5 and said, “We are constantly tweaking their schedule to try to accommodate all components.” She continually noted throughout the year that the misalignment of curriculum and instructional goals was a deterrent to coaching and to implementing any initiative. She described how multiple initiatives impacted the teachers; they were overwhelmed and felt like they never had time for collaboration, planning, or teaching. Mentor SS said, “Teacher buy-in remains to be a struggle simply because they are exhausted with the amount of new information that they are required to incorporate into their schedules. Not just [Literacy] Center [initiatives].” She noted, “[At Elementary 5A] where the coach is K-8 and the teachers are not as determined and other initiatives were going on as well, we didn’t and we will not see the same results as we did at [Elementary 6A and 6B].” The meagerness of staff buy-in was due to competing initiatives and lack of motivation and engagement on the part of the

coach and the teachers. Mentor SS experienced the negative impact of the multiple initiatives and felt that they impeded instruction, collaboration, coaching, and the culture of the school.

In contrast, at Mentor SS's other schools, staff members agreed that instructional alignment would be beneficial to improve reading instruction. Mentor SS described this district as willing to align curriculum to improve instruction and coaching conditions and described one administrator, "She is constantly supporting teachers, working on new work plans embedding Word Journeys and Guiding Reading into existing initiatives." The alignment of curriculum and collaboration was not an issue at this school, but the coach's availability to provide coaching was an issue. Mentor SS said, "A full time supportive coach could bring the final piece to this system to ensure continued efforts of the initiative." The alignment of initiatives did improve implementation and instruction.

Likewise, Mentors LW worked with district and school leadership who welcomed support and alignment to improve instruction and reading. Mentor LW said, "At the district level, they are seeking help with aligning programs and assessments, scheduling, curriculum and the procurement of resources." Her schools were able to align initiatives and modify the schedules to increase time for teaching and coaching, but they did encounter challenges during the assessment windows (three times a year). Mentor LW described ways in which the teachers and the coach were concerned with the amount of assessments at certain times of the year and whether these new assessments as a component of the Literacy Center framework would impact their standardized assessments. Mentor LW said:

> Teachers are concerned with the amount of testing and would like to discuss the correlations between assessments and if some could be discontinued. There is some concern as to how these new programs will affect their [standardized assessment] scores

since they have based on [another literacy assessment] in the past. (Mentor LW, journal entry, December 2018).

Similar to Mentor LW, the other mentors encountered the issue of time for assessments in addition to instruction. School literacy teams, mentors, and coaches assisted with administering and scoring assessments; they also assisted with analysis and grouping of students in collaboration with the teachers.

Likewise, Mentor HR had supportive principals and district leadership; they collaborated to develop professional learning structures in their schools and to increase instructional time and initiative alignment. She said, "Teachers are working to meet deliverables but need additional support in "making it fit" with other initiatives and programs. Mentor HR described the collaboration with her school in aligning Literacy Center and district initiatives and said, "Support them with a plan they have already established to support teachers with full implementation of Word Journeys and Guided Reading in conjunction with their district initiatives." This partnership permitted the opportunity to remove barriers to coaching and instruction.

Comparatively, Mentor CC had the same experience as Mentor AD with multiple assessments and district initiatives/ assessments limiting time for Literacy Center activities and implementation, and she said, "With it being so close to the end of the quarter, there were a lot of common assessments taking place." The multiple assessments also minimized time for instruction and coaching:

Teachers have administered the DSA assessment and completed the DSA Class Progress Chart. During PD this month, teachers correlated those findings to where students are

currently performing in [phonics program], Guided Reading, the FRA, and the Reading Inventory. (Mentor CC, journal entry, October 2018)

Mentor CC discussed her efforts to support instructional alignment.

In their experience, Mentor CC and Mentor AD worked with schools on instructional alignment (Literacy Center and district initiatives). They collaborated with the coaches and teachers to increase time to administer assessments for all of their requirements and to align initiatives (phonics program and guided reading) to begin implementation in the classroom.

Mentor CC described her experience of collaborating with the coach and teachers to align the curriculum. She said, "So by aligning that curriculum, it was able to really get some buy-in because it didn't feel as if we were starting over but they learned a lot in that short period of time when they allowed us in….the intentional and strategic alignment of District and Deal Center initiatives will help ensure sustainability and school/teacher buy-in." Mentors CC and AD supported alignment at the school level throughout the first semester until the district leaders were resistant to collaborate with the Literacy Center. Mentor AD had the same experience as CC with her schools.

To conclude, established school structures for teaching and learning (professional development, school literacy teams, intentional schedules, and instructional alignment) led to an improvement in content knowledge and instructional practices, consistent implementation, created a positive school culture, fostered leadership in teachers and coaches, and improved teaching and coaching conditions. Failing to establish these structures, increased the likelihood of inconsistent implementation, minimized time for instruction and coaching, increased frustration and decreased engagement for teachers, created a negative culture, and led to ineffective coaching and instructional conditions.

Clearly Defined Coaching Role

The evidence from the perceptions of the mentors identified determinants of effective coaching conditions as those in which the coach understands the role, serves solely as a full-time coach, is knowledgeable (in reading and in coaching), and is able to devote sufficient time to the role. Every mentor identified these factors in their individual interviews, and these same factors were described in their journal entries throughout the year. In the clearly defined coaching role section, the subthemes are comprehension of the coaching role, the fractured coaching role, and time for coaching, teaching, and learning.

The role of the coach is to support teachers and collaborate with them to improve their content knowledge and instructional practices in order to increase student achievement; it is an intentional process (coaching cycle) which requires the teacher to have an opportunity for continuous practice (implementing new skills with guidance) from a knowledgeable other (coach) to improve instructional capacity. This process fosters teachers to become self-directed learners (White, Smith, Kunz, & Nugent, 2015; Cooter, 2003; Costa & Garmston, 2002). Coaches are more likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning when they are knowledgeable about the expectations of the coaching role, possess knowledge of content and pedagogy, and consistently implement the coaching cycle with teachers. Through the perceptions of the participants (mentors, coaches, teachers), determinants of the coaching role were identified as comprehension of the coaching role, the fractured coaching role, and the limited time for coaching, teaching, and learning. These contributing factors affected whether or not a coach was effective in that role.

The comprehension of the coaching role is a determinant for a coach to be effective in this role. Every mentor encountered the barrier of the coaches' lack of understanding of the

coaching role at the beginning of the year, and this was a deterrent to coaching. Mentor CC said, "And that is something we found from the beginning is that there is not a clear understanding of what coaching is." The majority of the coaches were new coaches and had been teachers the previous year; many of them were new to the school, and some of the schools had never employed a reading coach until that year. These factors emphasized the need for the coaches to obtain an understanding of their role; the mentors assisted in the coaches' transformation from the mindset of a teacher to that of a coach.

The coaching role is often fractured into multiple roles and responsibilities, which decreases the time the coach supports instruction (Heineke, 2013; Cooter 2003). Each mentor encountered issues with their coaches having limited time for coaching because of serving in multiple roles, being responsible for multiple initiatives, or supporting several schools, and these time limits were a barrier to coaching.

Furthermore, sufficient time to engage in coaching, teaching, and learning determines the effectiveness of the coach's ability to perform in this role. The time constraints on supporting teachers and performing coaching responsibilities are additional obstacles. Every mentor had the issue of limited time for professional development (mentor-coach, coach-teacher, redeliveries). The participants (mentors, coaches, teachers) all indicated that the shortage of time was a significant hindrance to coaching, implementation, and instruction.

Through data analysis, coaches are shown to be more likely to be effective in their role if they are full-time coaches; serve only as coaches; and are knowledgeable about their role, content area, and coaching skills. In order to be effective, they also need to be allowed sufficient amounts of time to engage in professional development (receive professional development from their mentors), to provide professional development consistently (coach teachers and facilitate

grade level or school-wide collaborative learning), and to perform their coaching responsibilities. The next sections will describe the determinants for coaches to be effective in their roles and the conditions necessary for them to positively influence teaching and learning.

Comprehension of the Coaching Role

It is evident from the perceptions of the mentors that the coaches were unclear about their role at the beginning of the year, and this lack of clarity hindered their ability to coach teachers. Every mentor encountered the barrier of inexperienced coaches, but each coach demonstrated progress throughout the year as the coaches gained understanding of their role and responsibilities. The mentors educated the coaches on the expectations of this role and modeled the role in addition to teaching reading content and coaching skills to them; this instruction was significant in improving coaching competencies to build instructional capacity.

In Mentor CC's individual interview based on her experience as a coach, she provided a narrative about the inconsistency of coaching roles across schools and districts, and she stated that this is an overarching concern; her experience was similar to the experience of the coaches who participated with the Literacy Center. Mentor CC said, "Not understanding on what coaching is. And we have been using that term for a while but I do not think there is a clear understanding of what coaching actually is. Being able to ask those probing questions." She stated, "Instruction coach looks so different at different schools even within the same district because some are not used as true coaches." She discussed in her experience as a coach. "As an instructional coach in the past, I took over a fifth grade classroom. I became a substitute teacher. Um, also, pseudo administrators. Not actually focused on coaching." This revealed she had experienced coaching situations where she assumed additional responsibilities, and these duties had hindered her performance in the capacity of a coach; she accurately described some of the

coaching conditions for the new coaches within the districts participating in the Literacy Center initiative.

Additionally, Mentor CC described a common issue with coaches in that they are hired without any coaching or leadership experience, and they are not content experts in the area they support; this occurred with many of the coaches in the schools the Literacy Center supported. Mentor CC said, “Because you could be a wonderful teacher but that does not mean that you are a good leader and able to support or share,” and she added, “Sometimes we have those general roles where we have people with no reading background. No literacy background. No coach. No math. That’s like a science person trying to support reading without that background.” The majority of the coaches did not have coaching experience and had only limited knowledge in literacy.

Additionally, Mentor AD further described the coaches in District 7 (the one that she and Mentor CC supported) and their barriers to coaching (knowledge of role and multiple responsibilities). Mentor AD described her experience with the coaches and the meagerness of their awareness of their role and responsibilities as coaches. “The coaches did not have that experience of how to be a coach,” she noted, “So they were trying to finagle how to be a coach along with trying to learn the content. And it is just too much. You can’t do it. It is unfeasible.” Mentor AD felt that attempting to support multiple schools by assigning new coaches who lacked extensive reading knowledge and had only minimal experience in coaching was not an ideal situation in which to build capacity in these coaches.

For example, Mentor AD described the situation of the coaches in their district (AD and CC); she stated that the coaches spent a significant amount of time in district level training at the beginning of the school since they supported different subject areas and other district initiatives.

She recounted the barriers the coaches encountered and the negative impact these barriers had on coaching conditions:

> Unless they're at that school for a significant amount of time and focused on literacy alone, it can't happen—it can happen but it's not conducive to the best situation for an academic coach in our program as a whole because yes, they feel like literacy is important, but they have 99 thousand other things, including math, science, and social studies, especially from district level that they're trying to push into schools. (Mentor AD, focus group, May 13, 2019)

Her interaction with the coaches demonstrates the implications of an indeterminate coaching role; the new coaches were unclear about their role, and their numerous responsibilities impeded their ability to gain understanding of this role or to serve as coaches.

Equally important, it is evident through analyzing Mentor AD's experiences that additional hindrances to effective coaching conditions include coaches being required to support multiple schools, to coach in different content areas, or to serve in other roles in addition to coaching. These factors created an inadequate situation for coaches to build capacity in teachers. The conditions increased the likelihood that the coach and the school administrator were unaware of the job expectations of a coach, and coaches were assigned other responsibilities that decreased their time to support teachers in the classroom.

Comparably, Mentor SS expressed a sentiment similar to comments made by mentors AD and CC, noting that coaches' lack understanding of their role and the limits placed on their abilities to serve only as coaches impeded coaching. In Mentor SS's experience, she had new coaches who had minimal understanding of the coaching role, but the significant barrier she faced was the coach not being dedicated to perform only coaching responsibilities. Mentor SS

felt that this combination (being unfamiliar with the role and performing multiple responsibilities and roles in the school) was a deterrent to coaching. She advocated throughout the year that her coaches needed to understand "[The] role of coach" and she "encouraged an "active" role in classrooms." She further explained the additional tasks the coach had assumed could be avoidable and said, "[The] other responsibilities that often impede progress and may or may not be necessary (Ex. May assume some administrative roles, shared between schools, etc.)." Throughout the year, in Mentor SS's experience, it was evident that the coach's role was undefined, and expectations for serving as a coach were minimalized; this created conditions for fewer coaching opportunities and served as a deterrent to coaching and teaching.

As another example she noted, "The LC [coach] is stretched between K-8 classrooms and is responsible for school data etc. She is not supported with specific times to be in classrooms etc. and this continues to be a huge weakness." She indicated that the coaches were consumed with other responsibilities, and this prolonged their limited understanding of their role.

Unlike the other mentors, Mentor LW discussed the fact that her coach encountered a situation dissimilar to what the other coaches experienced when they transitioned to the coaching role. The coach was new to her role but not to her school; this created a different dynamic, and initially the coach struggled with the transition from teacher to coach within her own building. Mentor LW said, "My coach is also new to her current position and is now coaching teachers she once worked with so she is adjusting to this new role," and added, "She is learning to not take criticism or negativity from the teachers personally and that it comes with the job." She felt this was the "only deterrent because she knew grades it was hard for her to come in another role above them and build. She had a different relationship with them." As she learned her role, she was able to navigate the school environment as a coach and former teacher throughout the year.

Furthermore, Mentor LW initially noticed a change in her coach demonstrating an understanding of her role; her confidence in her coaching ability was increased when she better understood her role, and then she was able to focus on supporting instruction. Mentor LW described how her coach evolved from teacher to coach, and the coach recognized she had to transition to the mindset of a coach to separate herself as a former colleague of the teachers in the building. Mentor LW described this interaction and transformation over time and said, "I had to gradually make her understand because her role had changed. She could no longer play that and that everyone has a role to play in school and yours is now on the other side of the fence," adding, "So that was good thing. She learned from it and knows her new role is entirely different relationship with teachers." This is evidence that as coaches gain an understanding of their role it improves their confidence and increases the likelihood of professional growth (in content and in coaching skills).

Additionally, Mentor HR frequently described her major barriers to coaching throughout the year as the lack of content knowledge and the inexperience of her coaches; she also noted that great teachers do not always develop into great coaches. Mentor HR said, "Both of them are brand new to coaching. And they just came from the classroom. Well, one was a special ed teacher. One was just a regular classroom teacher. So, they don't have a content specific knowledge base." This is evidence that her coaches did not understand their roles and required extensive support from Mentor HR at the beginning of the year to learn these roles, the reading content and the skills required to be a coach. She said, "They need the content knowledge. The literacy knowledge. And if they are enable to really share content. Sometimes you have coaches who know a lot, but they do not know how to share that content."

For example, Mentor HR described how the coaches operated from a teacher's mindset in the beginning of the year and acted as peers when coaching other teachers instead of building capacity; she stated that they did not understand the coaching cycle and lacked the skills to develop teachers' instructional methods. She said, "[They] observe teachers and provide feedback that was superficial." The coaches would provide feedback and say, "The classroom was disorganized. The class was noisy. She was fifteen minutes off her schedule." This was evidence the coaches did not understand the purpose of their role in improving teacher and student outcomes. She discussed the point that as they learned their role and increased their reading and coaching skills, they demonstrated greater understanding of their role. "Their feedback was more specific to instruction. It was, "I noticed that she gave them an opportunity to turn and talk. I noticed she gave them provided feedback that was clear; she clarified things," she said when describing her coaches. In this example, Mentor HR demonstrated the coaches' meager understanding of their role and how that hindered coaching conditions until the coaches understood the coaching role and that their purpose was to improve instruction.

As the year progressed, Mentor HR described the coaches' independence and confidence in their role in the last few months of school, "Coaches are more independent and call or email me with questions that reflect a high level of understanding of the program objectives." Mentor HR's description of her coaches demonstrated their growth and improvement as coaches. She said:

> It was profoundly evident how much coaches are becoming more independent in their ability to problem solve and move teachers to higher levels of independence and intentionality. As the year started, it was hard to conceive how coaches would thrive without my support at the end of year. (Mentor HR, journal entry, May 2019)

The mentors who were able to regularly coach their coaches noticed as those coaches gained a clear understanding of their role and improved their professional competencies by the end of the year.

In conclusion, the coaches' understanding of their role is a determinant of effective coaching conditions. It is evident that when coaches do not understand their role, the coach functions as a resource teacher and provides surface level support to teachers, which is unlikely to build instructional capacity. Through the perceptions of the mentors, as coaches transitioned from the mindset of teachers and developed a coaching mentality (a deeper understanding of their role), the likelihood of their implementing the coaching cycle was increased. Implementation of reading practices in the classroom improved, and coaches improved in their professional competencies. Another common barrier to coaching stems from coaches' lack of understanding of their role and the fact that this role is often fractured into several responsibilities, thus impeding their ability to coach teachers. This barrier is discussed in the following section.

The Fractured Coaching Role

A determining factor in effective coaching is the coach's ability to consistently support teaching and learning and to actively perform in the coaching role. The coach's role is often fractured into multiple roles and responsibilities; this is a deterrent to coaching. The evidence from the perceptions of the participants (teachers, coaches, and mentors) consistently indicated that when coaches are unable to perform solely in the role of a coach, their ability to support instruction is reduced, and their support is unlikely to have a significant impact on teaching and learning.

Additionally, the majority of mentors encountered this issue of the fractured coaching roles, and they expressed throughout the year how the multiple roles/responsibilities of the coaches negatively affected their ability to participate in professional development (coaching with the mentors) and to provide professional development to (coach) teachers.

Reflecting on her interactions as a coach, Mentor CC said, "So in order to support instructional coaches that have to actually have to be serving in the capacity of a coach." In her experience with coaches, and as a coach herself, she had experienced coaches performing in various positions and serving minimally in the coaching role. She felt this was a disservice to the coach, the teachers, and the students. She described examples of a coach serving in other varied capacities and said:

> Not a copy maker. Not a substitute teacher. Not a part time media specialist. It has to actually… It has to be someone that is available to support and also have a literacy background; and I know that seems like a given. (Mentor CC, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

In District 7, her interactions with coaches were limited due to the coaches supporting various content areas, multiple schools, several grade levels, and having minimal coaching experience; the coaches' significant amount of responsibilities impeded their ability to collaborate with the mentor and to coach the teachers.

Furthermore, Mentor AD served the same district as Mentor CC, and she described the multiple responsibilities of the coach and how they impeded the ability to function as a coach. She said:

> Then they may be RTI and on student support team meetings, they may be in charge of that. They may be in charge of some other program that the district is pushing. What was

> it, Read 180? We had a coach who was a Read 180 coach and was still responsible for a school. Until we get that piece that I thought was there within the parameters or the key pieces, that that person was a literacy coach for that school all the time, or most of the time, it's going to be difficult to see massive growth in these programs. (Mentor AD, focus group, May 13, 2019)

In her experience, Mentor AD felt the conditions they encountered when supporting the coaches in this district created impractical circumstances for these coaches to be successful in any of their responsibilities, especially in building capacity with teachers.

Comparatively, Mentor SS encountered similar challenges with fractured coaching roles, but her coaches had multiple roles within a school. Mentor SS said, "Her [coach] duties are many and she is very stretched so it limits her amount of classroom visits etc. Classroom instruction seems to be improving; however, remains to be in pockets," adding, "More interaction between literacy coach and teachers needs to be present to ensure accountability and further growth." Additionally, she said, "The coach has felt overwhelmed trying to keep up with each grade level. The coach has additional duties as well, which notably is a concern." She described the coach's performance in various roles as a deterrent to coaching throughout the year.

Over time, she and the coaches strategically created time to collaborate with teachers and to support them, but this time was limited; she felt her coaches did not progress to their potential due to their limited availability for coaching sessions and supporting teachers. She described the experience with one of her coaches and said:

> Because they A: are not able to be in classrooms to support teachers, the planning with the two of us is difficult when she's a media specialist as well, or an RTI teacher that she's responsible for students daily. So that was a huge struggle. We made it work but it's

> not nearly as effective as it could've been with a full time coach. (Mentor SS, journal entry, April 2019)

In her experience with the schools, the coaches served in multiple roles, and this was a significant obstacle to coaching.

Comparably, the teacher and coach from Mentor SS's school described the same barriers in their focus groups when asked about challenges for the coach or during collaboration with the coach. The teacher said, "She does everything, that's all she does all day long. We don't have an instructional coach to come in and offer us help so we're on our own." The teacher also said, "The [coach is the] RTI teacher, and she has kids all day long. Plus she does the [Literacy Center]'s testing for the entire school, which now she's doing some math testing for the entire school," and she stated, "So, we don't have somebody that can walk in my room and offer me assistance."

In the coaches' focus group, one of the Mentor SS's coaches discussed her main challenge for the year as functioning in two full-time roles and said, "I am the media instructional specialist not just a coach." Another of Mentor SS's coaches expressed a similar statement while referring to other coaches in the focus group:

> The challenge for me is that I am the RTI interventionist, like they are, and she is for the whole school. And then pulling kids out for interventions and then I'm being pulled out for these meetings, which I am really glad because I have learned a lot. So basically, just time, when you're not just a coach you know and you have other duties in addition to being a coach. (Coach, focus group, May 13, 2019)

The coach discussed how she and the mentor attempted to rectify the issue of her multiple roles and responsibilities but were unable to resolve the problem during that school year. Both coaches

indicated that collaboration with the mentor improved conditions (created more time for coaching), and that they were able to somewhat perform better in their coaching roles due to the support from the mentor.

Unlike the other mentors, Mentor LW was consulted about the coaching position by the schools and district prior to hiring a coach; this was an advantageous circumstance for her. Mentor LW recommended one full-time coach to the district and said, "Because she is one full time coach and for you it would be beneficial because my school is a pre-K -1st and the other is 2nd-5th." Fortunately, for Mentor LW, she had one full-time literacy coach for two schools, and this created effective coaching conditions. She described their situation:

> When we delivered everything I was able to meet with just that one coach. She is just literacy. So we actually had time to sit down and go through the redelivery of everything. So if she had questions we talked it through. We would walk through it. But even at that, as the year went on she was given more and more to do. She made sure she just worked around it and she worked within the parameters. And again, I saw her four days a week. That is like having a full time person hired for your district. You know where the other ones were only seeing them once a week. (Mentor LW, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

In her experience, it was evident that a full-time literacy coach primarily committed to improving reading created efficacious coaching conditions; the mentor and coach were able to collaborate regularly, and she was able to coach the teachers and to facilitate ongoing professional development.

However, Mentor LW discussed the fact that as the year progressed, her coach acquired more responsibilities, which was a strain on the coaching role; she said, "Um, again mine was

fortunate that she was just literacy. But even at that, as the year went on she was given more and more to do." This is significant to acknowledge that in an ideal coaching situation (full-time reading coach who serves two schools and serves only as a coach) her ability to excel in her coaching role was impeded as she accumulated extra responsibilities within the school.

Similar to those of Mentor LW, Mentor HR's coaches were only serving as coaches, but initially they did not understand their role or have the content/coaching knowledge to act as effective coaches. They did encounter time restraints because the school staff implemented multiple initiatives, and this limited their ability to function primarily as coaches for teaching reading. In an example she said, "There has been no time for Guided Reading redelivery due to scheduling and other district mandates," and added, "Teachers are working to meet deliverables but need additional support in "making it fit" with other initiatives and programs." Mentor HR continually noted that the amount of time for coaching was limited due to the additional support she needed to provide to the new coaches, and that the coaches' time to coach teachers was minimized due the multiple initiatives in the building. These factors were deterrents to the coaching role in her experience.

In summary, the coaches had different experiences with the fractured coaching role. For Mentors CC, AD, SS, this was a significant barrier to effective coaching conditions throughout the year. The other mentors (LW and HR) had coaches who served solely as reading coaches. They (LW and HR) encountered the coaches' limited understanding of the coaching role and time limitations to perform coaching activities because of multiple initiatives or added responsibilities as hindrances to effective coaching conditions. Coaches are more likely to effectively build instructional capacity in teachers when they serve as full-time coaches, expert in one content area, and when they have ample time to perform coaching activities. Assigning multiple

responsibilities and roles to coaches reduced the amount of time they spent on coaching, decreasing the likelihood of their having a significant impact on instruction and student outcomes.

A concomitant of the fractured coaching role was the reduced amount of time for professional development and coaching, which decreased the likelihood of improving teaching and learning. Each role group consistently stated that a significant deterrent to coaching was limited time. The next section will describe the issue of limited time and the impact this has on coaching.

Limited Time for Coaching, Teaching, and Learning

Over the course of the year, a significant challenge on which each role group continually commented was limited time for coaching, teaching, and learning; this has been indicated throughout each theme. For the purposes of this section, the focus will be on time constraints for the coaches and mentors, and how these constraints influenced coaching conditions. Analysis of the data reveals that, these time limitations were a deterrent to coaching conditions; determinants that decreased time for collaboration and coaching were fractured coaching roles (multiple roles/responsibilities), ineffective learning structures (schedules, instructional misalignment), and inexperienced coaches (requiring extended time for the mentors to teach reading content and coach skills).

Each mentor experienced time constraints as a deterrent to coaching, but the reasons for reduced time varied among mentors. Mentors AD and CC supported new coaches who served multiple schools, grade levels, and content areas, and were assigned various responsibilities as district coaches. Similarly, Mentors LW and HR had coaches who were new, inexperienced full-time coaches in their schools, but their experiences differed from AD's and CC's in factors that

reduced coaching time. Mentor LW's coach supported a large number of teachers between two schools, and she did not have the opportunity to facilitate redelivery to all of them at one time. In Mentor HR's experience, her coaches had multiple initiatives to support in addition to their coaching duties. With Mentor SS, one of her schools had several initiatives that reduced time for literacy instruction and coaching, but her primary issue was that coaches served in multiple roles in their schools.

All of the mentors needed additional time to coach their new, inexperienced coaches to build their capacity (to become knowledgeable about the coaching role and reading content, and to increase their coaching capabilities). The amount of time spent on collaboration between the mentor and the coach was essential to improve teaching and learning. Each mentor experienced time constraints due to their different coaching situations, and their experiences are explicated.

Furthermore, Mentor AD and Mentor CC described the common experience among all of the mentors concerning the minimal time allotted for coaching and instruction. The time for coaching was often strained due to coaches coaching multiple schools, or to the coaches having multiple responsibilities/roles within their schools. Mentor CC reiterated the significance of a full-time reading coach and described time as a key element in efficacious coaching. She did not have the experience of a full-time coach at any of her schools, and this was a consistent barrier to coaching. She said, "Coaches still spend more time outside of the schools then directly supporting in the building. This left very little time to plan with Coaches." Mentor CC described effective coaching conditions and said, "And also just time and, uh, understanding this is a full time role," stating, "So one of the conditions has to be the capacity of being able to do it, the time, and also the leadership skills." She felt that time was a significant factor in building instructional capacity in staff (coaches and teachers), and the less experienced coach or teacher

required more time to receive coaching in order to develop their competencies, and she described this situation:

> Because the coaches had no coaching background at all, we were monopolizing their time. And the reason why we were monopolizing their time is because they had no literacy supports. So it was overwhelming to them and they still had to do math and science and social studies and they did not get into schools until almost. It was just way too overwhelming for them to take in as much as they did. (Mentor CC, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

In her experience, Mentor CC felt the lack of time impeded her ability to coach the coaches and the coaches' ability to coach the teachers. The limited time to provide professional development (redelivery and coaching) to inexperienced coaches and teachers reduced the likelihood of improving teaching and learning.

Additionally, in Mentor AD's experience, she noted that her coach's availability to support schools shifted between one to three days per week, but that it varied weekly; Mentor CC experienced the same issue since they both supported District 7. The lack of consistency and the coaches' inability to serve full time at the schools impeded their ability to build capacity in teachers. Mentor AD said, "The literacy coach is only in the building one day a week. It is very difficult to monitor and implement components [reading] when the coach is not in the building but one day per week." The coaches also were concerned about their limited coaching time, and Mentor AD said, "The literacy coach expressed concerns about redelivery rollout time constraints and training and implementation gaps." The coach regularly communicated about the need for additional time. "More support is needed from the academic coach, in the school setting,

to assist teachers with planning as well as collaboration through the coaching cycle." The limited time in the schools to consistently support and coach teachers was a deterrent to coaching.

Moreover, Mentor SS's coaches had time constraints due to multiple roles and responsibilities within the school; one of her schools had multiple initiatives, which further complicated the schedule and reduced coaching and instructional time for reading. She said, "The system has selected 'coaches' who have multiple roles in the system and do not always have time specifically committed to 'coaching,' " and she noted that "A full time supportive coach could bring the final piece to this system to ensure continued efforts of the initiative." She described how the multiple roles and initiatives were detrimental to coaching conditions in her experience that year. Mentor SS said, "The other school probably has three or four initiatives going on. And that in itself is a challenge for that particular school and with the instructional coach because she was spread thin." She further stated that time limitations are not conducive to building instructional capacity in teachers and said, "As far as supporting the teachers, they have to have the time to be able to do that. So I know time restraints were a huge barrier for our schools this year specific to the Literacy Center." The time constraints she encountered that impeded coaching were the coaches serving in various roles and in multiple initiatives that significantly reduced the time to coach coaches and teachers.

Unlike the coaches working with other mentors, Mentor HR's coaches served as full-time coaches. She consistently communicated that her primary barrier was the coaches' dearth of knowledge and the additional time required to build capacity in coaches and teachers. She said, "Since our primary goal is to be the "Coach's Coach" I need more time to support my coaches," adding, "In order to effectively improve instruction and put policy into practice, I need more time to support the coach in observing lessons, providing feedback, planning and

completing a coaching cycle, and modeling instruction." Mentor HR supported coaches who served solely as reading coaches, but their inexperience, lack of knowledge, and the multiple initiatives in the schools reduced coaching time. She said, "Time. They need time to plan. They need time to support teachers." The coalescence of inexperience and multiple initiatives required more support and practice (coaching time with the mentor and coaching the teachers) due to their deficits as new coaches.

In Mentor LW's experience, the barriers to coaching were time restraints within the school structures because of the number of teachers in the two schools and the fact that the school administration did not establish structures for an embedded, dedicated time for monthly professional development. Mentor LW described this situation and said:

> Time is always going to be an issue. Um, again mine was fortunate that she was just literacy. So I think the deterrent for her was the time frame to get it done in because she had to work within the parameters of the school as far as planning periods. (Mentor LW, individual interview, May 13, 2019)

Unlike the other mentors, she had a full-time literacy coach, yet time limitations continued to impede coaching conditions.

Similarly, Mentor LW's coach described how the volume of teachers created issues for scheduling and required a significant amount of time for coaching sessions and redelivery. The coach described the challenges she faced that year and the factors that decreased her coaching time; she said, "I have over 40 teachers, which is why I think I should only have one school since I have over 40 teachers that I serve at two different schools. Additionally, the coach said, "I don't have all that with my teachers," and "I have 15 minutes maximum that I can pull them for their planning period and one not making my teachers upset because I have to pull them every day to

make up that amount of time." The coach observed that her schools did not have a designated professional development structure for the teachers to receive professional development together, and she had to utilize more of their planning times, and this caused some of the teachers' discontentment. Limited time for professional development is a hindrance to effective coaching conditions.

In summary, adequate time has to be dedicated to professional development (redelivery and coaching). Various factors contributed to time constraints that directly affected coaching. These factors included content knowledge, coaching capabilities, and understanding of the coaching role; to rectify these initial barriers, additional coaching was required to improve the coaches' knowledge and their abilities to coach others. Additional factors were the coaches serving in various roles, multiple initiatives, and limited time for professional development.

One factor that positively influenced coaching conditions and reduced the issue of time constraints was that in some instances, coaches demonstrated professional growth (in content and in coaching). They then required less coaching support from the mentor and increased their ability to effectively coach teachers. Additionally, instructional alignment and modification to schedules to increase time for coaching and teaching, as well as embedding learning structures in the school to support regular professional development and collaboration, improved coaching conditions and increased coaching time for coaches and teachers.

In conclusion, the determinants of an effective coaching role are knowledge (in content and in coaching), understanding of the coaching role, serving as a full-time coach, and having time to receive regular development (mentor-coach) and to provide continuous, consistent professional development (coach-teacher). A common deterrent to the coaching role is that coaches often enter the role as former teachers who lack content knowledge, coaching

experience, and an understanding of the coaching role. The barriers to time are the fractured coaching role (multiple roles/responsibilities), multiple initiatives, a lack of understanding of this role, lack of knowledge (requiring additional coaching time), and limited time for professional development and coaching within the school structures. Through collaboration, the mentors supported schools to encourage changing practices and structures in order to increase time for coaching, teaching, collaboration, and professional development.

Chapter Summary

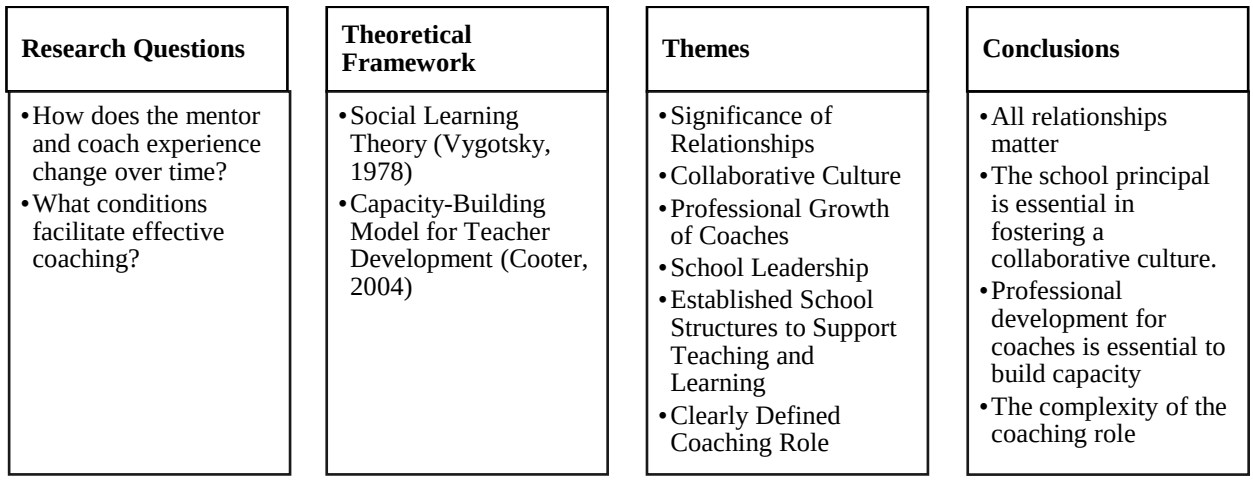
The focus of this study is to examine the lived experience of the coaches and mentors through the evolution of the CBMTD in order to gain an in-depth understanding of conditions for effective coaching throughout the school year. The evolution of the coaches (research question one) is significant to their transformation as a result of coaching experience with the mentors and to examine the entity of the Literacy Center program and explore effective coaching conditions (research question two). The perspectives of the participants provide insights to inform future professional development for coaching, identify hindrances to coaching, and illustrate the conditions needed for coaching to influence instructional change and student learning (to improve student achievement in reading). The next section will summarize the findings and discuss the conclusions, implications for practices, and recommendations.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this phenomenological case study is to examine the lived experience of mentors and coaches to gain an understanding of conditions for effective coaching, and thus to contribute to the literature concerning the professional development of reading coaches and the conditions necessary for them to be effective. The findings from this study reflect the participants' lived experiences of the Capacity- Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD) (mentor provides professional development to the coach through the coaching model). They are explicated through data analysis of focus groups, individual interviews, and phenomenological reduction (coding) of the mentors' monthly journal entries. The interpretation of the findings that led to the conclusions and recommendations of this study was formulated based on the theoretical frameworks of Vygotsky's (1978) Social Learning Theory and Cooter's (2004) Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development.

The chapter is organized to provide an overview of the problem and the significance of the study, followed by discussion of the findings. These segments are followed by a summary of the primary findings and the existing literature on coaching. The conclusions are explained through the research questions focused on the participants' professional development experience (evolution of mentor-coach experience) and effective coaching conditions. Next, the implications for practice and recommendations for future research are discussed. Figure 5.1 illustrates the research questions, theoretical framework, primary findings associated with each theme, and the conclusions derived from the findings and literature.

Figure 5.1 Summarization of Discussion Components



Overview the Problem and Significance of the Study

The problem identified in this study is that over half of students in the United States are not reading on grade level when they exit elementary school (Nation's Report Card, 2019). Students who are poor readers are more likely to experience problems with academics and behavior throughout school and adverse life experiences as adults. They are more likely drop out of high school, and to experience poverty, unemployment, and incarceration (Chiara et al., 2019; Magpuri-Lavell, 2018; Fiester, 2012; Hernandez, 2011; Kutner et al., 2007; Rumberger & Lamb, 2003). To rectify this problem, students need quality reading instruction prior to entering fourth grade (kindergarten through third grade); persistently low reading achievement scores can be attributed to ineffective instruction. Professional development is utilized to improve instructional practices, but this development yields inconsistent influence on teachers' instructional methods, depending upon its effectiveness. This inconsistency has created a need for an effective professional development model to change teachers' practices. The literature on professional development has indicated that the reading coach method is an efficacious professional development model to build instructional capacity in teachers when coaching is done under certain conditions.

The existing literature on coaching is centered on the role of the coach and the effectiveness of coaching on student achievement. The research on coaching explicates commonalities of the roles, different coaching models focused on the coaching cycle as a method to improve instruction, and similar characteristics and conditions of efficacious coaching. The literature suggests that the effectiveness of coaching yields inconsistent results due to variations of the coaching role, the experience of the coach, differing circumstances for coaching, and the limited research on professional development for coaches. At this time, there is not a study that describes the professional development of coaches through a coaching model, Capacity-Building Model for Teacher Development (CBMTD). This created a need and rationale for this study through the following research questions:

1) How does the mentor and coach experience change over time?
2) What conditions facilitate effective coaching?

The study is significant in informing professional development practices for reading coaches and in creating effective coaching conditions. There is limited research on coaches receiving professional development through a coaching model. Through analysis of the findings, discussion of the professional development of the coaches in this study will also clarify the role of the coach, assist in developing consistent criteria for effective coaching and optimal coaching conditions, and inform policies on national definitions and standards of the coaching role and on hiring practices and professional development for coaches.

Summary of Findings

In this section, the primary findings associated with the six themes are provided and summarized. The first research question was derived to examine the evolution of the mentor-coach experience in response to the lived experience of the mentor-coach (CBMTD) method and

to changes in school culture; the findings were the significance of relationships, collaborative culture, and professional growth of coaches. The second research question explored the determinants of effective coaching conditions. The findings showed that these conditions are created by school leadership (engagement and instructional leaders), established school structures to support teaching and learning, and a clearly defined coaching role.

The significance of relationships among the participants (district leadership, school leadership, mentors, coaches, and teachers) influenced coaching and instructional practices. The relationship between district leadership and the mentors (Literacy Center partnership) had a more significant impact on coaching and instruction than one would have anticipated. Augustine et al. (2009) asserted that positive working relationships between district leadership and the state education agency (university partnership with Literacy Center mentors) increased the likelihood of cohesive goals and initiatives, and of shared responsibility to improve student achievement and the development of principals and teachers. Analysis of findings from this study confirmed that the mentors who established positive relationships and partnerships with district leaders were able to foster a cohesive leadership environment; this permitted school principals to enact the Literacy Center initiative. They were able to create school structures to build capacity in coaches and teachers through support of instructional alignment, provision of consistent professional development (coaching, literacy team, redelivery) and consistent implementation of reading instruction.

However, in some districts, the leaders demonstrated centralized decision-making and had minimal engagement with the Literacy Center, were stringent with district initiatives, and determined instructional decisions for the schools; this created an environment for compliance and reduced principals' autonomy. When district leadership institutes multiple initiatives, "[It]

strained the capacity of local educators to coordinate and implement programs" and "Incoherence is linked to a number of inefficiencies and/or negative outcomes…. lack of coordination and coherence limits their [principals and teachers] potential for positive results and fragments educator attention" (Augustine et al., 2008, pg. 44). In turn, this perpetuated discord among instructional goals and minimized time for collaboration, coaching, and instruction, leading to fragmentation of teachers' priorities. Structural comprehensiveness and alignment of policies/initiatives and processes of engagement, agreement, and coordination between state partnerships (Literacy Center mentors) and participants (district leadership, school principals, coaches, and teachers) create conditions for effective school leadership, professional development, and instruction to occur in a school setting (Augustine et al., 2008).

The relationships between stakeholders and cohesion across organizations foster collaboration and directly influence student achievement; instruction and school leadership are primary factors in impacting student learning (Pollock & Ford, 2009; Augustine et al., 2008). The relationship between the principals and teachers and coaches and teachers was significant in coaching, teaching, and learning. The relationships among participants were a foundational determinant in the effectiveness of coaching and instruction; a deterioration of relationships negatively influenced the culture, coaching, and implementation of new reading practices. Principals and coaches had to establish trust, demonstrate credibility of professional competencies and content knowledge (reading), and provide consistent support to teachers to influence a change in teachers' attitudes and their instructional practices. The participants (mentors, coaches, principals) expressed that the collaboration between the mentors and coaches was a positive experience and inspired professional growth of coaches and teachers.

In some schools, a collaborative culture emerged as a result of the participants (coaches, teachers, principals) working closely with the mentors and of the involvement of school leaders. The coalescence of instructional alignment, established school structures to support teaching and learning (consistent dedicated time for coaching, planning, and collaborative learning), and the principal's engagement were contributing factors for a collaborative culture to emerge among members of a school staff. The school literacy team had a significant role in encouraging a collaborative culture to evolve within the schools and appeared to build instructional capacity in the participants.

A collaborative culture cultivated shared responsibility and vision among teachers, coaches, and school administrators; in turn, this culture improved morale among colleagues, increased engagement and the implementation of reading instruction, and fostered teacher leadership. Shared responsibility increased as the teachers abandoned previous practices and adopted new reading practices to work towards a common goal (to improve reading); this occurred in pockets of teachers at some schools where other teachers' demonstrated compliance rather than shared responsibility. Shared vision (collective action towards instructional goals to improve reading) occurred only in high functioning collaborative cultures and usually included a highly engaged principal; this environment was conducive to effective coaching and reading instruction.

The professional growth of coaches was an important outcome of the mentor-coach coaching experience. The findings from the perceptions of the coaches and mentors indicated that the majority of the coaches entered the role with minimal coaching experience and had not received professional development for coaching prior to their interactions with the Literacy Center. The professional growth of coaches is attributed to the professional development

(CBMTD) between the mentors and their coaches; coaches demonstrated a significant growth in reading pedagogy and coaching skills (andragogy and instructional strategies). Some coaches had limited availability to engage in coaching activities with the mentors; they demonstrated some growth in content knowledge and coaching capabilities, but their progress did not compare to that of coaches who consistently collaborated with the mentors. As coaches demonstrated growth in their professional competencies, they exhibited growth in self-confidence, and this improved their performance in their role.

One of the effective coaching conditions included the involvement and instructional leadership skills of the school principals. School leaders (principals and assistant principals) who acted as instructional leaders, demonstrated engagement, and actively participated with the Literacy Center initiative had a positive impact on coaching, teaching, and learning. Principals were perceived (by participants) as instructional leaders if they demonstrated they were knowledgeable about reading pedagogy, participated in instructional decision-making, were visible during instruction, and provided instructional feedback. Additionally, principals were perceived as engaged if they participated in professional development (provided by the Literacy Center) and instructional activities (attended literacy team meetings, instructional walk-throughs during literacy block, and coaching sessions). Principals who did not demonstrate visibility and engagement were perceived as not invested in the initiatives, and this decreased the likelihood of teacher buy-in, implementation, and of teachers' engagement with reading professional development (coaching, literacy team, redeliveries). The perception of the principal's involvement and knowledge of reading pedagogy had an impact on the teachers' willingness to engage in coaching and to implement new reading practices; the teachers emphasized that the

principal's professional experience was important to them, and they valued professional feedback more if the principal had previously been an elementary educator.

Furthermore, coaching conditions were improved by establishing school structures to support professional development (coaching, literacy team, and redelivery) and reading instruction through intentional scheduling and instructional alignment. The limited amount of time for coaching and instruction was a common deterrent expressed by the participants. The intentionality of scheduling created ample time for coaching, instruction, and aligning initiatives; it improved consistency in implementing the Literacy Center program and created effective coaching conditions. The findings suggested that school processes should be designed intentionally so that scheduling, alignment, and adequate time for instruction and coaching would create effective coaching conditions. If these structures were not established, teachers were less likely to engage in the initiative, and they demonstrated inconsistent implementation; they also had a negative attitude towards professional development and initiatives. Factors such as ineffective scheduling, multiple initiatives, and instructional misalignment created negatively impacted coaching conditions.

Additionally, a clearly defined coaching role was significant in the effectiveness of coaching. In order to have an impact on instruction, coaches had to understand the coaching role, possess content knowledge and coaching competencies, and serve solely as coaches. A deterrent to coaching was that some coaches served in multiple roles within a school, which minimized their time to receive professional development with the mentors and limited their time to support and coach teachers. Another factor that initially required more time for mentor-coaches to collaborate was the dearth of professional competencies (reading pedagogy and coaching skills)

among the coaches; as coaches demonstrated professional growth, they required less coaching support from the mentor and increased their ability to effectively coach teachers.

The determinants for an effective coaching role are knowledge (of content and of coaching), understanding of the coaching role, serving as a full-time coach, and having time to receive ongoing professional development (mentor-coach) and to provide continuous, consistent professional development (coach-teacher). Through collaboration, the mentors supported schools in order to encourage changing practices and embed learning structures to increase time for coaching, reading instruction, collaborative learning, and professional development.

Conclusions

"Qualitative research involves the move from a holistic perspective to individual parts (analysis) and then back to a holistic look at the data (synthesis)... in attempt to reconstruct a holistic understanding of [the] study" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 286). The previous section discussed the primary findings associated with each theme. The following section will discuss the conclusions that were derived from synthesis of the findings and literature; these conclusions are explicated through the theoretical frameworks and research questions interwoven throughout the section. The conclusions of the study described in this section are all relationships matter, the school principal is essential in fostering a collaborative culture, professional development for coaches is necessary to build instructional capacity, and the coaching role is a complex one.

All Relationships Matter

The conclusion of the study reaffirms previous research on the significance of established relationships in order for coaching to have a positive influence on instruction. Coaching is a reciprocal relationship between the coach and teacher; the coach has to develop rapport and a relationship with the teacher to engage in the collaborative professional learning process of

coaching; this creates an opportunity for positive shared experiences and collective ability to build capacity in teachers for sustainable improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimore & Pak, 2017; Stringer, 2013; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). The initial stages of the CBMTD are building relationships and trust to increase confidence in novice teachers and motivate them to acquire new practices; these are essential elements for the coach and teacher to establish prior to improving content knowledge (Cooter, 2004). Teachers who reported having a positive relationship and interactions with their coach demonstrated higher rates of motivation and engagement in behavior change (instructional practices) and increased rates of implementation (Heineke, 2013; Miller & Stewart, 2013; Knight 2007). Relationships and consistent collaboration are determinants of effective coaching.

However, the interwoven nature of relationships influenced coaching in various ways; the relationships outside of the mentor-coach and coach-teacher relationship evolved either as support for professional development (CBMTD) for coaches, or else they served as deterrents. The mentors recognized early on that relationships had to be established between coaches and teachers to encourage learning and promote engagement among participants, but they did not anticipate how significantly other relationships would influence the implementation and effectiveness of professional development and the growth of participants. The relationship between district leadership and mentors (Literacy Center partnership) and between the school principals and teachers could serve as deterrents to coaching and instruction, or they could create conditions for a collaborative culture to flourish. These relationships were often influenced by external factors (organizational cohesion, district initiatives, and school structures for teaching and learning).

The district leaders' collaborative partnership with the Literacy Center mentors set the stage for coaching and implementation for the remainder of the year; often external factors (centralized decisions by district leaders) directly influenced the relationships and experiences of the other participants (principals, coaches, teachers). All of the districts had instructional goals and initiatives, but they differed in their partnerships with the mentors and the autonomy of the school principals. Some district leaders were reluctant to collaborate with the mentors and stringent about district instructional alignment, district initiatives, and consistency of implementation among schools; this created a strained relationship between school leadership and teachers and between coaches and teachers. The mentors who experienced this reluctance on the part of district leadership noticed that it created conditions for a negative culture to emerge, and the mentors stated the teachers were often frustrated when they were responsible for implementing multiple initiatives. These factors appeared to create a negative attitude in teachers' willingness to dedicate their planning time to redelivery and coaching.

Relationships, collaboration, and alignment with school and district goals are effective components of professional development; if one of these factors is neglected, professional development (coaching) is less likely to build instructional capacity in staff or to implement a sustainable curricular framework (Desimore & Pak, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Deussen et al., 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). Analysis of the mentors' responses reveals that relationships with the leadership (district and school) had a significant impact on coaching; it wasn't necessarily individual relationships among role groups but the conglomeration of the different relationships influencing one another. Often the literature on coaching is focused on the relationship between the coach and teacher; minimal studies have been undertaken on the complexity of the relationships between stakeholders (district leadership, principals, mentors,

coaches, and teachers) on coaching and instruction. The mentors' revelations on this concept inspired them to reflect on their experiences, and to suggest future recommendations to the Literacy Center in hopes of recruiting collaborative and committed partnerships to create optimal conditions for coaching and reading instruction.

The School Principal is Essential in Fostering a Collaborative Culture

The participants' responses (mentors, teachers, and coaches) continually and unanimously expressed the importance of an involved, knowledgeable principal, adequate structures for professional development (coaching and redelivery), regular collaboration (grade level meetings and literacy teams), and adequate time for coaching and reading instruction. These external factors heavily influenced the implementation of reading instruction, coaching, and the professional growth of coaches/teachers. The principal possesses the capability to directly address these factors; school leaders should create and commit to school processes and procedures to support instructional goals and to elicit teacher input in creation of learning structures (Marzano, Warrick, Rains, & DuFour, 2018). The school principal played a significant role in a school's culture and in establishing professional learning structures that influenced coaching, teaching, and learning.

A collaborative culture and an engaged instructional leader are significant factors in effective coaching conditions. The synthesis of research and findings from the study suggests characteristics of an effective principal often include the principal setting the direction (a shared vision and collective goals); developing people (providing differentiated support and professional learning opportunities, demonstrating professionalism); developing structures to foster collaboration and build relationships; and managing instructional initiatives (professional

development for programs, alignment of resources, monitoring instruction) (Marzano et al., 2018).

This conclusion about school leaders is evident in the literature and through analysis of the participants' (mentors,' coaches,' and teachers') interpretations. The characteristics of an effective school leader are key elements in influencing culture, and they describe the conditions for a collaborative culture. These elements further contribute to shared responsibility and vision of the staff. Effective school leaders create a "clear vision and a common language and model of instructional practice in a school" (Marzano et al., 2018, p. 77). The mentors shared that some of the schools demonstrated highly functioning collaborative cultures and shared vision was evident among staff; this occurred only in a few schools. The partnership with the Literacy Center provided the opportunity for school principals to establish sustainable learning structures to improve reading and to develop teachers and coaches through coaching/collaboration with the mentors through CBMTD.

Professional Development for Coaches is Necessary to Build Instructional Capacity

It is likely that a coach may enter this professional role with little experience in effectively coaching teachers (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Anders et al., 2004; McCormick & Brennan, 2001; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). Coaches are often excellent classroom teachers who are "promoted" into the role. This reflects a frequent misconception, assuming that superior teachers will translate to becoming excellent coaches. The role of the coach requires a specific skill set comprehensive of andragogy, expertise in content knowledge, leadership skills, and the ability to facilitate intentional content and pedagogical professional development in order to increase teacher learning and implementation through a coaching cycle to improve classroom instruction (Anders et al., 2004; Costa & Garmston, 2002). Teachers are not trained in coaching

techniques or in adult learning, which differ from educating younger students; this often presents an issue with inexperienced, new coaches. However, when coaches receive ongoing, quality professional development, they are more likely to develop professional competencies (content knowledge and coaching abilities) and more likely to influence instructional practices (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Anders et al., 2004; McCormick & Brennan, 2001; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The findings from this study indicate that coaches demonstrated professional growth (reading content, coaching skills, and confidence in coaching abilities) through the interactions of CBMTD with their mentors.

As stated in the literature, coaches often do not receive professional development, especially through a coaching model; the coaching model is typically used as a form of professional development for teachers. The mentors and coaches both discussed their significant professional growth over the course of the year. The coaches' lack of knowledge was initially a major hindrance to improving instruction as many coaches entered the role without a strong reading background and with minimal or no coaching experience. The interaction between the mentors and coaches served a dual purpose in coaching the coach and in modeling how to coach teachers through the CBMTD. The mentors and coaches agreed that the coaching experience (CBMTD) was an effective professional development model to build capacity in coaches.

The Complexity of the Coaching Role

As findings from this study have demonstrated, the effectiveness of the coaching role depends upon various factors (relationships, the culture of a school, leadership, content knowledge/experience of a coach, participants' attitude and engagement, structures to support teaching and learning). The participants recognized the complexity of the coaching role through their experiences with the coaches throughout the year. The mentors and coaches indicated that

to be effective, the coach has to possess content knowledge, knowledge of andragogy, coaching skills, an understanding of the role, and be allowed to perform solely in their role. They noted that a coach requires these skills in addition to the other factors (school structures to support coaching and teaching, effective leadership, and a collaborative school culture) to enable the coach to be effective in their role.

The synthesis of the literature and the perceptions of the mentors indicate that the coaching role is often misunderstood or fragmented, and this limits the effectiveness of coaching (Heineke, 2013; Dean et al., 2012; Cooter, 2003). The mentor-coach coaching experience (CBMTD) provided an opportunity for leadership, coaches, and teachers to gain insight into the purpose of coaching and the influence a coach can have on instruction under the right conditions. The participants' experiences and the literature suggest that the coaching cycle is effective when implemented consistently (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Knight, 1995). The participants expressed that collaboration with the mentor and implementation of coaching in their schools had a significant impact on their instructional practices. Their accounts of their experiences also highlighted the negative implications of the coach performing in multiple roles, across multiple schools and content areas, and demonstrated that this is not effective use of a coach.

Previous research on effective coaching supports these conclusions. In order to provide an effective form of professional development, the coach must have a clearly defined coaching role, one which allows ample time to develop collaborative relationships with teachers and to implement the coaching cycle on a regular basis to intentionally build instructional capacity and increase the likelihood of the teacher adopting and implementing new practices (Al Otaiba, et al., 2008; Gamse, et al., 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2007; Fixsen et al., 2005; Smeele et al., 1999). The

coaching role is complex, and all of these factors should be considered when utilizing a coach to improve instruction.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Future Research

The focus of this study is to clarify coaching roles and professional development for coaches and to examine effective coaching conditions, with the ultimate goal of enabling effective coaching to build instructional capacity in teachers and to improve student performance in reading. This section discusses the implications for practice, followed by recommendations for future research. The implications for practice for coaches includes recommendations for a national definition and job description of the coaching role to educate leadership, to inform hiring practices, and to increase the likelihood of coaches serving solely in the coaching role in order to effectively build instructional capacity. The recommendations for future research include discussion of a standard definition of the coaching role, which could be used to examine the extent to which providing consistency in this role and consistent conditions for it could increase the effectiveness of coaches.

Secondly, the findings suggest that professional development for coaches has a significant impact on their performance as coaches. An implication for practice suggests that districts and schools develop a sustainable professional development plan for coaches. The recommendation for future research is replication of this study to further examine professional development of coaches through a coaching model in order to contribute to literature on professional development for coaches and gather findings to generalize findings across school settings.

National Definition and Job Descriptors of the Coaching Role

A primary conclusion converging from the findings was that coaches entered the role inexperienced and unprepared to coach teachers, and that the role of coach differed significantly between schools and districts. Undefined coaching roles prevent coaches from serving in their intended coaching role and limit their ability to support teachers. Dean et al. (2012) noted, "There is little consistency in the general competence of coaches, in part because there are no nationally agreed upon definitions or standards for the roles" (p. 76). The coalescence of new, inexperienced coaches and the variations in the coaching role were not conducive to coaching teachers or to improving instruction. These factors were a major hindrance to coaching.

A clearly defined coaching role is essential to the effectiveness of coaching. A national definition of the coaching role should be established and utilized to ensure consistency of the role, educate leadership for hiring practices and staff development, and clarify expectations of a coach for effectively building instructional capacity in teachers. Some national associations have produced recommended guidelines for coaches, but there is not a consistent federal definition and job descriptors for a coach (Dean et al., 2012).

Furthermore, to inform coaching practices, a clearly defined coaching role would educate district leadership and school leadership on the roles and responsibilities of coaches in effectively building instructional capacity. Dean et al. (2012) asserted:

> The reading coach's role is misunderstood by principals because there is little consistency in the training, backgrounds, and skills required for such positions. Some principals do not fully understand the positive impact that reading coaches can have on teacher instruction. This may lead to an environment that makes it difficult for the reading coach to work effectively with teachers (p. 77).

It was evident that school leaders struggled with developing the coaches and did not have a clear understanding of their role.

The perceptions of the mentors suggested that principals and district leaders were unfamiliar with the role of the coach and often utilized coaches as resource teachers or pseudo administrators; some schools had never employed a reading coach prior to their partnership with the Literacy Center. Many principals did not realize the negative effects of removing the coach from supporting teachers (coaching cycle) to perform other tasks. Educating the district and school leaders and deepening their understanding of the coaching role could improve coaching conditions and create consistency in the role.

Two recommendations stem from the implications of practice regarding the need to develop a national definition and job descriptors of the coaching role. The first recommendation is to further examine if a standardized definition of the coaching role accompanied with education for district and school leadership has an influence on the consistency of the coaching role and coaching conditions. Secondly, another recommendation as a concomitant of a standard definition and professional development/education for leadership would be to utilize this information to inform hiring practices of coaches. These recommendations are described and explicated.

The recommendation for research to further examine clarity of the coaching role would be to examine whether a standardized definition of the coaching role and educating leaders on the role would have an influence on coaching. The study focused on a clearly defined coaching role as a significant factor in the effectiveness of coaching; the findings and literature suggest the inconsistency of the coaching role between schools and districts is a hindrance to coaching. Future research to examine the recommendation of developing a standard definition of the

coaching role and of educating leaders on the coaching role could explore the extent to which these practices could improve consistency of the role and coaching conditions. Analysis of the perspectives of leaders and coaches could contribute to existing literature about the coaching role and effective coaching conditions.

Equally important, a consequence of standardization of the role and educating stakeholders about the coaching role would lead to a recommendation to inform hiring practices for coaches; this should be considered to ensure the school or district is hiring a qualified coach. The job descriptors should include teacher leader experience, experience in facilitating professional development, preferably coaching experience and/or training, content knowledge/pedagogy in the area of coaching, and an understanding of the coaching role. In addition to the findings from this study, the International Reading Association recommends knowledge of assessment, instruction, and current reading research, and the ability to support school reading programs and low-performing readers as additional job requirements (Dean, et al., 2012; Anders, et al., 2004). These qualifications would provide evidence that a candidate has experience with adult learning, has the ability to develop and present content and information, and exhibits knowledge of content and pedagogy; teacher preparation courses or a district professional pipeline to develop teacher leaders could provide opportunities for educators to acquire these skills. Requiring these qualifications would negate some of the initial barriers for new coaches. Additionally, another component of the hiring process could include requiring the coaches to participate in training and professional development for new coaches prior to entering the position, and to have a coaching mentor to support their transition into the role throughout their first year of coaching such as a cohort model for new coaches.

Limitations to the specified coach role could potentially be lack of funding, widespread district initiatives, and various needs of the schools that often required the coach to perform tasks outside of their roles (Mangin, 2009); districts and schools would need to be intentional when making staffing decisions around the coach to avoid these obstacles. Additionally, qualified candidates for a coaching position may not be among a pool of potential applicants, and therefore the district and school leadership would be responsible to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for new coaches.

Professional Development for Coaches

The implications for practice include ensuring that coaches receive adequate professional development to develop effective coaching skills. Both the literature and analysis of the comments from participants in this study indicate that there is limited support and minimal professional development opportunities for new coaches (or for coaches in general). Despite this evidence, researchers have found a number of instances in which coaches have entered into the role without the qualifications to be effective in this position (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Anders et al., 2004; McCormick & Brennan, 2001). When they do receive professional development, coaches often receive it in the content area or in the initiatives they support but not specifically in coaching (Denton &Hasbrouck, 2007). When coaches receive professional development, they are more likely to demonstrate leadership qualities, intentionally implement the coaching cycle, and experience higher rates of teachers' implementation of new practices (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). The implications derived from literature and the findings from this study suggest that professional development for coaches should be a component of a district-wide professional development plan.

District leaders should consider developing sustainable professional development structures, which would include continual learning opportunities for coaches to acquire knowledge of relevant content, pedagogy, and coaching skills. A similar professional development model as in this study (CBMTD) would replicate coaching the coach. Coaches should have the opportunity to practice their coaching methods with feedback from a more knowledgeable colleague (a mentor or a "master" coach) to increase the likelihood that they will develop professional competencies to influence their instructional practices.

The recommendations associated with professional development for coaches include replication of professional development of coaches through a coaching model to contribute to the minimal research on this topic and to inform future professional development practices for coaches. Furthermore, valuable insight from different educators' perspectives could provide additional information to research on the professional development of coaches. This could be achieved through implementation of this model (coaching the coach) in variations of school settings (middle and high schools) and could include different factors such as student achievement data to study the coach's impact on instruction and student achievement. The recommendations will be described and explicated.

A recommendation for further research would include replication of the study to further examine the professional development of coaches through a coaching model. There should be a future study to explore professional development for coaches, particularly coaches receiving professional development through a coaching model. This would contribute to the limited research on professional development for coaching. A replication of the CBMTD is a recommended model to develop coaches since it is applicable to various levels of expertise, and it gradually builds capacity through progressive stages until a coach has mastered skills to

effectively coach others within the school setting. The mentor-coach coaching experience (CBMTD) enabled elementary reading coaches to demonstrate professional growth in content knowledge (reading) and coaching skills regardless of the coaching conditions; however, some coaches excelled more than others, dependent upon their school environment(s).

Furthermore, additional recommendations would be to further examine the professional development for coaching through a coaching model using different factors. Altering the factors of this study to include student achievement data (in reading) or perspectives from secondary school participants and different school environments could provide findings through various lenses and contribute to literature on the coaching model for coaches and the coach's impact on student achievement. Additionally, a mixed methods approach would be powerful in gaining insight into the experience of the participants and the comparison of student outcomes in reading as a result of the coach's professional development through CBMTD. Furthermore, professional development for coaches through this model (CBMTD) in a secondary school setting to examine coaching conditions and the coaching roles in middle and high school environments would provide information to determine generalizations across educational settings concerning embedded professional development for coaches in schools.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine the professional development of coaches through a coaching model (lived experience of the mentor-coach coaching phenomenon) to contribute to literature on the coaching role, gain in-depth understanding of effective coaching conditions, and inform professional development practices for coaches (specifically reading coaches). The interpretation of the findings and literature through the research questions and theoretical framework (SLT and CBMTD) led to the formulation of the conclusions, implication for

practices, and recommendations. These conclusions describe the intricacy and conglomeration of the relationships, the complexity of the coaching role and school cultures, and various influential factors (leadership, school structures, professional competencies of participants) that impacted coaching and instruction. The implications for practices are centered on clarity concerning the coaching role, education on this role for relevant stakeholders, and professional development for coaches. The recommendations are focused on standardization of the coaching role to improve consistency of the role, inform hiring practices to employ qualified coaches, and influence coaching conditions to enable coaches to provide systematic instructional support to improve teacher practices and student learning. Additional recommendations are to further examine professional development for coaches through a coaching model and to employ various factors to contribute to literature on coaching and establish generalizations to inform practices for the professional development for coaches.

BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY
IN VERITATIS AMORE

Appendix A

Experience between Mentors and Coaches: A Phenomenological Case Study to Examine Effective Coaching Conditions

Subject Informed Consent

Introduction and Background Information
You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by Dr. Will Wells and Co-investigator, Brittany Adkins. The study will take place at a southeastern university's literacy center. Approximately five subjects will be invited to participate. Your participation in this study will last for 70-95 minutes for the focus group and monthly journal entries for the duration of the 2018-2019 school year.

Purpose
The purpose of this research study is to understand the relationship and interactions between mentors and instructional coaches. The study will examine the conditions for effective coaching to be instrumental in changing attitudes towards literacy, approaches to teaching literacy, and ability to build capacity and sustainable literacy systems in the schools. The information you provide will be used to improve future research and improve professional learning of instructional coaches.

Procedures
In this study, you will be asked to participate in focus groups and complete monthly reflective journals of your experience in the field. The focus groups will occur during one session lasting approximately 70-95 minutes. The focus groups will be recorded. You will also be asked to complete monthly reflective journals throughout the school year. The journal entries will be collected at the end of the school year. The contents of the journals will be analyzed using coding methods and memo writing. The information gathered from the recordings and journals will be used for research purposes in this study. A semi-structured protocol was used by the southeastern university research department to develop the focus group questions. The purpose of the focus group questions and journal analysis are to address your experience with the literacy project throughout the school year and to describe and provide context to specific events and interactions with role groups.

Potential Risks
There are minimal risks associated with document review of the reflective journals and recordings of focus groups. The mentors are employed in another state and will have minimal interaction with the co-investigator during this study. The procedures will provide confidentiality to the participants and demonstrate ethical research practices. The participants and site location will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used in the study to protect the identity of the participants and literacy project.

Experience between Mentors and Coaches: A Phenomenological Case Study to Examine Effective Coaching Conditions

Subject Informed Consent

Benefits
The possible benefits of this study will be used to improve future research and improve professional learning of instructional coaches. The data collected in this study may not benefit you directly. However, the information learned from this research may be helpful to others in the future.

Confidentiality
Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. The study sponsor or the Institutional Review Board may inspect your research records. Should the data collected in this research study be published, your identity will not be revealed.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw your consent at any time without penalty or losing benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your Rights as a Research Subject and Contact Persons
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Institutional Review Board Office at 502.272.8032. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions, in confidence, with a member of the Board. This is an independent committee composed of members of the University community and lay members of the community not connected with this institution. The Board has reviewed this study. You acknowledge that all your present questions have been answered in language you can understand. If you have any questions about the study, please contact **Dr. Will Wells at 502-272-7104.**

Consent
You have discussed the above information and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. You have been given a signed copy of this consent form.

_____	_____
Signature of Subject or Legal Representative	Date Signed
_____	_____
Signature of Investigator	Date Signed
_____	_____
Signature of Person Explaining Consent if other than Investigator	Date Signed

Date written: May 7, 2019

Appendix B

Sample of Mentor Monthly Journal Template

Literacy Mentoring for Leadership Program

Language and Literacy Mentor Reflective Journal

The purpose of the reflective journal is for LLMs [mentors] to think critically and analytically about the progress of their work in schools and mentoring of the school-based literacy coach and team. The journal is an opportunity for the LLM to describe, interpret, and discuss the outcomes of mentoring the school-based Literacy Coach using components of the Impact Cycle. The journal should illustrate the LLMs' reflective thinking on the mentoring/coaching process in relation to how program objectives are being implemented and met.

The journal is a space for LLMs to reflect on self-development as a mentor (coach's coach) and the development of the literacy coach by analyzing and managing their interaction with the school-based literacy coach and leadership team. Through journaling the LLM reviews and revises action plans to align next steps with the data (observations, conversations, assessment) they have gathered in schools. The reflective journal is where the LLM can record observations, speculate on school situations, and consider problem solving solutions.

The journal is to be completed monthly for each school.

Submission Deadline: Last Friday of each month by 5:00 pm.

Name of LLM _____ Reflection Date for the Month of _____, 2018

Impact Cycle Stage: Identify	
Reflection Prompts 1. Getting a clear picture of reality- pg. 25 Based on collaboration with the Literacy Coach, in relation to the program objectives, describe what is going well and what could be improved school-wide.	Reflection Prompts 1. Getting a clear picture of reality- pg. 25 Based on collaboration with the Literacy Coach, in relation to the program objectives, describe what is going well and what could be improved school-wide.
Based on collaboration with the Literacy Coach, in relation to the program objectives, describe for each grade level what is going well and what could be improved	Kindergarten
	Grade 1
	Grade 2
	Grade 3
Reflect on your collaboration with the Literacy Coach to identify a PEERS goal for the school. Pg. 72 Reflection should include details on the process including: questioning & listening pg. 82; data gathered from observations used to establish a baseline for growth pg.51; and areas of growth and strengths for the LLM and the literacy coach.	2. Identifying Goals – pg. 63

For each grade level, describe the progress being made towards the identified PEERS goal for maximizing instruction in Word Study and Guided Reading. Indicate why progress is being made or why it is not	Kindergarten
	Grade 1
	Grade 2
	Grade 3
Impact Cycle Stage: Learn	
Reflection Prompts	Reflection Prompts
Based on collaboration with the Literacy Coach, in relation to the program objectives, reflect on the learning of the literacy coach and K-3 teachers by describing your thoughts on: ✓ Redelivery ✓ mentor activities with the Literacy Coach and teachers ✓ Classroom instruction (assessments, data analysis, differentiation, etc.) ✓ Literacy Coach and teacher interactions/ activities	

✓ School environment ✓ Leadership	
Impact Cycle Stage: Improve	
Reflection Prompts	Guiding question: Are program participants improving reading instruction in Word Study and Guided Reading? In order to improve, the following needs to occur: 1.) Making Adjustments until a goal is met; 2.) Review Progress; 3.) Invent Progress, and 4.) Plan Next Actions
Based on collaboration with the Literacy Coach, in relation to the program objectives, reflect on improvement towards the PEERS goals, and the growth of the administrator, literacy coach and K-3 teachers by describing your thoughts on: ✓ instructional topics most pressing for literacy coaches ✓ concerns of teachers ✓ roadblocks and solutions ✓ revisions to redelivery and classroom practice ✓ changes in PEERS goals ✓ commitment of program participants ✓ relationship with program participants	

Appendix C

Focus Group Protocol

Leadership for Literacy Mentoring (LLM) Program

Focus Group Facilitator's Guide

Date: May 13th, 2019

Location: Southeastern Education Service Agency

Facilitator: Facilitator Research Associate Literacy Center

Participants Invited: Mentors (n=5), Coaches (n=1 per school), and Teachers (n=1 per school)

Schedule: Coaches: 8:45; Teachers: 10:00**;** Mentors: 11:15

Part 1

1. What has been the most valuable experience you've had as a Mentor/Coach/Teacher over the past year?

2. In what ways, if any, has this experience helped you grow professionally as a Mentor/Coach/Teacher?

3. Can you tell us about any challenges you have confronted along the way? How were those challenges resolved?

4. What suggestions for improvement would you offer to program leadership?

Part 2.

(If comments to Q1, 3, 4 do not address specific groups: coaches/school based literacy

teams/administrators repeat question in the context of the missing group, i.e.:

Q1.1 In working with your coaches...what has been the most valuable experience you've had over the past year?

Q1.2 In working with the school based literacy teams...what has been the most valuable experience you've had over the past year?

Q1.3 In working with administrators...what has been the most valuable experience you've had over the past year?

Repeat for Questions 3 and 4

Directions. Complete the following tables per focus group.

Coach Focus Group	
Total Number of Focus Group Participants	
Official Start Time	
Official End Time	

Teacher Focus Group	
Total Number of Focus Group Participants	
Official Start Time	
Official End Time	

Mentor Focus Group	
Total Number of Focus Group Participants	
Official Start Time	

Official End Time	

Appendix D

Mentors Individual Interview Schedule Protocol

Date: May 13th, 2019
Location: Southeastern Education Service Agency
Facilitator: Brittany Adkins, doctoral student, Bellarmine University
Participants Invited: Mentors (n=5),
Schedule: Mentors 12:15-2:00

Introduction: Greeting: "Hi, I am Brittany Adkins. Thanks so much for agreeing to speak with me about your experience with literacy center and collaboration with the instructional coaches this school year. I want to remind you that I am using this interview as data collection for my dissertation and possible future publication. The data collected will not be used beyond that purpose and you will not be identifiable within the writing I do. Through my research I am hoping to discern the impact and experiences throughout this school year. I will be asking you questions about your perception of how you think the project is going the first year of implementation. If you are not comfortable answering a question, please let me know and we will move forward accordingly. So that I may concentrate on your responses fully, I would like to digitally record our conversation. May I begin recording now? What further questions do you have before we begin?" (Wheeler, 2015).
Research Question 1: How does the mentor and coach experience change over time?

1. Tell the story of an instance where you felt you had made progress with the instructional coaches this year. (RQ1)
2. How do feel the literacy program has evolved throughout the course of the school year? What challenges and successes did you encounter working with the instructional coaches? Please offer specific evidence. (RQ1)

Research Question 2: What conditions facilitate effective coaching?

3. Please describe the conditions you feel are supportive to instructional coaches to build capacity within teachers. (RQ2)
4. Please describe the conditions you feel are a major deterrent to the success of the instructional coaches. (RQ2)

Adapted from Wheeler, W.C. (2015). Interview Protocol: Adaptive School Training Participants.

Appendix E

Sample of the Mentors' Monthly Coaching Activity Log

Monthly Activity Log & Data Collection Form (MALDCF)

Mentor Name: _____

District(s): _____

Reporting Month: Insert Month, Year

Please highlight one of the following:

During the 3-week job-embedded period, I was in my schools for the 12 required days.

This month I missed _____ (total number) days out of the 12 required days.

School List: Elementary School 1 (ES1) Elementary School 2 (ES2) Elementary School 3 (ES3)

SECTION 1: MENTOR ACTIVITY

Table 1 INSTRUCTIONS: Highlight any activities you completed during the month.

TABLE 1. RECORD OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY MENTOR ACTIVITIES

Developed an Action Plan with the literacy coach for the three (3) week job-embedded professional learning period between each instructional workshop
Planned with the literacy coach the redelivery of the instructional workshops
Mentored the literacy coach utilizing the *Impact Cycle* – Identify, Learn, and Improve
Supported the literacy coach to integrate the program's capacity-building objectives in the school's literacy program and instruction
Mentored the literacy coach to assist K-3 teachers in instruction of Word Study and Guided Reading with their students
Conducted classroom observations with the literacy coach
Mentored the literacy coach while working with school-based literacy teams
Mentored the literacy coach while working with individual teachers
Provided resource materials aligned with the program objectives
Relationship building with school-based literacy leadership team
Designed additional differentiated professional learning to meet the goals of the program for the school-based literacy team
Provided strategies to increase student engagement and improve student achievement
Provided mentoring and support on adult learning strategies, engaging students, school improvement planning, assessment strategies, data collection and analysis, as needed and appropriate
Met and discussed the program objectives and implementation with the school's leadership team and/or a representative of the leadership team
Collaborated, co-planned, and calibrated with other LLMs
Virtual meeting with literacy coach
Administrative tasks
Participated in school-based professional development

TABLE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL VISITS

JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n

TABLE 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH ADMINISTRATION

JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY TEAMS

JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n

SECTION 2: COACHING THE COACH

TABLE 5. TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES YOU MET WITH LITERACY COACH (AND COMBINED TOTAL HOURS)

JE	n (hrs)	WE	n (hrs)	MLKE	n (hrs)

TABLE 6. FREQUENCY OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH LITERACY COACH

How many times did you talk on the phone?						*How many times did you respond to their emails?*					
JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n	JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n

TABLE 7. SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY COACH ACTIVITIES AND HOURS	Total Hours Per Activity		
Based on my collaborative work with the Literacy Coach, these are the work activities of the Literacy Coach:	JE	WE	MLKE
Conducting classroom observations			
Conducting professional development sessions for K-3 teachers			
Developing an Action Plan with the team leaders and disseminated to all K-3 teachers			
Working with school-based literacy teams			
Working with teachers individually			
Meeting with the school's leadership team and/or a representative of the leadership team			
Assisting K-3 teachers in instruction of Word Study and Guided Reading with their students			
Conducting demonstration/model lesson(s)			
Providing ongoing support for K-3 teachers			
Meeting and discussing program implementation			
Planning redelivery of professional development			

Table 8a. REDELIVERY SETTING OF CONTENT FROM INSTRUCTIONAL WORKSHOPS DELIVERED BY LITERACY COACH

Table 8a. Instructions: Highlight redelivery setting for each school.

JE	WE	MKLE
a. All teachers b. By grade level c. Other group configurations	a. All teachers b. By grade level c. Other group configurations	a. All teachers b. By grade level c. Other group configurations
If you selected c., specify here:	If you selected c., specify here:	If you selected c., specify here:

Table 8b. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS LITERACY COACH SPENT ON REDELIVERY OF CONTENT FROM INSTRUCTIONAL WORKSHOPS

Table 8b. Instructions: Indicate in how many PD Sessions the redelivery took place through highlighting the appropriate choice.

JE	WE	MKLE
a. 1 PD Session (6 hrs) b. 2 PD Sessions (3 hrs each) c. 3 PD Sessions (2 hrs each) d. other	a. 1 PD Session (6 hrs) b. 2 PD Sessions (3 hrs each) c. 3 PD Sessions (2 hrs each) d. other	a. 1 PD Session (6 hrs) b. 2 PD Sessions (3 hrs each) c. 3 PD Sessions (2 hrs each) d. other
If you selected d., specify here:	If you selected d., specify here:	If you selected d., specify here:

SECTION 3: CLASSROOM HOURS DEVOTED TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Table 9.a. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS SCHEDULED FOR LITERACY INSTRUCTION BY TEACHERS

Grade	JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n
K	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
			Teacher		Teacher	
					Teacher	
					Teacher	
	Total Hours		*Total Hours*		*Total Hours*	

Table 9.b.

Grade	JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n
1	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
			Teacher		Teacher	
					Teacher	
	Total Hours		*Total Hours*		*Total Hours*	

Table 9.c.

Grade	JE	n	WE	n	MLKE	n
2	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
			Teacher		Teacher	
			Teacher		Teacher	
					Teacher	
	Total Hours		*Total Hours*		*Total Hours*	

SECTION 4: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

At the end of this month of mentoring, I'm confronting the following challenges:

This is a description of what worked well this month:

SECTION 5: MENTOR-TO-MENTOR CALIBRATION

Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement by highlighting your answer:

I feel calibrated with the work of my peer mentors.

Strongly Disagree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
Strongly Agree

References

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

Al Otaiba, S., Hosp, J., Smartt, S., & Dole, J. (2008). The challenging role of a reading coach, a cautionary tale. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, *18*(2), 124–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410802022423

Alper, M., Durose, M.R., & Markman, J. U.S. Department of Justice. (2018). *2018 Update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-year follow-up period (2005-2014)*. https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Effects of poverty, hunger and homelessness on children and youth.* https://www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty

Anders, P.L., Rasinski, T.V., Selin, A., Block, C.C., Flood, J., Risko, V. J., Barnes, C.J., Bean, & R., Cummins. C.L. (2004). The role and qualification of the reading coach in the United States. *International Reading Association*. https://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/reading-coach-position-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=f44ea18e_6

Augustine, C., Gonzalez, G., Ikemoto, G., Russell, J., Zellman, G., Constant, L., & Dembosky, J. (2009). *Improving school leadership: The promise of cohesive leadership systems*. Santa Monica, CA. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG885.html

Barczak, G., Lassk, F., & Mulki, J. (2010). Antecedents of team creativity: an examination of team emotional intelligence, team trust and collaborative culture: Antecedents of team creativity. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, *19*(4), 332–345. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2010.00574.xx

Berman, P., McLaughlin, M.W., Bass-Golod, G.V., Zellman, E.P, & Zellman, G.L. (1977). *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change: Vol. VII: Factors Affecting Implementation and Continuation*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R1589z7.html.

Bloomberg, L.D. & Thorpe, M. (2019). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: Road map from beginning to end*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Boatwright, P., & Midcalf, L. (2019). The effects of poverty on lifelong learning: Important lessons for educators. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *85*(3), 52–57. https://www.dkgnj.org/uploads/2/2/3/1/22313516/2019_jour_85-3.pdf#page=52

Bowers, A. J., Sprott, R., & Taff, S. A. (2012). Do we know who will drop out? A review of the predictors of dropping out of high school: Precision, sensitivity, and specificity. *High School Journal*, *96*(2), 77–100. https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2013.0000

Cervetti, G. N., Pearson, P. D., Palincsar, A. S., Afflerbach, P., Kendeou, P., Biancarosa, G., Higgs, J., Fitzgerald, M.S., & Berman, A. I. (2020). How the reading for understanding initiative's research complicates the simple view of reading invoked in the science of reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 55, 172.

Chapman, E. & McHardy, J. (2019). Adult literacy teachers' perspectives on reading difficulties and the origins of these perspectives. *Adult Literacy Education.* https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Research/ALE%20Journal/ALE_ResearchJournal-v001_01-2019-06_McHardyChapman.pdf?ver=2019-03-27-140056-217

Chiara M., Dario, S., & Marcello, S. (2019). Secondary school dropout and work outcomes inten developing countries, *Journal of Policy Modeling*. 41, 4, p. 547-567. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpolmod.2018.06.005.

Cohen, J. M. (2015). *The power of shared vision : How to cultivate staff commitment & accountability.* Minneapolis, MN: Creative Health Care Management.

Cole, P. (2004). *Professional development: A great way to avoid change*. Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria. Jolimont, Vic: IARTV

Cooter, R. B. (2003). Teacher "capacity-building" helps urban children succeed in reading. *The Reading Teacher, 57*, 198–205.

Cooter, R.B. (2004). Deep training + coaching: A capacity-building model for teacher development. In R.B. Cooter (Ed.), *Perspectives for rescuing urban literacy education: Spies, Saboteurs, and Saints* (pp. 83-94). Lawrence Erlbaum. Used with permission of the author.

Couloute, L. & Kopf, D. (2018). Out of prison and out of work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people. *Prison Policy Initiatives.* https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html

Costa, A.L. & Garmston, R. J. (2002). *Cognitive Coaching: A foundation for renaissance schools.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordan Publishers, Inc.

Costigan, A. (2018). “I’m not teaching English, I’m teaching something else!”: How new teachers create curriculum under mandates of educational reform. *Educational Studies*, *54*(2), 198–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2017.1379809

Cresswell, J.W. (1999). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choose among the five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Daniels, H. (2003). *An introduction to Vygotsky*. Taylor & Francis e-Library. https://search

ebscohost.com.libproxy.bellarmine.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=74823&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Danielson, C. (2002). *Enhancing student achievement: A framework for school improvement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

Davis, L. M. (2013). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education : A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html.

Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (2016). *Shaping school culture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Denton, C., & Hasbrouck, J. (2009). A description of instructional coaching and its relationship to consultation. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *19*(2), 150–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410802463296

Denton, C. A., Vaughn, S., & Fletcher, J. M. (2003). Bringing research-based practices in reading intervention to scale. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 18 (3), 201 211. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5826.00075

Desimone, L. (2002). How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented? *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(3), 433–479. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003433

Desimone, L. M., Porter, A. C., Garet, M. S., Yoon, K. S., & Birman, B. F. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: results from a three-year longitudinal

study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *24*(2), 81–112. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737024002081

Desimone, L. M. & Pak, K. (2017). Instructional coaching as high quality professional development. *Theory Into Practice*, 56(3), 3-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1241947

Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). *Coach can mean many things: Five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First.* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007-No. 005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Education Laboratory Northwest. http://ies.edu.gov/ncee/edlabs.

Dole, J. A. (2004). The changing role of the reading specialist in school reform. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(5), 462–471.

Eamon, M. K., & Wu, C. F. (2011). Effects of unemployment and underemployment on material hardship in single-mother families. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *33*(2), 233–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.006

Edmondson, J. (2004). Reading policies: Ideologies and strategies for political engagement. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(5), 418–428.

Feinberg, I., Tighe, E. L., Greenberg, D., & Mavreles, M. (2018). Health literacy and adults with low basic skills. *Adult Education Quarterly: A Journal of Research and Theory*, *68*(4), 297–315.

Fiester, L. (2010). *Early warning! Why reading by the end of third grade matters. KIDS*

COUNT special report. Annie E. Casey Foundation. https://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-why-reading-by-the-end-of-third-grade-matters/

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R. M. & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).

Gallucci, C., DeVoogt Van Lare, M., Yoon, I. H., & Boatright, B. (2010). Instructional coaching: building theory about the role and organizational support for professional learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, *47*(4), 919–963.

Gamse, B.C., Jacob, R.T., Horst, M., Boulay, B., & Unlu, F. (2008). *Reading First impact study final report* (NCEE 2009-4038). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20094038_1.pdf

Georgia Governor's Office of Student Achievement School Report Cards. https://gosa.georgia.gov/report-card-dashboards-data

Goldman, S. (2012). Adolescent literacy: learning and understanding content. *Future of Children*, 89-116.

Gong, B., Blank, R.K., and Manise, J.J. (2002). *Developing accountability systems: Towards a framework and process*. Center for Assessment. https://www.nciea.org/sites/default/files/publications/desigSchAccSyst_Gong02.pdf

Guskey, T. (1986). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, 5-12.

Guskey, T.R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching,* 8(3), 381-391, DOI: 10.1080/135406002100000512

Hasbrouck, J., & Denton, C. A. (2007). Student-focused coaching: A model for reading coaches. *The Reading Teacher*, *60*(7), 690–693. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.60.7.11

Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hathaway, J. I., Martin, C. S., & Mraz, M. (2016). Revisiting the roles of literacy coaches: Does reality match research? *Reading Psychology*, *37*(2), 230–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2015.1025165

Hedegaard, M. (1990). *The zone of proximal development as basis for instruction.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139173674.017

Heineke, S. F. (2013). Supporting teachers' professional learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113(3), 409-433.

Hyland, S.S. United States Department of Justice. (2019). *Justice expenditure and employment*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6727

International Literacy Association. (2018). *Exploring the 2017 NAEP reading results: Systemic reforms beat simplistic solutions* [Literacy leadership brief]. Newark, DE: Author. https://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/ila-exploring-the 2017-naep-reading-results.pdf

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development. https://ebookcentral-proquest com.libproxy.bellarmine.edu

Keatley, K. A., Peterson, A.V., Jr., Gaul, M. A., & Dinh, K. T. (2000). Teacher training as a

behavior change process: Principles and results from a longitudinal study. *Health Education & Behavior,* 27(1), 64-81.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Knight, J.; Elford, M., Hock, M. Dunekack, D. Bradley, B., Deshler, D.D., & Knight, D. (2015). Three steps to great coaching: A simple but powerful instructional coaching cycle nets results. *Journal of Staff Development*. p. 10-18

Knight, J. (2016). *What do instructional coaches do?* Instructional Coach Group. https://www.instructionalcoaching.com/what-do-instructional-coaches-do/

Koball, H., & Jiang, Y. (2018). *Basic facts about low-income children: Children under 18 years, 2016.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. https://www.nccp.org/wp content/uploads/2018/01/text_1194.pdf

Kuijpers, J.M., Houtveen, A.A.M., Wubbels, T. (2010). An integrated professional development model for effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. P. 1687-1694.

Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., Boyle, B., Hsu, Y., & Dunleavy, E. (2007). Literacy in everyday life: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2007–480). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/Pubs2007/2007480.pdf

Lauer, P. A., Christopher, D. E., Firpo-Triplett, R., & Buchting, F. (2014). The impact of short term professional development on participant outcomes: a review of the literature. *Professional Development in Education*, *40*(2), 207–227.

Lawton, D. and Gordon, V. (1996) Dictionary of Education, London, Hodder and Stoughton.

Linn, R. L. (2013). *Test-based accountability*. The Gordon Commission on the Future of

Assessment in Education. https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/linn_test_based_accountability.pdf

Lonigan, C. J., & Shanahan, T. (2008). *Developing early literacy report of the national early literacy panel*. National Center for Family Literacy. https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf

Looney, A., & Turner, N. (2018). *Work and opportunities before and after incarceration*. The Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/research/work-and-opportunity-before and-after-incarceration/

Lowenhaupt, R., McKinney, S. & Reeves, T. (2014) Coaching in context: The role of relationships in the work of three literacy coaches. *Professional Development in Education*, 40:5, 740-757, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2013.847475

MacKenzie, D.L. (2006). *What works in corrections: Reducing the criminal activities of offenders and delinquents*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511499470

Magpuri-Lavell, T. (2018). *Literacy mentoring for leadership program DEAL center literacy promise schools handbook*. Sandra Dungeon DEAL Early Language and Literacy at Georgia College.

Mangin, M. M. (2009). Literacy coach role implementation: how district context influences reform effort*s. Educational Administration Quarterly,* 45(5), 759–792.

Mangin, M.M. & Dunsmore, K. (2015). How the framing of instructional coaching as a lever for systematic or individual reform influences the enactment of coaching. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 51(2), 179-213.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From*

research to results. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R.J. & Waters, T. (2009). *District leadership that works: Striking the right balance*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

McCormick, K.M. & Brennan, S. (2001). Mentoring the new profession in interdisciplinary early childhood education: The Kentucky Teacher Internship Program. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education,* 21(3), 131-144.

McCormick, L. M., Streckler, A.B. & McElroy, K. R. (1995). Diffusion of innovation in schools: A study of adoption and implementation of school-based tobacco prevention curricula. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 9(3), 210-219.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Miller, S. & Stewart, A. (2013). Literacy learning through team coaching. *The Reading Teacher*. 67(4), 290-298.

Mood, C., & Jonsson, J. (2016). The social consequences of poverty: An empirical test on longitudinal data. *Social Indicators Research*, *127*(2), 633–652. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-015-0983-9

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2019). National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) Report Card: 2019 NAEP Reading Assessment. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/reading/2019/

National Reading Panel. (2001) *Report of the National Reading Panel--Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pubs/nrp/Documents/report.pdf

National Research Council (U.S.). Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. (2001). *Early childhood development and learning: New knowledge for policy.* New Academies Press.

Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2003). *Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity*. *Promises & practicalities.* Washington, DC: Aspen Institute Program on Education and the Annenberg Institute of School Reform. https://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/Coaching%20%281%29.pdf

Nollkaemper, A. (2018). The duality of shared responsibility. *Contemporary Politics*, 24:5, 524-544, DOI: 10.1080/13569775.2018.1452107

O'Connor, R. E., Fulmer, D., Harty, K. R., & Bell, K. M. (2005). Layers of reading intervention in kindergarten through third grade: Changes in teaching and student outcomes. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *38*(5), 440–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222194050380050701

O'Day, J., Goetz, M.E., & Floden, R.E. (1995). *Building capacity for education reform.* Consortium for Policy Research in Education Policy Briefs. https://repository.upenn.edu/cpre_policybriefs/75

O'Neill, J. & Conzemius, A. (2004). Building shared responsibility for student learning. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2013). National Center for Education Statistics Program of International Adult Competencies. Technical report of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC): Prepublication Copy. Paris, France. https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/_Technical%20Report_17OCT13.pdf

Pager, D. (2003). The mark of a criminal record. *American Journal of Sociology.* 108, 5, p. 937-75.

Peoples, K. (2020). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation: a step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Perkins, J. H., & Cooter, K. (2013). An investigation of the efficacy of one urban literacy academy: Enhancing teacher capacity through professional development. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 52 (2). https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol52/iss2/6

Pollock, J. E. & Ford. S. M. (2009). *Improving Student Learning One Principal at a Time*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Rampey, B.D., Keiper, S., Mohadjer, L., Krenzke, T., Li, J., Thornton, N., and Hogan, J. (2016). Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults: Their Skills, Work Experience, Education, and Training: Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies: 2014 (NCES 2016-040). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016040.pdf

Renahy, E., Mitchell, C., Molnar, A., Muntaner, C., Ng, E., Ali, F., & O'Campo, P. (2018). Connections between unemployment insurance, poverty and health: a systematic review. *European Journal of Public Health*, *28*(2), 269–275. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckx235

Rockies Research Center. (2020). Chapter three: Method (phenomenological study) [PDF file]. http://wpc.6fdc.edgecastcdn.net/006FDC/UOR_Curriculum/Rockies_ Research_Center/siteContent/PDF/DissWB_03_Method_qual_phenomenological_

Ross J. G., Luepker, R.V., Nelson, G.D., Saavedra, P., & Hubbard, B.M. (1991). Teenage health teaching modules: impact of teacher training on implementation and student outcomes. *Journal of School Health*. (1), 31-4. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.1991.tb07856.x. PMID: 2027291. FINAL.pdf

Rumberger, R. W., & Lamb, S. P. (2003). The early employment and further education experiences of high school dropouts: a comparative study of the United States and Australia. *Economics of Education Review*, *22*(4), 353.

Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Semega, J., Kollar, M., Creamer, J, & Mohanty, A. (2019). *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2018 U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports*, P60-266, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-266.pdf

Showers, B., & Joyce, B. (1996). The evolution of peer coaching. *Educational Leadership*, *53*(6), 12–16.

M., Muris, J. W. M. (1999). Can small group education and peer review improve care for patients with asthma/chronic pulmonary disease? *Quality in Health Care,* 8 (2), 92-98.

Stevens, A. (1999). Climbing out of poverty, falling back in: Measuring the persistence of poverty over multiple spells. *The Journal of Human Resources, 34*(3), 557-588.

Stringer, P. (2013). *Capacity building for school improvement: Revisited contemporary approaches to research in learning innovations, volume 6.* Rotterdam: Brill Sense. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-329-4

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *48*(4), 388–396. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.

U.S. Department of Education. America Reads Challenge Project. *Start early, finish strong. How to help every child become a reader*. (1999). http://www.ed.gov/pubs.startearly

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2019). *U.S. federal poverty guidelines used to determine financial eligibility for certain federal programs*. https://aspe.hhs.gov/povertyguidelines

U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). *Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment.* https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm

Vágvölgyi R, Coldea, A., Dresler, T., Schrader, J., & Nuerk, H. C. (2016). A review about functional illiteracy: definition, cognitive, linguistic, and numerical aspects. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*, 1617–1617.

Veenman, S. & Denessen, E. (2001). The coaching of teachers: Results of five training studies. *Educational Research and Evaluation*. 7:4, 385-417, DOI: 10.1076/ edre.7.4.385.8936

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Waldron, N. L. & McLeskey, J. (2010). Establishing a collaborative school culture through comprehensive school reform. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*,

20, 58–74.

White, A.S., Smith, M.H., Kunz, G.M., & Nugent, G.C. (2015). Active ingredients of instructional coaching: Developing a conceptual framework. *National Center for Research on Rural Education.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571818.pdf

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and application: Design and methods*. Sixth Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.