EXPERIENCING THE TRANSITION FROM CLASSROOM TEACHER LEADER TO THE DESIGNATED LEADERSHIP ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

A Dissertation in Curriculum & Instruction

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016
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ABSTRACT

This is a multiple case study, with phenomenological underpinnings, of a group of teachers moving from their role as classroom teachers to the designated teacher leadership role of instructional coach. The setting is within multiple elementary schools within the same school district. The primary sources of data collection included journal reflections and semi-structured interviews with this group of instructional coaches. Using a framework adopted from the literature on teacher leadership, this study illuminates the conditions and factors that impacted the development of the instructional coaches as they began to function as teacher leaders in new schools and in the classrooms of other teachers. Previous studies examined coaching relationships with student achievement and professional development, but few studies have looked at the growth and change that takes place in the instructional coaches themselves.

Several claims were made through this study. One claim shown is that classroom teachers moving into a designated teacher leader role experienced many feelings and thoughts that were similar to those they had experienced as novice teachers, including an initially strong focus on self-concerns. This claim is justified through the dialogue from logs and interviews shared by the participants in the study. A second claim centered upon the context in which transitioning teacher leaders were placed. It was highlighted in this study that navigating school cultures and building productive relationships with principals and other supervisors who had different leadership styles were some of the most challenging aspects for the participants in learning a new professional position. Another claim made is that teacher leaders moving from the classroom experience
challenges to their initial assumptions about teachers. This initial assumption held by those experiencing this type of transition is that all teachers are reflective, inquiry oriented and agents of change.
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It is really quite difficult to determine when my journey of learning began. In retrospect, it appears to me that it has been ongoing the moment I began my career as an educator.Completing this dissertation and this degree does not mark a conclusion, but merely another journey.

No journey of this magnitude can be accomplished alone. I have so many who have guided me, influenced me, and supported me. Most of all, thanks and appreciation has to go to my family who has endured the time and sacrifice that has allowed me to pursue and achieve this accomplishment. For thirty years, my wife and best friend has been my most ardent cheerleader, encourager, and critic. She has lifted me up when I was down. She has pushed me forward when I felt like quitting.

I have had numerous mentors in my professional life. These have been previous supervisors, colleagues, and university professors. I would not have learned all that I have or accomplished everything that I did without their spoken and unspoken guidance. I will not name them all, but I give sincere thanks to each for being a part of this journey.

A study such as this could not be completed without the enthusiastic participation of the participants. I thank each of them for their contributions to this study and for their past, present, and future contributions to the field of education.

To everyone, keep learning. Continue to reflect. Continue to question. Continue to improve.
Chapter 1  Overview

Setting the Stage

The world is constantly and rapidly changing. The same holds true for our schools. A successful student of today is much different than just a short decade ago. Schools today are preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist. The skills necessary to thrive today may not be the same in another decade.

The expectation for most students in previous generations was to graduate from high school and obtain a well paying, low skill job. Today, the expectation is for all students to be “college and career” ready. Much of this pressure for achievement falls upon teachers. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) assert, “If [we] want a high-performing school system, a competitive economy, and a cohesive society, …we need the very best, most highly qualified teachers who have a deep and broad repertoire of knowledge and skill in the schools that don’t have the luxury of screening out children” (p. 79).

The changes in instructional methodology required to reach these higher standards cannot be accomplished without support. Many schools are providing a supportive, job-embedded model of professional development through instructional coaching (Stichter, Lewis, Richter, Johnson, & Bradley, 2006). The goal of coaching is to respond to the pressure being applied to education by improving the quality of teaching. Coaching is being identified by many school districts as a way to improve teaching, which will improve learning (Boyle, Lamprianou, & Boyle, 2005).
Coaching is a form of teacher leadership. Instructional coaches in our schools usually are educators who have achieved a degree of proficiency in the art and craft of teaching and are “respected as teachers by their colleagues and administrators” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 289). These teacher leaders are usually appointed into the role of instructional coach because they have a “learning orientation in their work and demonstrate or are viewed as having the potential to develop leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 289). They are seen as possessing skills for teaching children and skills for influencing adult learners or teachers.

“People don’t really disagree about the importance of getting and keeping good teachers and good teaching” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 1). The difference lies in the kind of capital, or capacity needed to attain and then sustain this effort. Developing teacher leaders that can succeed in leadership positions such as instructional coaching is one effort worth pursuing.

Getting good teaching for all learning requires teachers to be highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other to maximize their own improvement, and able to make effective judgments using all their capabilities and experience. (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 2).

This is a tall order to achieve. By developing teacher leaders and designating them for positions such as instructional coaches, a greater chance for achievement is possible.

“Teacher leaders are both teachers and leaders…[who] have been teachers with significant teaching experience, are known to be excellent teachers, and are respected by their peers” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 267). Those who become teacher leaders, designated or informal usually have certain traits. They tend to be learners who are
driven to take risks to enable their students to achieve. They are also willing to take on responsibility (Wilson, 1993; Yarger & Lee, 1993).

There are factors that can influence a teacher’s capacity or readiness to assume the role of a teacher leader. These factors include excellence in the role of a classroom teacher, a clearly developed philosophy of education, an interest in adult learning, and being in a career stage that allows and enables one to share (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) also identified traits of teacher leaders that are focused on how change or renewal is approached. Teacher leaders are ones who go beyond simple implementation of new ideas, but also share these practices. Teacher leaders tend to seek out others who share the same traits of sharing and giving, they also are eager to help and assist peers. Teacher leaders usually engage in conversations of a high level about teaching and learning and challenge the status quo in a way that embraces change. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) describe how these practices need to be carried out “by teachers, for teachers, and with teachers” (p.67).

Experience may be an important factor in developing these traits. Years in the classroom to establish best practice and receive respect from peers are necessary. Time will also influence the development of a well thought out and clearly articulated personal philosophy of education. Time to increase understanding about learning may be necessary; particularly a greater knowledge of adult learning.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) identified phases a typical educator passes through in the course of a teaching career. These phases range from the early starting years of the career where efficacy and identity are developed (0 – 7 years), through the middle years
of working with change and personal and professional transitions (years 8-23), and the final years when teachers have the challenge of maintaining motivation. “Many of these readiness factors imply that teacher leadership is best suited for teachers in midcareer and midlife” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 267). They have acquired enough knowledge and still have the drive necessary to lead.

Teachers may also need to be encouraged to become leaders. Teacher leadership in the traditional sense probably is not appealing to most educators. In many schools or districts the appeal is made through transformation of the way the system operates. Interest in teacher leadership develops when change appears possible. Reid (2011) noted “the role was no longer an extension of a larger bureaucracy, but was becoming that of a facilitator among a group of professionals who held a shared vision” (p. 52). She, like other talented educators find appeal in being able to influence instruction on a broader scale.

This capacity building begins with building principals creating learning opportunities for talented and passionate teachers. These principals also need to have a mindset that moves away from the traditional way that schools operate or do business (Reid, 2011). “In the old, bureaucratic system of school, the teacher leader was a spokesperson for the principal, who was in turn a spokesperson for the district administration” (Reid, 2011, p. 53). Teacher leaders in this system were rewarded with stipends and usually appointed because they were willing to stick to the dictates of the bureaucracy above. “Unless one aspired to become a principal or district administrator, there was really no other way of moving up or gaining status as a professional educator”
There didn’t exist a place for the teacher leadership role that has emerged in more recent years.

One essential characteristic that must be present or be developed in teacher leaders is a passion for learning. “Leaders are both teachers and learners” (Gabriel, 2005, p. 4). Professional development, with an emphasis on studying leadership is also necessary (Reid, 2011). This is desired so that teacher leaders not only develop their own leadership capacities, but also learn how to develop the same in the teachers that come within their circle of influence.

Because of a “paradigm shift from top-down, authoritative administration to a learning organization [that] is built on the concept of interdependence and collaboration” (Reid, 2011, p. 54), another condition for fostering teacher leadership emerges. This is the need for principals to change school cultures from one of isolation and independence to one of collaboration. This is a tall task as cultures are established through time and therefore, time is necessary to influence change within the school culture. Culture is an important aspect of any school. Culture comprises what is seen and what is unseen. It includes what is said and what remains unspoken. Every school has a culture. Hanson (2001) explains:

Schools also have their own unique cultures that are shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings. These school cultures emphasize what is of paramount importance to them as they strive to develop their knowledge base in a particular direction (p. 641).

Simply stated, “culture can be defined as a set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002, p. 319). School culture
holds a strong influence over the actions and decision-making within a school. Culture plays an important role in both the development and identification of teacher leaders. A teacher leader in one context or culture may find herself void of influence in another context because “the whole purpose of a school culture is to get members to adopt predictable behaviors and a common mental model” (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 4).

Teacher leaders have to navigate the culture of the school in order to gain acceptance and then to ultimately provide influence. Relationship building is an important part of the process for the development of a teacher leader. Relationships can be an important part of establishing the climate for collaboration and interdependence. “Identifying relationships and skillfully managing them are the foundations for transitioning from teacher to leader” (Bowman, 2004, p. 188).

Finally, principals must work with teachers to develop visions that align. The vision of the teacher and the principal must share common goals. Aspiring leaders will not emerge in the absence of a shared vision. A shared vision will help to establish an atmosphere of shared leadership that will encourage teacher leaders to grow and emerge. Schlechty (2001) illustrates this paradigm through an analogy that depicts school leadership as “less like an orchestra, where the conductor is always in charge, and more like a jazz band, where leadership is passed around” (p. 178).

**Introduction to the study**

Many scholars have asserted that in order for a school to achieve the highest levels of student performance, strong instructional leadership is necessary (Fullan, 2001;
Instructional leadership is a function embodied in many individuals within a school rather than a role specific trait. The principal is an instructional leader. Team or department chairs are instructional leaders. Teachers are instructional leaders. Coaches are instructional leaders. These roles can be designated or established informally (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Effective instructional leadership will “build the entire school’s capacity to improve” (Harrison & Killion, 2007).

Leadership is displayed in multiple and often in overlapping ways. Instructional coaches are a form of designated teacher leadership. Instructional coaches are formally assigned to this role, but many of those appointed to the coaching role may have functioned as teacher leaders when serving in the role of classroom teacher. “Regardless of the roles they assume, [instructional coaches as] teacher leaders shape the culture of their schools, improve student learning, and influence practice among their peers” (Harrison & Killion, 2007, p. 76.)

This study examined the journey from leadership within the classroom to leadership in a designated teacher leadership role outside the classroom. It examined this process through the lens of a group of first year instructional coaches who as classroom teachers were informal teacher leaders, but then became designated teacher leaders as instructional coaches with both implied and explicit responsibilities. The study illuminated the experiences and perceptions of the participants through their own point of view. This study was limited to the perceptions and experiences of the participants shared through journal entries and through interviews. Ackerman and Mackenzie (2006) define teacher leaders as “experienced teachers who have tested their beliefs about
teaching and learning and codified them into a platform that informs their practice. However, teacher leaders still question those underpinnings and always gauge the extent to which their practices align with their philosophies” (p. 67). Bowman (2004) shared research findings that suggest that leaders possess several qualities that include adaptive capacity, abilities to engage others in shared meaning, a compelling voice, and a sense of integrity. The best teacher leaders then emerge rather than being appointed, and teacher leaders, in essence, help their colleagues move forward by challenging the present, the status quo. Our experiences influence who we are and what we believe. Decisions are made based on past experiences. This kind of adult learning is “understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 5).

Instructional coaches as teacher leaders take past experiences and use them as a guide for their actions and decisions in what is a newly appointed role. Teacher leaders, such as instructional coaches, benefit from their experiences as leaders within their classrooms with different degrees of success depending on the context and the conditions in which they attempt to exert teacher leadership. These teacher leaders emerging from roles as classroom teachers also develop toward proficiency in new roles at different rates dependent upon these past experiences as well as the contexts in which they are placed to practice teacher leadership.
Describing the Study

There is an inherent desire by all to have understanding and have order in and about our lives. Mezirow (2000) writes that the “human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings” (p. 3). Change in schools represents such a negotiation. Instructional coaches as designated teacher leaders have to negotiate this change in their roles and identities. The perception of success of the instructional coach hinges upon how he or she feels able to influence and assist teaching colleagues. Teachers are not young students acquiring knowledge. They are adult learners attempting to understand their own thinking.

The conceptual framework for this study centered on the assumption that instructional coaches, as teacher leaders, must grow into that capacity and then continue to develop traits of influence and growth, and that their ability to grow into the designated role is influenced by the conditions that are present in the context where that journey takes place. York-Barr and Duke (2004) developed a Framework of Teacher Leadership for Student Learning. This framework emerged from an extensive literature review of teacher leadership. It shares key understandings about teacher leadership and proposes a pathway that teachers may take in the development of leadership capacities.
York-Barr & Duke (2004) traced the route of leadership to the ultimate destination of education, which is student learning. This study focused primarily on the component of the York-Barr and Duke Framework that considers the interaction between the conditions in which instructional coaches as designated leaders carry out their work and their perceived growth as instructional leaders. As the researcher I was interested in whether or not there existed a relationship among the existing conditions and the coach’s self-perceptions of growth and positive job performance.

The conditions as illuminated by York-Barr & Duke (2004) support designated teacher leaders as they make their journey into that new role. Conditions that typically facilitate the journey are the existence of a supportive culture, which includes supportive
colleagues and a supportive principal. Other conditions that impact designated teacher leaders are time, resources, and developmental opportunities.

“If principals expect to reap the full benefits of having teacher leaders in coaching positions, they should create working conditions that encourage positive relationships, reduce risks, and provide leadership development” (Pankake & Moller, 2007). The principal may be the most important factor within the necessary conditions. After all, the principal needs to be seen as the instructional leader and stand together with the instructional coach. He or she also has great influence upon the culture of the school, which will impact the level of acceptance of the coaching initiative, if not the coach.

A coaching initiative represents a philosophical and financial commitment from a school district. Just placing outstanding teachers into these instructional coaching positions will not ensure any level of change or success. It is “important to ensure that the instructional coaches themselves are provided the support and training they need to become successful” (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 57).

As classroom teachers shift into the role of instructional coach, the York-Barr & Duke framework suggested that the existence of the supportive conditions described above would make the process more successful for the new coaches and then ultimately for the teachers. Kegan (2000) described the transformation as being epistemological, “less of what happens to us, and more what we make of what happens to us” (p. 52). This group of instructional coaches experienced much change in the transition to the new role as educators. The changes were both personal and professional.

“School districts across America have responded to the accountability movement by increasing professional development activities, including the utilization of onsite
coaching strategies for educators” (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 57). Though the phenomenon of appointing classroom teachers to the designated leadership role of instructional coaches has been fairly widespread over the last decade (Knight, 2007), the literature on the transition to the coaching role has not received a great deal of attention in the literature.

There is no doubt that “as schools invest more heavily in training their educators in new instructional strategies, it becomes important to ensure that the instructional coaches themselves are provided the support and training they need to be successful” (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 57). It is important that effective means for nurturing teacher leaders are developed and sustained.

The Research Questions

The research questions serve as the foundation for any study. The questions provide a compass for the study. The researcher, through the question, “must figure out which issues, uncertainties, dilemmas, or paradoxes intrigue you” (Glesne, 2011, p. 29).

Qualitative research seeks “to make sense of actions, narratives, and the ways in which they intersect (Glesne, 2011, p. 1). A qualitative research study attempts to tell a story of one set of participants in order to inform and influence a future set of participants. The information garnered and shared can provide a benefit that could allow those with similar future experiences to avoid pitfalls and make effective decisions.

The over-arching question of this study was: How do individuals experience the transition both cognitively and emotionally from functioning as a classroom teacher
leader to functioning in the designated teacher leader role of instructional coach?

Potter (1996) states that ontology “is the concern about whether the world exists, and if so, in what form” (p. 36). For the instructional coaches of this study the ontology is the context of their world, the school and the people of the school. The main answers searched for in the study were how the coaches personally perceived their reality within this transition.

Sub-questions include:

1. As the coach perceives it, how does the leadership and principalship of the building affect this transition?

2. As the coach perceives it, how does the school culture affect the transition?

Definitions

Terms appear throughout this dissertation that address various facets of educational coaching and accountability in education. The following technical terms are provided as reference.

**Cognitive coaching:** Cognitive coaching is a process in which a trained coach works to move a teacher through a reflective, cognitive process involving a specific set of strategies (Costa & Garmston, 2002).

**Instructional coaching:** Instructional coaches utilize research based best practices in their work with classroom teachers. Instructional coaches promote teacher growth through modeling, reflection, data analysis, and high quality professional development.
**Literacy coaching:** Excellent teachers who work as coaches to lead, create, and direct a school’s literacy program (Sturtevant, 2004).

**Peer coaching:** In peer coaching, teachers develop a mutually supportive, confidential interaction in which they develop and reflect on new strategies in a peer relationship (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

**Professional (or staff) development:** High quality professional development is defined as ongoing, research based, job embedded training in best practices (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

**Teacher Leadership:** Leadership that promotes instructional improvement by collaboratively establishing an organizational culture that supports collaboration and continuous learning (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000).

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**Limitations of the Study**

This study examined the work of one set of instructional coaches within a single, rural/suburban school district in central Pennsylvania. The data were collected over a two and a half year time period. The data collected were entirely self-reported. For the initial portion of the study the researcher was the supervisor of the participants. This limits the absolute certainty that participants were totally forthcoming in sharing all thoughts and information. However, it was also possible that the participants were more forthcoming due to a long relationship of established trust with the researcher. Although, it was discovered that there were contrasting differences in the experiences of the individual coaches, the data still came from within schools in the same school district.
This multiple case study was limited to telling the story of this group of novice coaches as they entered this new professional role and grew during this initial period. The purpose was to understand and portray the experiences and perceptions of the participants from their own point of view. The data was comprised of the journals and interviews of the coaches themselves.
Chapter 2  Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on teacher leadership and instructional coaching in order to frame this study within the professional literature. The chapter begins with an overview of the literature on teacher leadership, focusing specifically on studies that address the York-Barr and Duke Framework on Teacher Leadership (2004). The second section of the chapter examines some of the literature on instructional coaching including various definitions of coaching, an overview of the history of coaching, and an examination of a variety of models of coaching including peer coaching, cognitive coaching, literacy coaching and instructional coaching. The third section of the chapter then turns its focus to reviewing the extant literature regarding the various factors that impact the effectiveness of a classroom teacher moving into a teacher leadership or instructional coaching position. The chapter concludes with a section that points out the contribution of this study to the existing literature.

Teacher Leadership

Defining Teacher Leadership

“Teacher leadership has been described as its own unique form of leadership in school” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 259). Unique because it is so varied. What might
constitute teacher leadership in one school may differ in another. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) describe teacher leadership as those who lead both within and outside of the classroom. They model and influence others toward improved instructional practices. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) agree that teacher leaders provide influence to colleagues. Teacher leaders can come with and without formal designations. To this researcher, an instructional coach is one type of teacher leader.

Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) have described the evolution of teacher leadership in terms of waves. At one time teacher leadership was confined to formal roles such as department heads or union representatives. In these roles teacher leaders acted as an extension of the management of the school. Their function was to ensure efficient operation of the system. In the second wave teacher leaders were identified by instructional expertise and appointed into such roles as curriculum director/leader, staff developer, and mentor. The third wave as identified by Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000) is the realization of the goal of the second wave; improving classroom instruction. This is accomplished with an understanding that teachers are the primary source behind the improvement in schools. This is done through the promotion of collaboration and continuous learning with teachers as the leaders of the movement. These teacher leaders are found both inside and outside of the classroom.

Instructional leadership is a term commonly used and usually applied to the role of the school principal. Pellicer and Anderson (1995) describe instructional leadership as “the initiation and implementation of planned change in a school’s instructional program, supported by the various constituencies in the school, that results in substantial and sustained improvement in student learning” (p. 16). However, a principal operating
unilaterally will not achieve the same results as one working in partnership with teachers. It is necessary to have teacher leadership working in partnership with the school principal. With this partnership the teacher leader possesses the “ability…to engage colleagues in experimentation and examination of more powerful instructional practices in the service of more engaged student learning (Wasley, 1991, p. 170). This view of teacher leadership is one that has teacher leaders “leading among colleagues with a focus on instructional practice, as well as working at the organizational level to align personnel, fiscal, and material resources to improve teaching and learning” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 261). A more recent entrant into this arena of instructional and teacher leadership is the instructional coach.

Leithwood and Duke (1999) identified six categories of leadership. These are instructional, transformational, moral, participatory, managerial, and contingency. Of particular interest to this study is the category classified as instructional. Instructional leadership “typically focuses on the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students” (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 47). This is but one focus. Another that is important is the reciprocal influence of instructional coaches on schools and schools upon instructional coaches.

If teacher leaders, such as instructional coaches, are going to have organizational success, then a relationship with school or building leadership is imperative. Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson, & Hann (2002) describe this as parallel leadership, which “encourages a relatedness between teacher leaders and administrator leaders that activates and sustains the knowledge-generating capacity of schools” (p. 38). Crowther and his colleagues explain the role of the principal and of the teacher leaders or instructional coaches. The
principal would see to the strategic thinking and other macro thinking such as visioning. The teacher leaders, or instructional coaches would take on more of the instructional leadership role, focusing on the classroom level implementation. Both pieces are critical if the coaching process is to be successful. For the partnership to work a relationship between these two bodies of leadership must be developed and sustained.

**Conceptualizing Teacher Leadership in Context**

York-Barr & Duke (2004) analyzed available research on teacher leadership to construct a framework. This framework illustrates “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, pp. 287-288). The framework graphically shows this process as an appointed teacher leader or instructional coach moves from the position of classroom teacher. Instructional coaches cannot just be appointed because they are great teachers and then plan for success. This research framework addresses conditions necessary for instructional coaches or teacher leaders to thrive and grow in the role.
Instructional coaches in most circumstances are appointed into the role. The goal in most circumstances is to improve student learning. However, there are many conditions that will either enhance or diminish the effectiveness of an instructional coach as a teacher leader. York-Barr & Duke (2004) describe three categories that most influence teacher leadership as being school culture, roles and relationships, and structures. “These categories are interrelated, and some items can be appropriately placed in more than one category” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 269). The relationships and structures within a school can influence and be influenced by culture. Smylie and Denny (1990) note that the role and behavior of teacher leaders is directly shaped by the norms, rights, and obligations of the school culture. “In the realities of teacher leadership
practice, therefore, cultural, relational, and structural influences are not likely to be separated meaningfully” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 269). York-Barr & Duke (2004) summarize by stating that the “conditions known to support the work of teacher leaders include the active support of their principals and colleagues, the availability of time and resources necessary to carry out the work, and opportunities to learn and develop in ways that directly support their leadership work” (p. 290).

The first column of the framework sets the foundation for instructional coaches or others as teacher leaders. “Teachers who lead are respected as teachers by their colleagues and administrators” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 289). It is likely that a teacher appointed into a leadership role has demonstrated these qualities. There should be a certain degree of confidence that respect and leadership qualities are already present. A candidate for a teacher leadership or coaching position should also have demonstrated over time an orientation toward continued learning. This orientation is essential in order to grow more fully into a new and different role that is outside of the familiar walls of the classroom.

The next section of the teacher leadership framework highlights the successful pathway of influence for the teacher leader or instructional coach. The work most likely will not be successful without the establishment of trusting relationships. The work of leading will occur from the “formal positions of leadership as well as through informal collegial interactions” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 290).

As teacher leaders or instructional coaches, their influence goes beyond their classroom or immediate teaching team. The framework asserts that the targets of influence include different layers of the school organization. These layers are individual
teachers, teams or groups of teachers, and finally whole buildings or even organizations. The improvements that can occur in student learning are then achieved by the influence coaches as teacher leaders have not just upon the teaching or instruction in the school, but also through the creation of “positive learning relationships between teachers and students and among students, establishing classroom routines and expectations that effectively direct student energy, engaging students in the learning process, and improving curricular, instructional, and assessment practices” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p.290).

York-Barr & Duke (2004) identify several conditions that influence teacher leadership. This becomes part of the foundation of their framework. One of the conditions is school culture and context. It is determined that strong learning communities that promote professionalism and a continuous learning mindset (Caine & Caine, 2000; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994) are best for facilitating the development of teacher leadership.

Learning communities can create an atmosphere that allows for risk taking and ongoing, continuous research into teaching practice (Caine & Caine, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Caine & Caine (2000) suggest that teachers, who participate over time in a culture such as this, develop perceptual orientations. With a perceptual orientation, teachers move from seeking to be in control to a behavior of seeking relationships. There is a shift to reflecting on the positive conditions that produce the best results. There also is a shift toward looking for interconnectedness as opposed to seeing things operating independently. Lastly, this kind of culture shifts thought away from individuals feeling empowered toward the search for ways to empower others (Caine & Caine, 2000).
“These qualities…constitute a superb foundation for the development of good leaders” (Caine & Caine, 2000, p. 8).

Building relationships with key colleagues and with principals is a primary factor in the development of effective teacher leaders (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Silva et al., 2000). “The success of teacher leadership depends largely on the cooperation and interaction between teacher leaders and their colleagues” (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 229). A teacher leader will need to have or develop collaborative relationships in order to have influence with colleagues. This relationship may hinge upon the perceived expertise of the teacher leader. It is imperative that the teacher leader is perceived as having instructional expertise (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leaders and their colleagues must have continuous dialogue. Communication and ongoing dialogue are important aspects of communication since teacher leader roles “are by their nature, ambiguous” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The role will evolve based on the changes in the context and the needs of the individuals within the school.

The Critical Role of the Building Principal

The relationship between the teacher leader and the principal is critical. “Where we have seen teacher leadership begin to flourish, principals have actively supported it or, at least, encouraged it” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 33). Principals are the ones “with the greatest power, and the ones who set the tone for the relationship” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 273). Silva et al. (2000) offer further evidence of this through their case study. Three teachers did not feel supported by their principal and experienced
frustration in their work to be teacher leaders.

Additional support for the importance of the school administrator as an important factor in influencing the effectiveness of teacher leaders is provided by the literature on the impact of the principal on the effectiveness of instructional coaching. The most important person in the individual school for the success of the coach is the principal. “A well-prepared and talented coach can accomplish a great deal, but every coach’s impact will be magnified when he or she works in partnership with an effective instructional leader” (Knight, 2007, p. 32). The work of coaches is squandered if school principals are not instructional leaders” (Fullan & Knight, 2011, p. 50). A shared vision of instructional coaching by the principal and coach is also critical. If the coach follows the principle of enrolling teachers and the principal sees coaching as the means of “fixing” teachers, a conflict exists that will be detrimental to the effectiveness of the coaching. The principal will determine what role the coach will take within the school and play a key role of acculturating the coach into the school culture (Jorissen, Salaazar, Morrison, & Foster, 2008).

Pankake and Moller (2007) identify eight strategies that will support and encourage coaches in schools. The principal and coach must collaboratively build a plan that includes a timeline and benchmarks for checking progress. The relationship must be negotiated between the principal and coach. This is important so that the two may be effective in their similar and contrasting roles. The principal must be accessible and provide access to resources, both human and material. The focus must remain on instructional improvement. Finally, the principal must help the coach maintain balance, not become overloaded with tasks, keep good relationships with teachers, and continue to
learn through professional development. For the greatest impact on student achievement to occur the principal and the coach must collaborate to identify needs of the school and determine proper professional development (Knight, 2005).

It is the role of the administrator to ensure that coaching is implemented in such a way that trust and collegiality is built among coach and teachers. It is the school administrator who must set the stage for teachers to feel safe enough to collaborate and not be viewed as a teacher who needs to be “fixed” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). The administrator must provide support for teachers as well as for coaches. They are encouraged to be supportive of the coach and the work of the coach (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007). These efforts by the administrator will more likely ensure that teachers will see the coach as a welcomed guest in the classroom who can provide a means of professional growth. Teachers are cautious of new initiatives. Change can be difficult for adult learners. “Without support, a powerful practice, poorly implemented, is no better than one that is ineffective” (Knight, 2007, p. 509). It will be a challenge for administrators beginning a coaching program that looks much different from past educational practices (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Regular meetings between coach and administrator are necessary to discuss the ongoing work, progress, and direction of professional growth for school and coach (Killion, 2007). Administrators must ensure that time is provided for teachers and coaches to meet and reflect on best practices. The greater the frequency of the meetings, the more likely that positive results will occur (Kostin & Haeger, 2006). Even with all of this in place, it is important to realize that results from coaching will not be immediate. Trust must be established. Relationships must be built (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). In one study on perceptions of critical
characteristics coaches needed for success, it was determined that several months were needed to develop the trusting relationships between coaches and teachers (Ertmer, Richardson, Cramer, Hanson, Huang, Lee, et. al., 2005). Success could be determined by how many teachers continued to ask for support from the coaches (Ertmer, et al., 2005).

Silva et al (2000) use the metaphor of “sliding the doors open.” This implies that a principal will “slide the doors” and allow for teacher participation in leadership decision-making, but then “slide the doors” closed again until another desired opportunity arises. Sustained and effective teacher leadership appears when the door is kept open with teachers acting as leaders within their day-to-day work. Instructional coaches represent one role that teachers can assume to provide this kind of ongoing teacher leadership.

Teacher Leadership as Instructional Coaching

Definition of Coaching

Tschannen –Moran (2010) describe the word coaching as we know it as originating from the Hungarian word kocsi, which comes from the town of Kocs where carriages were made. Coaching is transporting to a desired destination in a comfortable carriage. In current times we understand coaching as a means of passing on knowledge and experience.

Bickmore (2010) describes her connections as a coach, principal, and professional development director. As a gymnastics coach she wondered why her team members
repeatedly fell from the balance beam in competition. After all, the team had consistently taken part in summer camps and modeling from experts. Why were they not seeing good results? Her realization is that all of the practice of the team occurred in controlled situations, but it was quite different when attempting the same moves in front of a large audience. This thinking was taken to the educational setting. Rather than relying on experts, it was determined to embed the learning in the situation of teaching through the work of peers and of coaches.

Coaching is really about providing skills or expertise to another. It is a way of promoting self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief “in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). “Teacher efficacy is a type of self-efficacy”(Bruce & Ross, 2008, p. 347). In education, coaching may be viewed as a mechanism for creating more self-efficacy in teachers. “Individuals who feel that they will be successful on a given task are more likely to be so because they adopt challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite setbacks, and develop coping mechanisms for managing their emotional states” (Bruce & Ross, 2008, p. 347). If teachers have a greater belief that they will impact student learning, they will be more willing to take risks to get there. Coaching can help provide this mindset. “Teacher efficacy contributes to achievement because teachers with high efficacy use effective classroom management strategies to encourage student autonomy, meet the needs of low ability students, and positively influence student perceptions of their abilities” (Bruce & Ross, 2008, p. 348).
History of Coaching

The concept of coaching has been with us for many years, if not centuries. Isaac Newton once said, “If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulder of giants.” Perhaps, he was referring to learning from a mentor, or coach. Coaching as a field of study has been documented since the early part of the 20th century. In 1918 Coleman R Griffith began studying the psychology of football and basketball players. In 1926 he published a text, *Psychology of Coaching*. In this text he discusses the different aspects of athletic coaching and reviews learning principles that might help coaches improve their support of their players (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Regardless of the field of endeavor the human instinct is to improve. Why else is there constant change and progress? Coaching as a leadership function can be thought of as a means to an end. The end is improved performance. In many cases the end is not reached without a partnership. The partnership can be created in the coaching process. That relationship can have different appearances.

Coaches provide support to develop and improve teachers, but who or what provides the support to assist the development of coaches? How does a teacher move from being a successful classroom teacher into a role of helping other teachers? How does a successful classroom teacher with the respect of his or her students move into a teacher leadership role and gain or grow the respect of his or her colleagues? This study provides the story of growth and development of a group of instructional coaches who take this journey out of the comfort of their classrooms into the appointed role of teacher leader and instructional coach.
Without ongoing professional development, few teachers will actually change their practice, and schools will continue to see the same results they always have (Poglinco & Bach, 2004; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Instructional coaching is a professional development practice that provides teachers with access to a mentor or leader who can guide them toward improvement. Instructional coaches provide a service to classroom teachers, allowing these teachers to grow and develop their teaching practice (Kowal & Steiner, 2007).

Much has been written about the coaching of teachers. The need for this kind of job-embedded professional development has been well established. However, while much has been written about the coaching of teachers and coaching in general, little has been shared about how and to what extent new coaches are mentored or coached. Who is providing the mentoring and guidance for those who mentor and guide the teachers? What conditions provide the fruitful ground by which a teacher leader, such as an instructional coach, will become successful?

School principals and coaches already practicing in schools share the recognition that there is a need for continued development as a teacher, and certainly mentoring as a leader of teachers (Stock & Duncan, 2009). “It is ironic that instructional [coaches] are increasingly thrust into leadership situations where they must lead individuals who are reluctant to change, yet the [coaches] have had little mentoring or advance preparation in the field of leadership” (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 67).

Historically, professional development in education was delivered in single or multi-day sessions by experts in a particular field or specific technique. Teachers attended these sessions usually in large groups. There was usually very little follow-up
after the session. With this lack of support, only 10% of teachers would actually use the new learning in their instruction (Joyce & Showers, 1982). Because of the lack of follow-up, teachers usually returned to the classroom frustrated or defeated. Changes in instruction or in student learning rarely occurred (Guskey, 2000). Professional development done well and with high quality has been found to increase student achievement. (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). So, the struggle for schools has been to find the right kind of professional development to achieve this outcome. It is believed that if professional development could improve instruction, then the improved instruction would increase student learning. Wright, Horn, & Sanders (1997) find that there is a clear connection between teacher quality and student achievement. “The two most important factors impacting student gain are the teacher and the achievement level for the student. The teacher effect is highly significant in every analysis and has a larger effect size than any other factor” (Wright, et al., 1997, p. 61).

Professional development often employs the expert coming to spend the day with a group of educators. This occurred too frequently, and sadly still does. Teachers were given great ideas, but no plan for implementation and no support for continued learning. High quality professional development has a focus on actual teaching, reflection, and then the assessment of student outcomes (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). In a study of professional development it was determined that if the professional development had a duration of less than 14 hours, there was no effect observed in student learning. Significant effects on student learning were observed in professional development that lasted between 30 and 100 hours and took place over a six month to one year time period (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). This kind of sustained, ongoing
professional development is embedded within some models of coaching. Professional development will only be successful if it is focused on both student and teacher learning. There needs to be a culture of support and a value placed on quality professional development (Killion, 1999). If student learning isn’t the focus of the professional development, student achievement will rarely change (Killion, 1999). “High quality staff development must be focused on student learning…It focuses on extending teachers’ content knowledge and content specific instructional skills, and it incorporates multiple models of learning with extensive classroom based support” (Killion, 1999, p. 191). Coaching as a practice and the understanding of coaching as a practice has been around for decades if not for centuries. It has been used in business to train new employees, educate experienced employees in new practices and ultimately improve the bottom line (Flaherty, 1999).

**Contrasting Purposes for and Approaches to Coaching**

“In a country where academic achievement has the potential to change social equity, it is imperative that all students achieve academically. To that end, scholars have agreed for some time that the single best safeguard against school failure is highly qualified teachers” (Sailors & Shanklin, 2010, p. 1). The answer seems quite simple. Improve the teachers and student achievement will improve. The problem appears to be that educational leaders do not have consensus on the method for improving the teachers. Even if the premise of using instructional coaching is an agreed upon strategy, the expectations for how the coaches will operate differs. “Change should be the outcome of
coaching. That change might be defined in terms of teacher behaviors or student learning or both...those who implement coaching programs might be wise to accept some surrogate measures of student learning, such as increased student engagement, change in teaching repertoires, and the like, as evidence of their impact” (Fisher, 2012, p. 4).

There are many school districts that are in great need of improvement; however, not all school leaders see the path to improvement in the same way. As a result schools have adopted very different coaching systems that are driven by different purposes. Some school leaders are looking for both quick fixes while others are more interested in long-term solutions. Those leaders who are most interested in quick fixes often see teachers as the problem to be fixed. As a result these leaders want teachers to conform and follow specific models of instruction that are often scripted or at least very prescriptive. They want teachers to learn the instructional model and then follow it precisely with fidelity. Coaches can be used to drive, implement and monitor this quick fix.

Other school leaders who see teachers as being part of the long-range solution to school improvement identify contrasting purposes for instructional coaching. These leaders want their coaches to inspire and instigate self-improvement. They want their teachers to develop a continuous learning mindset as opposed to following scripts with fidelity. Depending on the purposes of coaching and the vision that the coach is directed to have by the leadership of the school; an emphasis can fall in one area or another. Coaching can be a motivational tool for teacher learning that informs and guides, or coaching can be used to direct, assess, and evaluate.
In schools that view coaching as a mechanism for directing and assessing teachers, coaches typically adopt a directive view of coaching in which the coach teaches, gives direction, and provides feedback. In those schools in which coaching is viewed as a form of job-embedded teacher learning, coaches often adopt a nondirective coaching style in which the coach listens, asks questions, explores, probes, and allows the person being coached to find solutions to the existing problem (Grossek, 2008). The difference mainly is that a coach will either assert his/her own instructional expertise or focus on enabling the individual teacher to enhance his/her expertise by moving beyond the existing boundaries. Though the visible aspects of the coaching philosophy are most evident at the teacher coach level, the manner in which coaching episodes are approached very much depends upon the overall philosophy and purposes of the system.

For some school districts, a direct approach in coaching may be the desired style. Parsloe (1995) states that coaching is “directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction” (p. 72). This directive form of coaching involves more telling and showing. Directive coaching has also been denoted as “confrontational coaching” (Steiner & Kowal, 2007), “expert coaching” (Egawa, 2006), “implementation coaching” (Borman Feger, & Kawakumi, 2006), and “coaching heavy” (Killion, 2008). A coach operating in a directive approach may be tasked with getting teachers to employ a specific instructional method and show consistent fidelity to that method. It may also involve the implementation of a teaching program that requires specific instructional moves by the teacher. Madeline Hunter’s seven steps in the development of an effective lesson would fall into a directive coaching model. These steps may need to be coached. In this instance
coaching is imposed, perhaps by an administrator. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) denote this kind of coaching as a form of contrived collegiality. They go further to state that some forms of coaching “don’t just encourage teachers to work together on improvements they identify, but also mandate that they work together to deliver prescribed literacy programs with fidelity” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 119).

Directive coaching can be effective, and possibly the best mode of coaching if fidelity is the desired outcome. The purpose is to enable one individual to mimic and then duplicate the actions of the mentor or coach.

There are identified advantages for employing a directive approach. It improves a teacher’s accuracy in the implementation of various instructional and school-based programs including positive behavior supports (Filcheck, McNeil, Greco, & Barnard, 2004), reading interventions (Jager, Reezigt & Creemers, 2002), and explicit math instruction (Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2011). If fidelity to a specific instruction method is the desired goal, directive coaching could be a better stance to take. Research in at least one instance identifies that “there [is] a functional relationship between implementation of the coaching procedure and an increase in teacher fidelity” (Bethune & Wood, 2013, p. 110). A directive approach is preferred if the desired goal is system wide improvement. A coach acting in a directive manner with the support of the instruction leaders will have a greater likelihood of having all teachers appropriately and effectively implementing a new, desired approach.

In addition to removing instructional decision-making from the hands of the teacher, another danger of employing directive coaching is the impression that coaching is evaluative. A directive coaching environment would feature mostly one-way
communication. Effective communication and change will only take place in a nonthreatening environment. “The climate must foster equality and freedom, trust and understanding, acceptance and warmth. In this climate and in this climate only does the individual feel safe enough to incorporate new experiences” (Rogers and Farson, 2006, p. 281). In a directive approach with the possible need of “telling” teachers what to do, a culture of resentment can be created with teachers only implementing new initiatives in a limited manner (Knight, 2007). This can defeat the usual purpose of directive coaching, which is implementation with fidelity.

A nondirective approach may best be described by Grant and Stober (2006) who explain, “coaching is more about asking the right questions than telling people what to do” (p. 3). Nondirective coaching has been identified with a number of different names. These include “responsive coaching” (Ippolitto, 2009, 2010), “cognitive coaching” (Costa & Garmston, 1994, 2002), “consultative coaching” (Borman, Feger, & Kawakumi, 2006), and “coaching light” (Killion, 2008). A coach engaged in a nondirective approach allows more control by the teacher or mentee. In this approach the teacher is making more of the decisions. The coach is supporting and encouraging. Vanderburg and Stephens (2010) found in their study that teachers shared a preference for a nondirective type of coaching by sharing “patterns in the data that suggest the teachers valued how the coaches created a space for collaboration [and] provided ongoing support” (p. 141). A nondirective model allows teachers to develop independently and creatively, as opposed to the directive model that demands all teachers developing and implementing in an identical manner.
The goal of both directive and nondirective coaching is “one clear purpose, the learning and development of an individual, a process that involves change” (Brockbank & McGill, 2006, p. 9); however the manner of achieving these results is different. A nondirective approach will take more time, but will result in longer lasting change that does not require continuous supervision because it is rooted in the learning of the individual teacher. A directive approach will allow one to see more immediate change, but may also require continuous supervision to ensure that the implementation change continues to stay in place since the learning comes from others not from the teacher.

Directive coaching is rooted in the notion that it is essential to change teachers’ “attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions” in order to make significant impact on instructional practice. This notion has been challenged (Guskey, 2002, p. 382). A principal interested in “fixing” an ineffective teacher may push an instructional coach toward a more directive approach. Costa and Garmston (2002) suggest, “coaching should never be about ‘fixing’ another person” (p. 97). This corroborates the research findings of Buckingham (2007) who demonstrated that trying to fix problems by focusing on weaknesses is relatively ineffective. Ultimately, a skilled coach would know when it is appropriate to act in a directive mode, as an expert and when to act in a nondirective mode, as a facilitator (Ives, 2008). “School reform literature suggests that a mixture of pressure and support from school leaders and literacy coaches may be most effective in helping teachers shift instructional practices” (Ippolito, 2010, p. 164).
Coaching Models

There are four coaching models most commonly used in schools. These are peer coaching, cognitive coaching, literacy coaching, and instructional coaching (Cornett & Knight, 2009). The goal of each model is to steer teachers toward improved instruction. The models differ in the philosophy and implementation behind each. The key component that is common in each model is that implementation takes place in high quality, job embedded, professional development. One aspect of this professional development is networking among teachers. “Coaching dedicates extended time to the examination of instructional practice and attempts to connect teachers to create networks that enhance social capital and information flow (Taylor, 2008, p. 22). Another key aspect is that coaching encourages risk-taking and “imparts an innovative orientation, and provides an example of professionalism around instructional practice (Taylor, 2008, p. 22). Coaching alone will not provide change. Coaching with quality professional development, resources, and strong leadership combine to produce gains in student achievement (Russo, 2004).

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching had its advent in the early 1980’s. It is defined as the experience of two teachers collaborating in and out of the classroom on instruction, planning, and resource development (Swafford, 1998). Peer coaching requires a reciprocal relationship between two teachers usually within the same school. The two teachers mutually support each other in actions to improve instruction. “The traditional goal of peer coaching is to
provide positive feedback to instructors” (Slater & Simmons, 2001, pg. 68). Joyce and Showers (1982) found that the learning in a workshop or training session rarely transfers to classroom practice. With the addition of peer coaching, Joyce and Showers (1982) note a 80% gain on transfer to classroom practice over traditional workshops. Showers and Joyce (1996) saw consistent results in the ensuing years following the original work on peer coaching. Teachers more consistently used new learning from workshops with the discussion and mutual support of peer coaching in place. Unlike the other models, peer coaching is very much teacher driven, and a strong belief that peer coaching improves student learning because good teachers, who feel good about themselves, teach their students more (Slater & Simmons, 2001). Peer coaching also breaks down the traditional isolation of teaching. Peer coaching practice allows teachers to “break down some of the barriers that upheld a view of teaching as an isolated practice” (Jewett & McPhee, 2012, p. 108.) Using peer coaching as a means of professional development “allowed them to be more collaborative and to find enjoyment in working together to improve teaching and learning” (Jewett & McPhee, 2012, p. 108). In summary, there are many reasons for implementing and supporting peer coaching in schools. Peer coaching “can reduce teacher isolation, increase collegiality, facilitate the sharing of resources and ideas, and capitalize on teachers’ individual and shared strengths” (Troen & Boles, 2010, p. 59).
Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive coaching is a second model commonly used in education. Whereas, peer coaching is a reciprocal process, Cognitive coaching works from the coach to the teacher. Cognitive coaching uses a cycle similar to clinical supervision, which includes a preconference, observation, and post conference.

A cognitive coach is a mentor who supports a teacher through the development and growth of thinking (Costa and Garmston, 2002). Costa and Garmston developed the process as a way for principals to support teacher thinking and self-directedness. It developed at a time when principals commonly used checklists of teacher behaviors as a means of evaluation. The principal would acknowledge the correct behaviors and suggest an addition to practice of the missing behaviors. Cognitive coaching “is grounded in the belief that the thought processes of the teacher are what drives practice” (Ellison and Hayes, 2009). Consideration for the way adults learn has to be considered. “Adults are self-directed learners who are unique based upon their personal experiences.

The mission of Cognitive Coaching is to produce self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for high performance both independently and as members of a community” (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p. 16).

Much of the literature related to cognitive coaching continues to point to the work of Costa and Garmston. They provide a detailed definition through discussion of a Renaissance School. “A Renaissance School is a learning environment which recognizes that within the interdependence of the system, there lies the individuality of a human being and that each individual is involved and functions within a set of core values,

A cognitive coach is usually employed by a school district in that capacity, coaching teachers on a full time basis. The goal of cognitive coaching is to increase student achievement through greater teacher efficacy, produce higher levels of teacher thinking, and to provide teacher support (Edwards, 2008). “From the one-room schoolhouse to the large conglomerations now in existence as the place of learning for today’s youth, education has gone through many transformations. The one constant is the existence of the classroom teacher and, of course, the importance of this individual as the facilitator of learning” (Uzat, 1998, p. 3). Regardless of context the most important component of improved learning is outstanding teaching. Unfortunately, many teachers continue to feel isolated as if still in a one-room schoolhouse. Continuous professional development is essential. Cognitive coaching can be the “program to assure the long-term professional growth of the teacher” (Uzat, 1998, p. 4).

Dennen (2004) cites seven necessary coaching methods in order to produce the goals noted by Edwards. These are modeling, explanation, coaching, scaffolding, reflection, articulation, and explorations. There are mixed reports of improved student achievement with cognitive coaching, but evidence of greater teacher efficacy has been found (Dennen, 2004). Edwards (2005) states that cognitive coaching is linked to increased student test scores, improved teacher efficacy, increased ability for reflection by teachers, and more teacher collaboration.
**Literacy Coaching**

Some authors write of literacy coaching as its own entity, while others claim that it “is a category of instructional coaching that focuses on literacy and related aspects of teaching and learning” (Toll, 2009, p. 57). Literacy coaching is similar to peer and cognitive coaching in some ways. Its main goal is to support teachers and help them develop and improve instructional skills. It differs in that it focuses on literacy instruction across all content areas. Attention to literacy coaching increased with the presence of literacy coaching in the federal guidelines for Reading First (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Literacy coaches were specifically mentioned in the guidelines and that professional development for teachers should have “ongoing, continuous activity, and not consist of ‘one-shot’ workshops or lectures” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 26). The federally funded National Reading Panel (2000) issued the report, *Teaching Children to Read*. Over 100,000 studies on reading instruction were reviewed. Recommendations for reading specialists to provide guidance to classroom teachers were made (Dean, Dyal, Wright, Carpenter, & Austin, 2012). Consideration for who takes these roles is vitally important. Research shows that advanced preparation for coaches certainly makes a difference (L’Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010). L’Allier and Piper (2006) provide evidence from several studies that classrooms supported by highly trained literacy coaches achieve the highest average gains in reading performance.

Literacy coaches, like other coaches, may allocate their time in different ways. “Using time allocation to categorize the main focus of their coaching, four categories of coaching emerged: teacher oriented, student oriented, data oriented, and managerial.
Research shows that the greatest gains in student achievement occur in classrooms supported by literacy coaches with a teacher-oriented stance (L’Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010). Relationships is another theme in the research. Teachers in a research study note that a trusting, non-evaluative relationship provides a means of growth that builds instructional capacity. Teachers prefer a coach who is “more like a facilitator of their learning rather than a dictator (Vanderberg & Stephens, 2009, p. 3). Literacy coaches must also be literacy leaders in their schools. Effective coaches will be involved in three leadership practices: setting goals in a school, developing people, and redesigning the organization to facilitate accomplishment of goals (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Literacy coaches and principals must be on the same page as they provide direction for initiatives and direction for school literacy reform.

The practice of literacy coaches evolves or changes over time. New coaches often struggle to determine how to best use their time. As a classroom teacher their time is often dictated. Now as a coach without a classroom, decisions must be made. In one research study it was found that there is significant decrease in the percentage of time allocated to working with students and a subsequent increase in time spent conferring with teachers and co-teaching (Bean & Zigmond, 2007).

Literacy coaching can often be found across the spectrum from cognitive coaching. A cognitive coach is teacher driven. Literacy coaching can be driven by programs. Literacy coaches are “most effective when they support the implementation and monitoring of research based literacy interventions that classroom teachers can infuse into their instruction to develop students’ vocabulary, fluency and comprehension” (Taylor, Moxley, Chanter & Boulware, 2007, p. 22).
Instructional Coaching

While literacy coaching is aimed more narrowly in a specific skill, cognitive coaching focuses primarily on altering a teacher’s thinking, and peer coaching is work with fellow teachers, instructional coaching is defined as work to improve instructional delivery in all curricula areas (Taylor, 2008). “Instructional coaches partner with teachers to help them incorporate research-based instructional practices into their teaching. They are skilled communicators, or relationship builders, with a repertoire of excellent communication skills that enable them to empathize, listen, and build trusting relationships” (Knight, 2007, p. 30). Instructional coaching is “one form of instructional leadership…characterized by nonsupervisory/nonevaluative individualized guidance and support that takes place directly within the instructional setting…intended to promote teachers’ learning and application of instructional expertise” (Taylor, 2008, p. 13).

The work of an instructional coach is complex and varied. In a typical day an instructional coach may be meeting with teachers, modeling instruction in a classroom, observing, gathering data, gathering materials, planning professional development, delivering professional development, participating in team meetings, facilitating team meetings, etc. The list could go on. It can be quite difficult to write a job description for this position. The primary goals of instructional coaching are to move teachers toward a more collaborative atmosphere and provide professional development that is “grounded in inquiry, collaborative, sustained, ongoing, intensive, connected, and engaging for teachers” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. 3).
The key cog for the work of an instructional coach is the relationship with the teacher. Knight (2007) writes, “the biggest fear when starting out is that teachers will not want to work with them. Not much will be accomplished if no one wants to work with the coach” (p. 20). Coaching is a work of partnering, of a relationship. If there is no relationship, nothing can be accomplished. “The way we interact with others makes or breaks most coaching relationships. Even if we know a lot about content and pedagogy and have impressive qualifications, experience, or postgraduate degrees, people will not embrace learning with us unless they’re comfortable working with us” (Knight, 2011, p. 18). The primary thing a coach will do everyday and in every scenario of the work, is to build relationships. Most coaching programs strongly encourage and emphasize the development of relationships. The relationship is a foundation of trust between the coach and the teacher. The interaction between coach and teacher is one in which the “coaches listen carefully and talk little” (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2006, p. 25).

Collaboration is a key aspect of the coach and teacher relationship (Jorissen, Salazar, Morrison, & Foster, 2008; Russo 2004).

**Challenges in Transitioning into the Teacher Leadership Role**

As one might expect, given that instructional coaching is a form of teacher leadership, the literature on the transition into the coaching role includes some of the ideas contained in the York-Barr & Duke Framework. Both conceptualizations assert that there are important existing variables that are not necessarily in the control of the coach. In addition to the importance of the role of the principal as discussed above, Jim
Knight (2007) states the existence of two additional variables that are key predictors of the success of any coaching program. The first is that coaches need to receive professional development. Arbaugh, Chval, Lanin, Van Garderen, & Cummings (2010) echo this by saying “too often, we assume that effective teachers will be effective coaches, and that these teachers need little support as they transition into new roles as [mathematics] coaches” (p. 12). Critical coaching skills are also those involving knowledge of content, pedagogy, and curriculum, an awareness of coaching resources and knowledge of the practice of coaching (Knight, 2007).

The other key variable is the possession of the proper discipline, skills and personality by the coach to be effective. There are many examples of outstanding athletes in specific sports moving into the role of coach with disastrous results. The great player had the skills for the game, but not the skills for coaching others. Some, over time, develop the necessary skills, but many do not. This holds true in education as well. Arbaugh et. al. (2010) write “as experienced, accomplished teachers, they have many skills and much knowledge about teaching. However, when these experienced teachers become [mathematics] coaches, they become novices again – a space that is very uncomfortable and often confusing to navigate” (p. 12). Coaches may also need training in their presentation skills, data analysis, and curriculum planning (Ingersoll, 2007).

All of this leads to the importance of identifying talented teachers with the personality and skills to become an effective coach, provide excellent training in the process of coaching, and ensure that existing school leadership practices are aligned with coaching principles. In a study of teachers moving from the classroom to mathematics coaching positions Arbaugh, et. al. (2010) discuss the challenges of this move.
Transitioning from mathematics teacher to instructional coach requires more than just acquiring additional competencies (e.g., the abilities to work with adult learners, facilitate grade-level meetings, provide feedback to other teachers about their practice, or deal with resistance to change). It also requires, among other things, negotiating new aspects of relationships with long-term colleagues, facing emotional challenges in different ways (p. 12).

Arbaugh et.al. (2010) identified six challenges faced by novice mathematics coaches. These challenges can be generalized to include all experienced classroom teachers who move into instructional coaching roles. The first challenge is “not knowing what you don’t know.” Novice coaches do not enter the role being cognizant of what they need to know in order to do the job effectively. Coaches are usually identified or recruited for the new position due to their success as a classroom teacher. Over the years the novice coach as an instructional coach learned effective communication with students. He or she learned what worked in the development of skills and learning by students. In this new role the coach is now working primarily with adults. Learning theory for adults is much different. Oftentimes the new coach is working in a context that is much broader than what was experienced in the classroom. Instead of just working with a classroom of kindergarten or 5th grade students, now a coach is working with teachers across this spectrum of age levels.

The next challenge, which may come as a surprise to many teachers, is dealing with teacher resistance to change and/or unprofessional behavior. Many novice coaches would never fathom how these behaviors could occur because in their career it was not part of their own practice. In practice in their classrooms, the new coaches made
decisions daily. Now the role requires them to help others make decisions. The skill in this has been highlighted in the practice of negotiation, partnering, listening, and asking questions. These actions were not daily actions in the realm of the classroom.

“New coaches face the challenge of seeing familiar situations from a new perspective” (Arbaugh, et. al., 2010, p. 14). The classroom teacher view is usually confined to within the walls of his or her classroom. “Teachers are typically not aware of the differences in instructional practices that exist in a school” (Arbaugh, et. al., 2010, p. 14). This often comes as a surprise. Many teachers tend to believe that what happens in their classroom or in the classrooms of their closest colleagues is the same throughout the school or the district. It can come as a shock that this is not the case. This wider view is necessary because instructional coaches are often asked to participate on school and district leadership teams.

Moving from the classroom teacher role to that of instructional coach is much different than other changes a teacher might take in a career. Teachers can change grade levels and know that new curriculum will need to be learned. The teacher can know that other instructional moves will have to be adjusted to match the developmental abilities of the students. With a move to a coaching/leadership position there can be a significant jolt to the confidence level of the person who was considered an outstanding teacher.

When a teacher becomes an instructional coach, he or she enters a gray area in the hierarchy of the educational system. He or she is no longer a direct colleague of fellow teachers and friends. He or she is not an administrator either. This can leave the new coach feeling like she is in a “no-man’s land.” The teachers that she called colleagues and friends may now be interacting in different ways. The new coach will have to find
their place within the structure of the school and possibly establish adjusted parameters of relationship with fellow teachers.

All of this contributes to new and different emotional challenges. Teaching is a profession that requires large amounts of emotional energy. Over the years the experienced teacher learns to emotionally adjust to the rhythms of the school year and the expected ups and downs of the job. The challenges inherent in the transition to a teacher leadership/coaching role present new stress. Primary among the new stressors can be the fact that the new coach is moving from being a peer to their teaching colleagues to now being a leader of those same colleagues. “They no longer feel comfortable venting to the same colleagues and are unsure about whom to approach for emotional support” (Arbaugh, et. al., 2010, p. 16).
Chapter 3  Methodology

This study examined the journey of former classroom teacher leaders into the designated teacher leader role of instructional coach. The following research question was the primary source of inquiry: **How do individuals experience the transition both cognitively and emotionally from functioning as a classroom teacher leader to functioning in the designated teacher leader role of instructional coach?** Sub-questions addressed the impact of the building principal, the school context and culture on that transition. In answering this research question, a case study methodology with phenomenological underpinnings seemed most appropriate.

Merriam (1998) described three basic forms of educational research. These are positivist, interpretive, and critical. Merriam (1998) describes the three in this way.

Briefly, the three orientations are distinguished as follows. In positivist forms of research, education or schooling is considered the object, phenomenon, or delivery system to be studied. Knowledge gained through scientific and experimental research is objective and quantifiable. Reality in this perspective is stable, observable, and measurable. In interpretive research, education is considered to be a process and school is a lived experience. Understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained from an inductive, hypothesis- or theory- generating (rather than a deductive or testing) mode of inquiry. Multiple realities are constructed socially by individuals. In the third orientation -critical research-education is considered to be a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction and
transformation. Drawing from Marxist philosophy, critical theory, and feminist theory, knowledge generated through this mode of research is an ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice (pg. 4).

With this understanding I viewed this study as being positioned within interpretive research. Education is a process and the transformation from classroom teacher to that of teacher leader and instructional coach is a process. This process is a lived experience. It featured many challenges; primary among them is learning to work with teachers and administrators as opposed to chiefly working with students.

This study took an interpretive perspective. It is the experience that was of interest, as well as how the participants interpreted that experience. The data collected was entirely self-reported through logs and interviews. The new instructional coaches may have had good self-awareness of who they were as classroom teachers, but the quest began again as these individuals attempted to find themselves in new roles as instructional coaches; as appointed teacher leaders.

In the following section of this chapter I will discuss case study as a methodology as means to justify that method for this study. Another section of the chapter will describe the context, participant selection, and my role, perspective and assumptions as the researcher. The means of data collection and analysis will be shared. Finally, strategies that were used for enhancing the reliability/trustworthiness and validity/credibility for this study are shared.
Case Study

Robert Yin (1994) states that the “first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked” (p. 7). “How” or “why” questions are appropriate for the consideration of using a case study (Yin, 1994). These questions are appropriate because the possible answers can result in story; a story of the studied case.

Stake, Yin, and Merriam all agree that case study is defined as a study of a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries (Merriam, 1998). In a case study this single entity is studied intensively and described in depth. A case study is not just defined by time and space, but also by other components, such as the number of participants (Merriam, 1998). In a case study patterns of behavior may emerge within an investigation. The case study examines the process and the resulting outcome. Stake (2000) calls this a “specific One” (p. 135). The outcome is not known. As researchers we continue to make new discoveries within the data as we see connections between and among the parts.

This case study followed the understandings put forth by Stake. Case studies are good for describing and expanding the understanding of a phenomenon and are often used to study people and programs particularly in education (Stake, 1995). A case study can offer a refinement of understanding (Stake, 1995) of the context in which teachers care. “We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does” (Stake, 1995, p. 8). This is done in part to be able to create thick description of a case in order to convey what the reader would
have experienced if he or she had been present (Stake, 1995). This study of novice teacher leaders and their transition to their roles as instructional coaches fit within this understanding of a case study in education.

A case study may result in a story. The story emerges from the data. It arises from the analysis of the collected data that may include interviews and journals. The most common methods for data collection to be relied upon are interviews and observation (Merriam, 1998). The data are coded into categories or themes from which a vivid, interpretive narrative is then composed.

Based upon the purpose and research questions for this study, case study was determined as the best methodology to be used. Case studies can explore, explain, or describe. According to Stake (1995), "Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (p. xi)." A single case can be one entity, such as an individual or an organization, or it could be a collection of entities, known as a collective case study (Stake, 2000) or a multiple case study (Yin, 1994).

The term “case study” can refer to either single-case or multiple-case studies (Yin, 2003). Often referred to as “collective case study”, multiple-case studies are commonly used in order to investigate some general phenomenon (Silverman, 2010). In many cases, choosing multiple case studies will strengthen the findings. Ultimately, it is important to examine the purpose of the study by reflecting on the research question and the goal of the study before making a decision about whether to include multiple cases.

Case studies will vary in complexity, but they all look specifically at one setting, one subject, one set of documents or one event (Merriam, 2002). There are other features
that are inherent within a case study. These features include a defined time and place, a rich description, multiple sources of data, and the fact that the phenomenon being studied is inseparable from the context.

Examining several cases within a study will result in a multiple case study. A multiple case study may be appropriate if the researcher is examining several related cases. Yin (2012) affirms the use of multiple case studies if the researcher is trying to confirm findings from another case or looking at a success versus a failure. A multiple case study is also appropriate if the cases being investigated are different such as one participant in an elementary school and another in a high school. Sometimes, the first case study lays the groundwork for the second in a series, or for a multiple case study project. Two or more case studies are often compared and contrasted. Bogden and Biklen (1992) call this a “comparative case study” (p. 69). It is argued that in qualitative research “data is often derived from one or more cases and it is unlikely that these cases will have been selected on a random basis” (Silverman, 2010, p. 139). If multiple cases are chosen for a study it is usually done to generalize cases across a range of contexts or subjects. This could be done in order to compare and contrast where each case has differing characteristics. Yin (2012) writes of the use of “replication logic” rather than “sampling logic” (p. 33). This means that a researcher should use more than one case for the purpose of finding similar results across multiple cases. This can result in findings that are more robust (Yin, 1994).

Mason (2002) describes the use of a strategy when analyzing multiple cases. Mason (2002) prescribes the use of “the same lens to explore patterns and themes which occur across data” (p. 165). The researcher should use a method of cross-sectionalizing
or categorical indexing. With this approach “the researcher applies a uniform set of indexing categories systematically and consistently to (the) data” (Mason, 2002, p. 151). This type of coding method will work best with text-based data. It enables the researcher to determine what might be relevant.

**Research Design**

This qualitative research study used multiple-case study methodology framed by a phenomenological lens as a tool to investigate and analyze the process and journey of change of three classroom teachers moving into appointed teacher leader positions as instructional coaches. Each of the three individuals represented a case. Though each experienced a similar process of change, there were some contrasts. These contrasts were represented by the differing contexts of each participant. Though all were within the same school district, the building assignments were different. With the differing building assignments, there were different cultures and leaders to contend with in the journey.

Your methods are the means to answering your research questions. Their selection depends not only on your research questions, but also on the actual research situation and on what will work most effectively in that situation to give you the data you need (Maxwell, 2013, p. 100).

**Context of the Study**

The site for this study was within a suburban school district located in the northeast United States. It is located in a university town. Education is highly valued by
the local populous. Overall, the district performs well and is consistently ranked in the
top quartile of school districts in the state. The district has approximately 7,000 students.
There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The school
district had recently identified a new superintendent who provided instructional-based
leadership that led to restructuring within the Curriculum and Instruction offices. This
restructuring led to the opportunity to begin a professional development initiative using
instructional coaches in appointed teacher leadership roles.

The district has a history of valuing professional development for teachers. A
close relationship is maintained with the college of education of the local university.
There have been many opportunities for the emergence of teacher leaders through this
partnership and in other avenues. Curriculum is usually teacher developed. Prior to the
recent introduction of instructional coaches a position known within the district as
curriculum support teachers was a designated teacher leader role.

**Researcher Role and Perspective**

As the researcher in this study, I believe that I have had the proper experiences
that allowed valid and reliable findings to be revealed. The study followed the journey of
three classroom teachers who were moving from the comfort of that position to a new
one as a designated teacher leader acting as an instructional coach. As a former
classroom teacher, principal, curriculum director and even a form of instructional coach, I
believe that I related to the experiences that this group had during the transition into the
position.
I had varied level of familiarity with all of the participants over the years. I had known one participant for more than ten years. I previously worked with this participant as a mentor teacher and then as a principal. I had known another participant for approximately seven years. Prior to working in the curriculum office, I was the principal and supervisor for this participant. I had very limited professional contact with the other participant, though I would agree that I was at least acquainted with this individual for a number of years.

I possessed some advantages for conducting this study. I knew the role of instructional coach, having been in a similar role in the same school district for a number of years. I too experienced a transition from classroom teacher to a teacher leader position. I have had twenty-three years experience in the school district that is the context of the study. This provides much knowledge of the context, which includes instructional practices, cultures, curriculum and the leadership.

This familiarity also created some disadvantages. During the initial period of the study I was the supervisor or "boss" of the participants. This was clearly explained during the IRB process. There was a possibility that a participant may have not been entirely truthful. A long relationship with the participants may also have created comfort and confidence that enabled the participants to be most forthcoming in sharing their experiences and thoughts. The multiple modes of self-reported data were one attempt to counteract this possible disadvantage. As someone who has experienced a similar transition, it was extremely important for me to bracket, as best as I could, my own experience in moving into a designated teacher leader role so that I could capture the stories of the participants as best as I could instead of recreating or retelling my story. As
it will be noted below, there were a variety of strategies including member check that were used to enhance the likelihood that the stories portrayed the experience of the participants.

Based on experience and extensive reading about teacher leadership and instructional coaching, it was natural that I may have had assumptions about the findings of the study. I have lived through many roles in education including that of teacher leader. I strongly believed that there were conditions that will allow a new teacher leader to be more successful. These conditions match some of those determined by the York-Barr & Duke (2004) study. These conditions included support from the building leader or principal and a supportive and growth-minded culture within the school. Relationships with school leaders and with teachers were found to be critical components needed for the success in the work performed by teacher leaders such as that undertaken by the participants in this study.

I strongly believed that there were barriers or obstacles that will minimize the effectiveness of such an individual. These were the counterparts to the advantages. If a principal is not supportive, or if a building culture is resistant, a newly appointed teacher leader will struggle. This teacher leader will also potentially struggle without continued learning about leadership. This could be considered a bias, but it is what defines my researcher identity (Maxwell, 2005). To minimize the possibility of my subjectivity I used triangulation, member checks, peer/colleague examination, and an audit trail.
Participant Selection

Each of the identified participants completed a formal application process to attain the instructional coaching position. Applications were reviewed and interviews occurred. The subjects represent three candidates selected from an internal interview pool of twelve. There were no external candidates. The participants for this study were chosen because of the unique position they were in as newly identified teacher leaders acting in the role of instructional coach. Maxwell (2013) might say that the subjects were selected using *purposeful sampling*. In purposeful sampling “particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals, and that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 97). This group of three teachers represented members of the only group within this district undergoing the professional change being examined for study.

The original team of instructional coaches selected for the role numbered five, but only three were ultimately selected for inclusion in this study. Two of the instructional coaches were eventually eliminated from the study, as the volume of data could not support their inclusion due to the low number of journals/logs that each was able to produce during the first year of the study. This did not negatively impact the study, as the three remaining instructional coaches provided the similarities and contrasts necessary to draw conclusions.

Each participant, though within the same school district, had primary responsibility as a teacher leader and instructional coach in different pairs of buildings.
The participants serve as instructional coaches in two K-5 elementary buildings. In all cases the participants work with approximately 30 classroom teachers.

**Data Collection**

Merriam (2002) asserts that there are three major sources of data for a qualitative research study – interviews, observations and documents. Two of the three comprised the methods employed for this study. Data were collected through interviews conducted with each participant. Data were also collected and analyzed through documents. These documents were journals or logs kept by each of the coaches.

Case study research is not tied to one particular data collection method. The use of these methods provided an in-depth analysis of the cases. This study sought to understand the process by which classroom teachers evolve into teacher leaders. The framing of this question was indicative not only of qualitative research but more specifically of case study research. The methods aligned with case study research and the question was phrased to indicate case study research as an appropriate methodology. The methods selected were then appropriate to understand the phenomenon.

The newly identified instructional coaches began their transformation from classroom teacher to that as a teacher leader without a classroom in late spring/early summer. Several group sessions were facilitated as a means to prepare the instructional coaches for their new role. Articles were shared and discussed. Strategies for success and potential pitfalls of the change were revealed.
At the start of the school year each of the instructional coaches was asked to keep a journal or log. There were no directives on how often each coach recorded in the journal. This varied across the coaching team. Some provided entries consistently on a weekly basis, while others were less consistent. This was one factor in the eventual exclusion of two of the instructional coaches. The journal entries continued from the start of the school year through the close of the year in June. Specific prompts were rarely used. The purpose was to allow each of the instructional coaches to freely reflect on their own work, successes, and struggles. The following table shows the number of journal entries received from the three participants in this study.

Table 1 - Participant Journal Entries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #1</th>
<th>Carla</th>
<th>24 entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant #2</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>32 entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>36 entries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The analysis of documentary sources is a major method in social research” (Mason, 2002, p. 103). Documents can “provide you with historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources” (Glesne, 2011, p. 85). The journals were a great source for corroborating data from the interviews and also revealed information that otherwise was not shared. The generally open-ended nature of the documents adhered to a caution from Silverman (2010). “It is forever beneficial to
ask how documents are produced; who, exactly, produced them, and how the production process was socially organized” (p. 101).

Interviewing should be considered as “the process of getting words to fly” (Glesne, 2011, p. 102). The experiences of an individual conform to create the perceptions of that individual. Each of the teacher leaders had a similar and contrasting story to tell. To this end, interviews were used to capture their stories. The interview questions were designed in order to allow the individual teachers to share their perceptions of the journey. Follow-up interviews that were unique to each participant were found to be necessary to gather more specific data. These follow-up interviews asked questions to clarify previous statements and information or to probe deeper. It was necessary to have these follow-up interviews with all three participants. The responses from using the interview protocols may have raised more questions or the need for the participant to elaborate further in a given area. As much as the experiences were similar among the participants, there were also contrasting differences that emerged. Interview protocols can be found in the Appendix of this dissertation.

Interviews can vary in form or function. In most case studies interviews have the look of being “open-ended (Yin, 1994). In an “open-ended interview there isn’t an expected “correct” answer. Participants are asked to reflect and share, but there is not one response that is expected. This is an effective method of collecting data from key informants or participants (Yin, 1994). It is important to not construct interview questions that are too closely bound by the research questions. “Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 74).
Face to face interviews were conducted in the spring of the initial year of service as an instructional coach. A second round of interviews was held near the end of the second year of service as instructional coaches. The interviews produced data that triangulated with the journal entries. Bogden and Biklen (1992) share that the results of interviews can be used independently or in conjunction with other data collection methods such as document analysis. Each of the interviews had a time span of 30-45 minutes.

The questions were carefully crafted in order to acquire as much insight and data as possible. The research question influenced the construction of the questions, but I was careful to not let it be the focus. “Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; you interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 74). Several of the questions fell into a category of being *presupposition* questions. These are questions used by interviewers when the belief is that the interviewer believes that the participant “has something to say” (Patton, 2002, p. 369).

The initial interviews ended with a variation of a *grand tour* question (Spradley, 1979). This type of question is designed to take the participant through a place, a time period, or some sequence of events. Each participant did this pictorially in the form of a timeline or journey map and this was provided to the researcher. The interview protocols for the end of year one and year two are included in Appendices A and B.
Data Analysis

The codes used to interpret the data followed the teacher leadership framework of York-Barr and Duke (2004). The initial pass through the data allowed for coding based on the conditions necessary for the development of teacher leaders as espoused by York-Barr and Duke (2004). These conditions were *supportive culture, supportive principal, and culture.*

The conditions that impacted the success of teacher leaders according to the York-Barr and Duke (2004) framework are the school principal, the school culture, resources provided and the professional or leadership development opportunities provided. In addition to looking for these codes, I looked for other ideas to be revealed from the data. I looked for themes or patterns from each individual coach as initially each individual coach was coded separately in order to identify individual themes or trends.

With the completion of this initial level of analysis a summary was written by the researcher for each participant that portrays the journey of that teacher into the designated teacher leadership role, while making sure that the journey attended to any of the conditions found in the York-Barr and Duke (2004) framework. This initial summary of the journey of each individual became the focus for a member check session with each individual. The initial summary for each participant was followed by a second level of analysis that compared and contrasted the patterns and themes between and among the cases.

Member checks for each participant occurred twice during this process. Following the initial construction of the participant’s “story” a member check was
completed. Another was done following the completion of the draft of chapter four, which highlighted the experiences of all three participants. These member checks validated the stories told within the study. One participant suggested a change of wording that provided clarity in the transition that she had experienced.

The final level of analysis focused on connecting the cross-case analysis to the literature on teacher leadership including the York-Barr and Duke (2004) framework in order to develop assertions, claims, or hypotheses that might be tested in future research. It also allowed for identifying implications for facilitating the journey from being a classroom teacher to that of a designated teacher leader such as an instructional coach.

**Credibility**

“Qualitative research assumes that reality is constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing” (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). This represents a challenge for researchers as “there are interpretations of reality: in a sense the researcher offers his or her interpretation of someone else’s interpretation of reality” (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). This study represented the researcher’s portrayal of the perceptions of the reality of the subjects; the instructional coaches.

There are several strategies that can be employed to add strength to the validity and trustworthiness of a qualitative study. These include triangulation, member checks, peer/colleague examination, statement of researcher’s experiences/assumptions/biases and submersion/engagement in the research situation (Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1991, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, Guba and Lincoln, 1994).
Triangulation can include the use of multiple investigators and multiple sources of data or methods to confirm findings (Denzin, 1970; Mathison, 1988). This study employed several sources of data to support the findings. These included the interviews and the documents created by each of the subjects. These artifacts aided in the establishment of validity because “if the researcher hears about the phenomenon in interviews…and reads about it in pertinent documents, he or she can be confident that the ‘reality’ of the situation, as perceived by those in it, is being conveyed as ‘truthfully’ as possible” (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). Following principles of naturalistic inquiry, the purpose of this study was “to understand the constructions of the respondents on their own terms” (Erlandson et al, 1993, p. 132). It should be noted that the interviews and journals consisted entirely of self-reported data, which placed possible limits of credibility on the data, though the opinion of this researcher is that a strong level of trust existed that enabled participants to be honest and forthcoming in the self-reports.

After different levels of analysis, member checking was employed with each of the participants individually. The portrayal of each coach’s journey was shared. Each coach was asked to confirm what had been portrayed and modify any misunderstandings. As stated earlier, the participants were in agreement with the portrayal of their experiences. One participant suggested a change of wording that modified the possible perception of one aspect of the transitional experience. The purpose of sharing is to determine if the participants in the study believe that “the interpretations are plausible, if they ring true” (Merriam, 1995, p. 54).

Much of the story of the participants was written in a descriptive manner including the dialogue shared by the instructional coaches. “In writing descriptive
passages, it is helpful to use quotes” (Erlandson, et al, 1993, p. 147). This study included a large quantity of dialogue or quotes from the participants. This allows the reader to hear the voices of novice instructional coaches as they moved through the transition from the former role of classroom teacher.

As a researcher and doctoral student I have been part of an informal writing/support group for several years. We communicated almost daily with accomplishments, questions, and discoveries as we were all sharing the same doctoral study journey. This part of my graduate studies, though informal, became quite valuable as the mechanism that not only gave peer critique, but also peer support. It was found to be important to have peer/colleague examination in order to receive feedback on the plausibility of findings in the study (Erlandson et al 1993; Merriam, 1995).

The strategy of submersion/engagement in the research situation involves the element of time. How long will it be necessary to reveal plausible findings in the research study? This study focused upon the transition stage of classroom teachers moving to teacher leadership positions. Collecting data over the first year of this transition as well as a retrospective look at the transition after two years was appropriate.

There are three strategies to be used to ensure greater consistency, reliability, and trustworthiness in a qualitative study. These are triangulation, peer examination, and audit trail (Erlandson et al, 1993; Merriam, 1995).

Triangulation for reliability is ascertained in the same way as for validity by using multiple methods of data collection. As stated earlier, I primarily used interviews and documents produced by the subjects in the form of logs or journals.
Peer examination is also ascertained in a similar way as validity. “This strategy provides a check that the investigator is plausibly interpreting the data” (Merriam, 1995, p. 56). There was an existing support group of fellow doctoral students who were able to perform this strategy to help ensure reliability. I shared emerging results with the group. They were frequently asked to provide input as to whether the results were consistent with the collected data.

The audit trail is similar to the process used when an auditor provides verification of business accounts (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The audit trail is a detailed account of how the data were collected, how categories for the data were determined, and how other decisions were made throughout the study. This was done with the premise that another researcher would be able to follow the trail from the initial data to the interpretations.
Chapter 4  Case Studies: Participant Stories

Introduction

In January of 2012 this school district made the decision to adopt instructional coaching as a means of professional development to improve instruction and student performance. I as the researcher was in a key position in which to study the change that would take place for classroom teachers, who were already teacher leaders. These classroom teacher leaders would take part in a journey, or a transition and evolution from this role to that of appointed teacher leaders in the role of instructional coaches for the school district.

The three participants in this study were teacher leaders prior to being appointed into the official role of instructional coach. All three were talented and effective teachers. They were liked and respected by their immediate colleagues found in their teaching teams and within the buildings in which they taught. As teacher leaders they frequently availed themselves to ongoing learning through professional development. They shared their learning and classroom successes with others. They took on leadership responsibilities within their team or within their school. All three participants played an active role in the Professional Development School partnership as mentors and collaborators with leaders from the university.

Prior to becoming instructional coaches, this group of excellent educators was already identified as teacher leaders. With the appointment to the role of instructional
coach their scope of leadership grew. They were now identified as leaders by the administrative leadership of the school district. They were assigned particular schools within the district in which to engage in the work of instructional coaching. This changed their perspective of teacher leadership. They were now in a position for a broader view of the operation of the school district and to provide leadership for all teachers, even those who didn’t wish to be led. As classroom teachers they rose to leadership in the view of central administration. From the view of some of their colleagues they were appointed into this leadership role.

Instructional coaching in the schools can differ from one context to another. In many places an instructional coach is a specialist. He or she is a math coach or a reading coach. In fewer instances there are instructional coaches who specialize in specific grade levels, such as kindergarten reading coaches or middle school science coaches.

The group of teacher leaders who comprise the participants in this study received a broad assignment. Each was assigned as an instructional coach in two separate K-5 buildings. They were appointed as a coach to help teachers in both math and reading. This was a daunting task considering that most of their experiences as a teacher were at a single grade level.

Their assignment was two different buildings, which meant that they were now working with two different principals. Two different buildings and two different principals required learning and negotiating two separate and unique school cultures. Their supervisor and evaluator was the K-6 Curriculum Director who was previously a principal in the school district. In the second year this group of novice instructional coaches would have a different supervisor and evaluator who also was a former principal.
within the school district. All of this constituted a large amount of change for the newly appointed instructional coaches. Change from being in a teaching team in a single grade level in one building working for one principal to having broad responsibilities working with a variety of teachers, principals, and direct supervisors. What follows is the story of this group of teacher leaders told through their own perceptions and reflections captured in logs and interviews. Each coach’s story is reported individually by separating the story into parts- a brief pre-coaching history, a description of the coaching assignment, their initial thinking about the coaching process, issues, concerns and barriers that the coach faced, critical experiences during the first year that impacted the coach, sources of support, and finally a brief description of changes after the first year. This chapter concludes with a brief description of an unexpected change in leadership that impacted the entire instructional coaching team, including the participants in this study.

**Carla’s Story**

**Carla’s Pre-Coaching History**

Carla is one of three instructional coaches involved in this case study. When she assumed the appointed teacher leadership position of instructional coach, she had completed her tenth year of teaching, all as a first or second grade teacher in the same school. Teaching is a second career for Carla following a very brief experience in another field. Carla completed her preparation for teaching as an intern in a Professional
Development School (PDS) partnership. More recently in her time as a classroom teacher she acted as a mentor in this same PDS program.

Carla is a teacher who has demonstrated that she is willing to take risks and be innovative. During her career in the classroom she frequently volunteered to participate on district level committees related to curriculum development. She consistently showed herself as being reflective and modeling a desire for continuous learning.

She was instrumental in changing instructional practice in her own classroom and beginning to influence the work of other teachers not just on her team, but within the school district. With interest in improving literacy instruction in the building in which she taught, Carla was led to a newer approach to reading instruction popularly known as CAFÉ and the Daily Five. Since that time many years ago, this approach has spread from classroom to classroom throughout the school district. This occurred through Carla’s leadership as a classroom teacher and then as a teacher leader as an instructional coach.

Carla spread the word on CAFÉ and Daily Five in a non-threatening and humble manner. She never belittled or criticized the current work of any of her colleagues. She continued to make changes in her practice and others began to become interested. First they asked questions. Carla gladly and kindly responded to all. Soon, colleagues wanted to see for themselves what was happening. Again, Carla was gracious and opened her classroom to any and all. There were some that were critical and skeptical of the innovation. Carla was never deterred. She continued to innovate.
Carla’s Coaching Assignment

Carla’s primary coaching assignment was within relatively unfamiliar schools. She had not worked within these buildings and was not acquainted with the building principals. One of the buildings has eighteen K-5 classrooms. The second school is actually housed in two separate buildings but seen as one school unit. One is a K-2 building with nine classrooms. The other is a 3-5 building with nine classrooms. Both principals were fairly new to their roles. It was the first year in the district for the one principal, while the other had several years experience as a secondary assistant principal before assuming the role as elementary principal less than two years prior to Carla’s arrival as instructional coach.

The teachers in both school buildings were high in experience level, the majority having taught for ten years or more. Carla had only two first year teachers to work with and only two others with less than three years of teaching experience. This level of experience of teachers created an additional obstacle for Carla as she had already demonstrated herself as an innovator while many teachers in these buildings were not quick to accept change.

Carla’s Initial Thinking about Coaching

Carla identified an instructional coach as “someone that supports teachers in the direction that they would like to take their professional development.” She envisioned her role in more of a non-directive model of practice. She saw the coaching role as one of support and guidance. Individual teachers would play a strong role in identifying their
path toward improvement “so that they have a drive and a purpose behind their own professional development.” The role for Carla then was viewed as one in which she works “with them in the area that they want to focus on, and then pull in resources and support that would help them do that.”

Optimism highlighted Carla’s mindset as the school year began and she embarked upon the coaching role. “Many people at this building are eager to work with me, especially the newer teachers and the teachers that were Professional Development School (PDS) interns.” From the start she was trying to find her role, but optimistic about the prospects. Coaching is “so based in your attitude, and the way that you look at things.” She shared that she is “hoping to find ways to encourage teachers to think critically about what they are doing and why.” This statement reflected her own thinking and practice as a teacher and she identified that it may be a challenge for her to establish this kind of mindset. She reflected on her possible coaching practice through questioning such as “how can we support teachers that are not familiar with this kind of thinking? Patience and time are essential, but are there other ways to encourage or support this type of thinking?”

Carla initially thought about coaching as a learning opportunity for others and for herself. Her drive as a learner was identified when she wrote “I thought this experience would be an incredible way to meet new people and work with a variety of teachers. I wanted to learn more about how great teachers teach and push themselves to be better.” She was definitely thinking about helping others, but also reflecting on how the experience will add to her own personal skills and knowledge of teaching. She wrote that she wanted “to be able to support and grow with other teachers.”
Issues/Concerns/Barriers

Early in the school year Carla found herself grappling with the contrast between directive and non-directive coaching. She was concerned about how she communicated with the teachers when she shared that she was “finding that an interesting part of this position is carefully choosing what you say and when you say it.” She reflected on her most recent role as a classroom teacher and how she felt about directive and non-directive communication. “Because I was just in the classroom last year, I have a strong connection to how classroom teachers feel when asked to or told to do things. I believe that when given information and purpose, most people are willing to support and help in more ways than when they are directed to do something.”

This conflict with being directive or non-directive continued for Carla. It was evident that she struggled with this. It appeared that she wanted teachers to be more like she was as a classroom teacher. She noted “some teachers want to talk (and be heard), some want me to tell them what to do and how to do it.” She commented that this is “not exactly reflective,” which indicated a conflict with her personal view of how a teacher should operate. She saw her role developing as a coach in the way she would want to be coached. “I am not here to fix or teach. I am here to help people get better.”

With this conflict it appeared that some frustration set in. Within the first few weeks of school starting, she shared “I know I need to listen. I know people are trying to make changes. I see that and I recognize that it is difficult. I don’t know where to begin.”
Carla indicated internal struggles throughout the first year in this appointed leadership role as an instructional coach. She continually was searching to discover and define her role in the position. She found herself within the gray area often described by educators who are no longer classroom teachers, but not administrators. There are awkward moments for any educator moving from the comfortable confines of their own classroom. Carla described it this way. “Not having a classroom is a challenge because sometimes as you are trying to work with another teacher, the environment that they have set up is so different from mine. “ The instructional coach is no longer a direct colleague of the classroom teacher because he or she does not have a classroom of his or her own. No matter what, the coach is always a guest in the class and at a disadvantage due to not being part of the classroom culture from day to day.

Another obstacle was the change in perception held by others. “You kind of lose a little bit of credibility because you don’t have a classroom.” She referred to the relationship she had with colleagues. As a classroom collaborating teacher, she had been viewed by colleagues as an equal. Now in the role of instructional coach she does not have her own classroom. Now the comments might be “you aren’t a teacher and you don’t understand.”

This was certainly a challenge for Carla, but also a means in which she grew professionally. “I think it’s been good for me in a lot ways because it’s also made me think about who I am, and what I believe, and what I am saying.” Her beliefs as an educator were solidified through this challenge. The position created a challenge “where I think that more than any other time in my life, I had to stop and really think about why am I doing what I am doing and how do I know that this is right?” She had been placed
in a position to challenge her own beliefs. “Even if I don’t have my own classroom, am I still acting on and working along with my belief system?” Through the instructional coaching position she “had more opportunities to question and really look at those pieces of [her beliefs].”

Initially she shared her role by saying, “My goal is not to be in the classroom as much as possible, but to effect what is happening in the classroom as much as possible…in a positive way for teachers and students.” Throughout the early weeks of the school year, Carla reported that she was meeting with teachers continually and consistently, but not figuring out what to do with them or for them. The direction was not coming from the teachers, and she struggled to identify it herself. She wrote, “Have them think of where they want support and leave other things alone? How?”

Carla characterized much of her time as spent listening. “Met with another group of teachers today and realized the importance of hearing people.” It showed that she repeatedly was availing herself to the teachers she was assigned to work with, but struggling with the issue of role and identity.

Eventually, Carla experienced some success through a series of lessons conducted with one of the librarians. She shared that she feels it is important to begin to know the students, which begins to occur with these lessons. “I am really getting to know the students. This is very exciting to me. I have realized how important it is to have a grasp of the students before working in the classroom.”

Listening evolved into relationships. She identified that as a major part of her role. “I am beginning to build relationships, gain trust and become familiar to people. I am getting little nudges here and there. I realize that each of these nudges (a quick
question in passing or a brief email) is a bit of an interview of what I am about.” As stated earlier, Carla was not well known in the buildings to which she found herself assigned. It would be natural for the teachers to want to get to know her. She continued thinking about relationships by writing “the process of building relationships is important. I don’t want to take that for granted. Teachers only have so much time, and that does not include lots of time to get to know the coach. They need to feel that I am useful, helpful, and responsive.”

Teachers also needed to trust her. Carla recognized this. “I’ve been working so hard to establish relationships based on me not being the watch dog.”

Her building assignments were also challenges to be faced. Carla was placed in buildings in which she had no history. She knew very few of the teachers very well and they did not know her. “They never knew me as a teacher. They never saw me teach.” This created the challenge of establishing credibility. “Even when you do go in and you model a lesson, or co-teach, it’s still not the same thing as having your own classroom.” Without the history in the buildings Carla realized that “people aren’t ever seeing me with how I really work when it’s a classroom that I know and have spent setting things up.” I’m never really in my element anymore because it’s just not, in most situations, the way I would have done it.”

She did not know the building principals and they did not know her. This was something for her to overcome from the start. “I think it’s been a challenge having buildings that I don’t know anyone in. So like, who to trust and how do you build that trust has been hard.”
Critical Experiences

Carla hoped to grow and learn from other teachers. She shared her desires about sharing what she knew and but also gaining skills and knowledge from others. She began the role of teacher leader as instructional coach full of optimism that she could make a difference for others and for herself.

Very early in the experience she began to see that not all teachers are as eager to grow and learn. She shared her disappointment in the way some teachers were satisfied with the status quo and showed resistance to changing and trying new things. She commented after one such interaction regarding working with students on making book choices. “Met with teachers today. Realized that people view students differently. If a child can’t make a good choice, is it that child’s issue? A bad choice issue, solved by removing the privilege of choice?”

Another example of Carla’s optimistic ideal of all teachers being open to change appeared in her description of a team meeting from later in the school year. She reported that the meeting was “more negative and uncomfortable than I imagined.” The meeting was set up to be a discussion about interests for future professional growth. She was hoping for the group of teachers to share their thoughts and ideas so that she could build professional development sessions that would meet their needs. She found that this was not commonplace in the way she expected. “It was clear that sharing of ideas is not appreciated or common.” Sharing and collaboration was part of the culture of her teaching teams during her time in the classroom. It was surprising for her to realize that
this was not the standard practice with all teams. “Why is there no collaboration? Why do they sit there with empty looks on their faces?

Carla was able to use her acquired skills of reflection to make a critical change in her own thinking. Throughout her shared experience, she described the role that listening plays. She repeatedly shared how critically important it was and would be for her success. “LISTEN. I feel like that is a word that just keeps rambling around in my head any time that I am working with a teacher or group. So much like a teacher, I can see the path from A to B, so I want to put people right on it instead of nudging them to get there on their own.” She reached a critical juncture in her own thinking when she shared “now that I have been in this position for several months I am beginning to see the benefit of listening. I can see that many things that people want to say are just so they can be heard.”

She was now thinking differently about listening. Her reflection shows that she was thinking more deeply. “At this point in the year I am thinking. What is this teacher trying to say? Where are they coming from? What do they really want? How much are they willing to do?” She identified her change or growth as a listener. “Maybe I am becoming a more critical listener. By that I mean that I am no longer just listening to what is said, but also looking for a deeper understanding of the people that I am interacting with.”
Sources of Support

Carla identified her team of coaches as her greatest source of support. She saw that each brought different strengths to the team. “If I was doing this on my own I don’t think I would be as successful right now. Because I think that it also takes those other people’s perspectives to help me figure out the best way to work with someone.” She also appreciated that they too are undergoing change and working with challenges that are similar. “Collaboration with each other [is] our strongest asset. We became a powerful team of honest and real people that continued to focus on that original goal. We were living the goal.”

She perceived the team as giving her strength to stay on task toward success. “As a team we have recently found a very strong need to keep our vision clearly in front of us.” Her reflections showed a deep appreciation for her fellow instructional coaches. “A dynamic team is stronger than anyone could have imagined. We are strong because we share a vision. We are striving to achieve that vision through honest hard work and passion that we share with each other on a daily basis through laughter, stories, and genuine friendship.”

To a lesser degree and with less frequency she identified support from building principals. At the beginning of the year she provided a strong endorsement for this kind of support, but very little was shared later in the school year. “My relationship with [this principal] continues to grow. Our weekly meetings are short and sweet but her support is excellent.” She has identified the need to listen, but wishes that the principal was able to use this skill more effectively. “What we can control is asking people their opinion.”
People want to know that someone is hearing what they have to say. More principals need to hone in on that technique.” She obviously felt that this skill impacted teachers, and perhaps her ability to effectively be a coach with them.

**Evolving as an Instructional Coach**

For Carla, year one was a year to grow and learn. She identified that she saw more of the school district. She learned more about how a large system works. In her words she saw a “big picture.” This was eye opening for a teacher whose previous vision was the students within the classroom and possibly some view of the team or the building. After completing the first year Carla began to “focus in on the smaller pieces” as an instructional coach. Her work began to “focus on curriculum and more specific things within what I am doing with coaching.”

Her work as a coach began to evolve from one of learning and thinking to more thinking and doing. She shared that as year one moved into year two she was able to “focus in on some specific things with teachers.” Relationship building is important at first, but then becomes the foundation for more specific work. “I definitely built relationships and was able to work more with teachers in ways that I feel like are more coaching.” As she started in the role there were times that Carla said that she “felt like a sounding board.” Teachers were frustrated with building or district leadership, but I found that I needed to “leave all of that behind. I couldn’t control that. I couldn’t try to fix everything.”
After a year in the position Carla reflected back on her personal change as a teacher leader. She didn’t necessarily see herself as a teacher leader as a classroom teacher but she acknowledged her enjoyment of collaboration. As a classroom teacher she would “collaborate with other people and [talk] about things, share ideas and try things the same way I am now [as a coach].” The difference is that she can do the same thing, only now “with more people.” This thought related well to her personal perception of her own influence. Initially, she didn’t feel that she was having much influence on others, but this feeling of accomplishment grew over time. “I think that I influenced people before, but I am even more confirmed in it now.” Perhaps she didn’t readily recognize it because in her words this influence isn’t “really visible.” She became very cognizant of the manifestation of this influence. “I’m not influencing people to do a certain thing, but influencing them to feel comfortable trying things and doing what they feel is right for themselves.”

Carla faced many challenges, some that the other coaches did not encounter. Eventually, she embraced the insecurities that she felt. She reached a point where she was okay with “the vulnerability part of it.” She realized that nobody will “teach in a classroom any better than the teacher of that classroom.” She accepted that the teacher “is doing what is best” for that classroom. When I come in to a classroom “I am not showing them a better way,” I am showing that “there are other ways to look at things and there are other things that can happen.” She summed up her personal perceptions of her work as a coach by saying, “my influence isn’t about a curriculum or the actual implementation of something, it’s more about emphasis about a teacher looking at what they are doing and knowing why they are doing it.”
It seems that she was pretty hard on herself. She thought that she should have all of the answers. Once she let that go and accepted that she could still be like she was as a classroom teacher, her own personal perception improved. She just wanted to know for herself if “what I’m working on with them is something that’s going to work and be good for the students in the classroom?” This is the same mindset she would have had as a classroom teacher.

She certainly recognized that things were different for her mainly through her own willingness to accept and to change. After completing a year things settled in for her. “I am more comfortable with where I am and how I am seeing the role. I feel like I can kind of let my guard down and work more vulnerably with people.”

Lisa’s Story

Lisa’s Pre-Coaching History

Lisa was one of the five instructional coaches who were appointed to this specific teacher leader role. Lisa was a kindergarten teacher for the entire length of her teaching career of eight years. These years were all spent in the same building with leadership provided by the same principal. This may suggest the perception that Lisa’s views and beliefs of teaching would be narrowed by the limits of her experiences, but Lisa was surrounded by the practice of teaching her entire life as both of her parents were teachers.

Lisa was an active participant in the Professional Development School partnership like many of the other instructional coaches, but in contrast, Lisa was not an intern
herself. The beliefs about teaching and learning that were formed in others as interns came to Lisa once she was already teaching. Lisa’s principal from her teaching years had been in the role in the district for approximately fifteen years. She had the principal role in this building and one other building in the district during her career. She was the principal who opened the building, seeing it through from construction through the opening of the doors. This principal who led Lisa’s formative development as a teacher was instrumental in the establishment of the Professional Development School partnership. The PDS partnership had small beginnings under the leadership and collaboration of this principal. This allowed for Lisa to develop views and beliefs that meshed well with the philosophies of the PDS.

**Lisa’s Coaching Assignment**

Lisa was assigned to two buildings within the district. By comparison to others in the district, her assigned buildings were two of the most rural and least diverse of all elementary buildings in the district. These buildings were both K-5 buildings of approximately 400 students. Each building had three classrooms in each grade level. Lisa had good connections within both buildings. This proved to have advantages and disadvantages. The first was the building in which she taught kindergarten for many years. The second building was where her mother was a teacher for many years.

The teaching staffs in these buildings were a mix in experience, but with a larger number of younger teachers than those with many years of experience. Again, this created advantages and disadvantages for Lisa. There were several teachers very early in
their careers that would be logical targets for Lisa’s services. The principals in the two buildings presented contrasts for Lisa. The principal she had spent her entire teaching career working with had retired the spring that Lisa accepted this new role. The principal selected to fill her shoes came from the leadership of the university side of the Professional Development School. She held a facilitator role attached to the university, but with a strong presence in the schools. This was her very first year as a principal in any school.

Alternatively, in the other building Lisa was working with a very experienced principal. This principal had been in the role in this building for ten years. She had experience as a principal in other districts in other states as well. These contrasts in building leadership forced Lisa to operate differently and approach the role in different ways.

**Lisa’s Initial Thinking about Coaching**

Lisa’s start as an appointed leader as an instructional coach created mixed feelings for her. She noted marked excitement about taking on the role that was countered with a presentation of emotions for missing the daily work and interaction found in the classroom. She initially reflected with a question. “Where do I belong?” She shared that she initially found herself “gravitating toward kindergarten rooms” and longing for the “Home Sweet Home” of her own classroom. She also shared a feeling of not being worthy to do the role. “When I got the phone call about getting the position, I thought
that I had no clue what to expect. I felt very anxious. I only know kindergarten. How is this going to help me when I work with 5\textsuperscript{th} grade teachers?”

Lisa had relationships established with many teachers in both buildings. She realized that this could be an advantage for her. She was “grateful for the relationships [she] already has established,” but still questioned her role. “Who would be okay with me popping in? Who would not?”

The feelings in her own building where she has been a teacher for many years were magnified. It seemed that she found herself in that gray area of uncertainty. She was searching to discover where she belonged. Her emotions were apparent in her words when she wrote, “While I feel most comfortable here, I also had the most surreal experiences here…walking by my old room and gauging whether it was a good time to go in. So strange.” That uncertainty of her place and her role were illuminated. “I feel at home and out of place, all at the same time. I also found myself trying to feel out everyone’s comfort level.” Lisa identified her new role as a bit of an “identity crisis.” She knew that her relationship with her colleagues had now changed. “Everyone was very gracious and welcoming, but I did find myself thinking. Do they really feel this way, or do they feel that they HAVE to feel this way?”

Another initial concern for Lisa in addition to negotiating the changed relationship with people she had known for years was that of organization. She realized that she would have interactions with many teachers during a typical day or week. She was wondering how she would “juggle questions, concerns, excited interest and unsure wonderings from teachers in both buildings. Keeping track of everyone’s comments/ideas is an unexpected challenge.” She was trying to determine a way to keep
the information organized. “I am constantly going to my laptop, iphone, googlecal, notebook, stickies, etc. My goal is to reach a more compact and efficient way of organizing all of this.”

Despite initial challenges with the change in relationships with her colleagues and looking for a way to organize all of the varied information, Lisa remained excited and optimistic. Early in the school year Lisa wrote “I love this and can’t wait to see what next week will bring!” Lisa saw the possibility for personal growth. “I feel like I am saturated with new learning, like when taking classes or courses, yet I get to apply and connect the material immediately in the most authentic ways, so cool.”

She explained her thinking and understanding of her role as an instructional coach. “I think about the label of an instructional coach and how that can be perceived. Walking that line of honoring and respecting what is already being done very well while encouraging something new or different in a non-threatening way is the goal of any instructional coach.” She saw the difficulty of the challenge of negotiating the relationships with teachers she knew, teachers she didn’t know, teachers with plenty of experience, and teachers with little experience. “Knowing how to [work] with individual personalities and styles [as an instructional coach] is the tricky part.”

Very early in the school year, Lisa reflected on and shared her thinking about coaching. This represented her initial definition or belief about what an instructional coach does.

An effective coach is the person who listens best and then knows how to help or where to find the right help and support; ultimately, to be the person who encourages the classroom teacher to inquire and ask their own
questions and look for their own ways to include best practices, to create a
trusting and safe environment for classroom teachers to feel comfortable
and excited to try new things.

From this statement shared by Lisa, it is evident that she was seeing coaching as
more of a non-directive act. Her statement denoted that she saw the role in that way as
opposed to someone telling teachers what to do or how to do something in a more
directive model.

She shared that she would primarily be doing three things to support teachers.
These were to “listen and be patient, organize opportunities for collaboration, and support
teachers through resources, co-teaching, co-planning, and co-reflection.

Lisa began to have realizations about herself as a leader. As a classroom teacher
she “didn’t realize that [she] was being looked at as a teacher leader. I feel like when [I]
was in the classroom [I] was in this, sort of bubble.” She felt very much in control of her
situation and her outcomes. She could see “very quickly and easily the successes and
challenges that you are having and then you can automatically have some kind of plan.”
Now in the appointed teacher leader role as an instructional coach she shared how she
was “so much more aware of all the other factors that are part of a [school] district, the
good, bad and ugly, whatever it might be.”

In this new role she realized her influence, but struggle with not being able to see
the outcomes. “When I was in the classroom and something didn’t go well, or I wanted
to try something different I could just do that. Whether it worked or not just [affected]
me and my classroom.” As an appointed leader carrying a role with broader perspective,
“it’s not always that immediate and it’s not always that easy to see right away what the effect might have, or might not have been.”

In this appointed leadership role it would be natural to feel more vulnerable. Lisa had these feelings. As a classroom teacher leader “the level of control that you might have over what you are going to prioritize or do is in your control.” Now as a district level leader her thoughts change. “I feel like you have to be in the know of more things in this role than I felt like I was in my own classroom.”

Issues/Concerns/Barriers

It has already been mentioned that Lisa found her circumstances to be a concern or issue. Familiarity can be beneficial, but in her case it also created internal conflict as she struggled to find her place among her peers. She no longer was the fellow teacher from the room down the hall, or the daughter of the teaching colleague next door.

She categorized herself as an “outsider with inside connections” in one of her assigned buildings. She referred to her inside connection as her mother teaching there. It continued to be a struggle for her to make connections and find her role. “I am still learning how to navigate the environment and the way the connections actually work together (or not) every day.” She was so cognizant of how others might perceive her connection that she actually avoided visiting her mother’s classroom. “Very silly to look at my checklist and realize I almost avoid her room – that needs to stop.”

She recognized the positives and negatives of the arrangement. She claimed to be “very lucky to be a part of my original building, and this proves to be the best
transition I could have asked for…however, I do sense that there is a change in some teachers with how I am perceived.” She referred to the “outside connections” as her instructional coach colleagues. She thought about the perceptions of others. “Those outside connections can sometimes make people nervous and I know they think of this when we talk and work together.” She was optimistic that these feelings would pass and her preference was to “re-navigate the waters in the building, than to have to steer a new course altogether.”

Another group of individuals for her to navigate was the building principals. She observed that the two principals were supportive, but in different ways. “In both of my schools, I feel that the principals also push teachers…what I am noticing is that they go about this in very different ways.” She described her relationship by feeling “connected and comfortable” to one principal and “very carefully listening and responding to” the other. She found that she more readily related to the newer principal, but that she was “thinking through my questions and respecting the perspective” of the veteran.

Just like her familiarity with kindergarten had her realizing that she may be unconsciously spending more time there, she reflected that she might be spending more time in the school of comfort. She asked herself, “Am I spending more time with [one] principal because I choose to? What can I do to have a relationship with both and appreciate each perspective.”

She was seeing that the contrast in the principal roles was really that of learning the flexibility she must develop in the role. She was seeing the differences in the cultures of the buildings based on the leadership style of the principals. There was a more directive model in one location and a more contrasting, non-directive model in the other.
Lisa’s belief about leadership and supervision had been shaped by her own experiences. She shared that her “ideal is that [supervision] becomes an intrinsic role of every teacher…and not one person that dictates or guides it all.” It is obvious that Lisa conducted her classroom in this manner. “I come back to relating this role to a classroom. Every teacher wants their students to become motivated to understand and tweak their own learning, so the same should go for teachers and their learning.” She was strong in her beliefs of where she wanted to go. She realized that it would take time. “Getting that theory in place at each building means working with everyone involved. Every day I am gaining more insight into how that will feel, look, and happen in each building.”

Specificity to the job and to the role continued to be a challenge for Lisa. She shared some of the questions that she frequently reflected upon that show her thinking. “How do I prioritize? How long until I suggest? How can I best help? What do I say to that?” She made a prudent suggestion regarding this challenge. “You know that book called The First Six Weeks of School? I feel that we should write a book called The First Six Weeks of Coaching (seriously, I think there needs to be a manual for this!”

**Critical Experiences**

It appeared that Lisa arrived at a turning point simply through some of her own self-reflection. She realized the contrasts that she faced between the styles and cultures of the two buildings. She understood the difficulty with others building a new relationship based on her new role. She shared that her “lens has become much wider.”
She was now seeing the bigger picture. She was seeing the educational structure beyond her own classroom walls. She went on to say, “I am quickly becoming more aware of the varying perspectives and ideologies that exist. I appreciate this new knowledge and perhaps this is why I am more aware of my own thinking...never before have I felt more buzzing in myself.”

The thoughts of the directive and non-directive practices of the principals crept into Lisa’s thoughts as an instructional coach. After reading an article by Killion (2008) regarding coaching heavy vs. coaching light, Lisa went into reflective mode. In reference to heavy and light she asked, “Is there such a thing as balance? What if it becomes too heavy and doors are shut in our face? Is this the part where I need to stop worrying about being liked and know that being supportive is most important. There is so much growing up on my part that has happened and still needs to happen in this new role.” Her reflections showed a continued concern with the balance between heavy and light. Later in the school year she wrote, “I spent the morning questioning myself. Am I being productive enough? Am I helping someone right now? Am I doing enough?” This represented her concern about allowing something to happen vs. making something happen.

Lisa understood the difference in the heavy and light approach. She responded several times in regard to different situations. “Maybe it is too evaluative coming from me, but from the principal more appropriate.” Another she shared that “sometimes it is best to pull back a little bit and see what will result…I would never like the role of an administrator because they don’t always have that option.”
Sources of Support

Even though Lisa shared contrasting views of the two principals that she worked with, she also shared the valuable support that she received. She recognized that the more directive style of one was divergent to her own thinking, but she saw that “we both want the same things…more motivation, choice, and purposeful work.” The inner conflict was that Lisa, in her beliefs, was willing to let things grow over time. She perceived that this principal wanted the same things, but wanted it all to happen more quickly. In her view this principal “doesn’t seem to trust her teachers to establish this when the pressures of testing and data come into play.”

Lisa was not deterred. She reflected on the situation. “I feel I need to somehow follow-up with the principal, making sure we are both on the same page, talk about what seems to be similar views.” Later in the school year Lisa took some of the responsibility. There was a realization that “I wasn’t really going out of my way to stop in her office or check-in with her anymore than she was.” After changing this behavior she reflected that “it is helping and I am feeling that we may be more on the same page than I thought.”

The team of instructional coaches was also a strong support group for Lisa. “I surprise myself because I don’t lie awake at night worrying or feeling overly stressed about one certain thing or another…because I work with…our amazing team (we support each other so well).” She saw how the strengths of the individuals complemented one another and how it was supporting to her in her role. “I just love our team and feel we are on to something very powerful…we can encourage and support each other.” Even
when things became daunting or overwhelming Lisa turned to the team. “I keep myself positive and excited about what is to come and I know it is because of our team.”

The team became more than just a support group, but also a learning network. Lisa found herself being challenged and growing intellectually. “Every single time we leave each other I feel exhausted from thinking so much.” She was strong in her feelings of personal growth and learning. “We are learning so much about what it really means to be a teacher and an instructional coach. We are learning more together than at any other points of our career. We learn from each other and push each other…a perfect storm for a breakthrough team.”

She identified this learning as it applies to coaching success too. The team enabled her to be more successful in her work with teachers. As coaches we could “talk about things and reflect about things that either were happening with particular teachers, or things we might be overhearing, or even things that we are learning. I think having that time to think through it together really helped.”

**Evolving as an Instructional Coach**

Lisa reflected upon her own personal change by sharing her thoughts on perspective. She saw her role as an educator as “much broader now.” This perspective stretched her because now she reflected on “things that [she] was doing in [the] classroom. [She can] see the better, bigger picture.” This change in perspective was good for her, but also created some personal dissonance.
Lisa shared that reality hit harder for her as an instructional coach during the second year in the role. She shared that the first year “was almost like a dream state where we were all kind of getting a feel for what the potential for this [role] could be.” It seems as if she is saying that in some ways we weren’t sure what we had got ourselves into. The second year was a time “for the rubber to hit the road.” Lisa shared her personal struggle in terms of her personal efficacy. It is year two in the position and “I have no idea what I am really supposed to be doing.”

Patience was a characteristic of development identified by Lisa. “I think my biggest first lesson was patience.” She reflected on how she learned to listen better, react appropriately to a teacher, and perhaps go slow if necessary. “I learned early on where I had too many ideas and too much to think about, and trying to do too much to quickly.” She saw that all teachers were not in the same place when she was expecting “that same enthusiasm and readiness to do it all…I think that kind of backfired.” Patience was learned. “If you force it, it doesn’t work.” Patience means to “start where that person is and go from there.”

Confidence and relationships were other areas of growth identified by Lisa. “I’ve learned so much professionally.” She shared that she improved at taking “in so much information and how to start to think about ways to apply it.” Relationships were “enhanced with some people that I already had, but also new relationships [have developed].”

The struggle wasn’t that Lisa didn’t know what she was doing; the personal struggle was now realizing the broad scope of the role. Her interactions with teachers were changing. “The first year, when I was working with people there was this
excitement. There were so many relationships in both buildings.” What she discovered was that the “depths of our conversations [were] shallow.” In the second year the relationships were moving to another plain. She shared that teacher thoughts about her were evolving. “She’s here, we’re going to have to do something.” It seemed that the process of building relationships was done and now it was time to get to work. A teacher might think, “is she trying to see if I’m doing a particular thing?” Lisa stated that this was a “strange vibe that I wasn’t expecting the second year.”

In spite of challenges Lisa shared how she had grown into the teacher leader role in this broader scope. “I think I’m more aware of my influence now than I was as a teacher leader [in the classroom].” One reason she expressed was that she was “not so focused on her own classroom environment.” She reflected that she now realized that she “was more of a teacher leader [in the classroom] than I thought before.” This could have been because now she had the opportunity to think more about her influence due to the nature of the instructional coaching role. There was time for reflection. “I have been more thoughtful in my reflections. I feel like my reflections have been more focused than they were when I was not in this [instructional coach] role.” She gained experience in the role, which enabled her confidence to grow. “I am more aware of my influence as a teacher leader. Maybe that is related to my adequacy as a coach.” She appeared to reference that as she felt more confident in her role, she saw the greater amount of influence she had with teachers.

This confidence that produces influence may have grown because of her ability to look beyond the walls of the classroom. With reflection that was encouraged by the
instructional coaching team, Lisa saw that two main themes of her evolution as a teacher leader were purpose and collaboration.

“When I go back to the classroom I’m going to do a much better job of thinking about why all of the time. Why am I doing this? What is the purpose of what I’m doing?” By seeing her own growth and in a sense, helping herself, she was now helping others in the broader appointed teacher leader role. “I think I always had [purpose] in my classroom, but I didn’t realize how much.” Now that she was working with teachers it became much clearer for her.

Another example of her personal learning helping others is in regards to collaboration. “I have never worked with people the way that I have worked with the team. I have learned through this what true collaboration means.” She collaborated as a classroom teacher, but she identifies that it wasn’t the same. As a classroom teacher “you get caught up in your own world.” She credited the instructional coaching team with enabling her to appreciate collaboration and perhaps model it better for other teachers. “Every single person [on the team] has taught me something about myself, or has given me some of their strengths to help me try to learn and grow as a person, and coach, and teacher.”
Beth’s Story

Beth’s Pre-Coaching History

Beth was appointed as an instructional coach in the spring of 2012. She completed an application and interview process like all of the other candidates. Just prior to assuming this teacher leadership position, Beth was completing her first year as a third grade teacher in one of the buildings in which she would become the instructional coach. For nine years Beth taught third or fourth grade in another building within the school district. For one year right after becoming certified, Beth taught sixth grade in one of the building’s middle schools.

Beth came to this teacher leadership role in a manner somewhat different from the other appointed instructional coaches. The journey began for Beth as an intern in the Professional Development School partnership with the local university. Her beliefs as a teacher and as a learner were formed and refined within this experience. An additional influence in her experience as an intern was that one of her mentors was this investigator who later became her supervisor for a brief time as a building principal and as curriculum director with responsibility for initiating and facilitating the practices of the instructional coaches.

Beth made connections as an instructional coach to her background in PDS. She wrote, “As an instructional coach team, we need to reflect on how our thinking and practices have been shaped by our partnership with the Professional Development School. Some of the coaches cut their educational teeth in an inquiry-based environment that was fostered by the PDS.” She realized this connection and this became a foundation
of her beliefs about teaching and learning. Connections to her PDS background will be found evident throughout her reflections. She wrote later in the first year of the experience about this connection. “One claim I feel comfortable making is that the PDS has had a big influence on our instructional coaching team.”

Beth had beliefs that matched well with this investigator. She voluntarily made decisions to place herself in positions to continue the working relationship. She requested the transfer after many years of successful teaching to the elementary building I was leading as principal. Then in the spring of that same school year, she applied for and was appointed into the instructional coaching position by the committee of administrators.

**Beth’s Coaching Assignment**

Beth described her coaching assignment as one with “some familiarity.” She would serve in two K-5 buildings, which included the building she was leaving. There was limited familiarity with this building because she had only been there as a third grade teacher for one year.

The building that Beth was leaving as a classroom teacher and becoming the instructional coach was the most diverse within the school district. This building had classrooms K-5 like the others and approximately 350 students. Each grade level had three classrooms except fifth. This grade level had only two. Most of the teachers in the building were fairly new to teaching or new to the district. The majority of teachers had
been hired by the investigator, so there was already a culture that Beth would find familiar.

This building was in town and one of the closest to the university. Many international families who were graduate students had the children attending this school. Classrooms would have students from every continent in the world, except Antarctica. There was typically a higher number of English Language Learners in the classrooms of this school as well. The attendance area for the school included a large area of apartments that would also diversify the socio-economic status of the students of the school. Many of these factors contributed to a higher level of transiency relative to other schools in the district.

The principal in this building was new to the role of being an elementary principal. He was appointed into the role after fulfilling the duties of assistant principal in one of the district’s middle schools. He also had previous experience leading high schools within the state. Because of this level of inexperience and unfamiliarity there was a hands off approach reported by Beth that contrasted with her other building assignment.

The second building of Beth’s assignment was a K-5 building that was one of the larger buildings within the district with approximately 450 students. There were at least three classrooms per grade level. Most of the teachers in this building had a reasonable level of experience. There were a few close to retirement and just a few that were new to the profession.

This building was located on the other side of town, but still relatively close to the university. There existed a high level of racial diversity represented in the international
population, mostly children of graduate students. An apartment complex nearby added to the diversity providing a socio-economic mix as well as a level of transiency.

The building principal here had been in the role with the district and at this building for about a dozen years. She would be described as an active principal. She was very involved in the activities within the school and within the district. This principal typically would volunteer for many if not all district level curriculum teams. It seemed that she had a desire to be involved and to be informed.

**Beth’s Initial Thinking about Coaching**

Beth began the year reflecting on her thoughts about culture and the necessity of relationships in being successful as a coach. She began the year knowing that “investing time to build relationships at the beginning of the year [is important] as I get into the thick of things as an instructional coach.” Building relationships takes time, though. She realized that this was going to be a process. Beth reflected on this by saying “[A] piece of advice to a new instructional coach is to find just one or two people in their building to connect to and let the relationships grow from there. You can't be in all classrooms, nor do you need to be. Find one or two teachers, plant some seeds, and more coaching partnerships will grow from there.”

She made connections to multiple facets of her work. “Relationship building is the foundation to a key element in professional development – collaboration. When people have established a relationship of trust, collaboration is much easier.” However, did this work for her or any instructional coach in all schools with all cultures? “Even
with the relationships and collaboration in place, these two elements can only flourish if both are part of the school culture.”

The initial thoughts about coaching and being in this new teacher leadership role were very much dominated by the impressions of the school cultures and the leadership style of the two principals. It seemed that Beth perceived distinct contrasts in both regards. “The learning environment at [one building] is one that is influenced by a can-do attitude. Everyone was eager to share ideas and open to hearing new ideas. They crave information that will make them a better teacher.” These thoughts contrast with Beth’s comments about the other building and its culture. “The learning environment at [the second building] feels more cautionary when it comes to trying new things…teachers there seem to be more on edge about the new things they are being asked to do.”

Beth continued to reflect on the cultures of the two buildings. She defined school culture as “the beliefs, customs, values, and traditions of the school.” She defined the culture of the first building as one that has an “all for one and one for all” attitude. She perceived that teachers were given “space to explore, make changes, make mistakes, and learn from whatever they undertake.” She identified in her log that culture is an important aspect that can help or hinder her work. She had a thought in her mind on emphasizing learning as opposed to teaching. She wanted to help teachers place their emphasis here as well, but she realized that “a school culture that supports learning over teaching benefits students and teachers alike.” It was apparent in her reflections that the cultures of her assigned schools were contrasting.

Near the beginning of the year Beth was finding her way in one building. She wrote in her log “it is much easier to operate in one setting over another…”[in this
building] it is much easier to think of the what-ifs and the possibilities of trying new things.” She added that she felt “as though working with teachers [here] is looked upon as a way to push and nudge the thinking of teachers…I feel much more useful at [this] school.”

She perceived the second building as one that has a “culture of control.” She defined that by sharing that “there are procedures and signs in place to control the learning environment. She observed that “competitiveness is more evident” in this building. “There seems to be a lot of talk about high test scores and placements and abilities of students.” She didn’t see this as being entirely negative. “These are good conversations to have, but the conversations have a certain tone that seems competitive in nature.” Early in her experience as a coach she shared “it is more challenging to operate in [this] setting…it’s much more difficult to think of the what ifs in this setting. I know that I am much more guarded.”

Beth appeared to have a stronger identity of her role than the other new instructional coaches. What it should be? What it should look like? The questions that she posed demonstrated that she was clear in her mind about what she should do and how she should do it. She saw her role as one that promotes thinking which promotes learning. “Encouraging innovative and creative thinking is a powerful motivator for learning. If the person in charge forces their ideas on others, what purpose does that serve? How does this empower or motivate people? I want to be a motivator, not a hinderer.”

She saw herself as a coach with a purpose “to raise questions rather than to provide solutions.” Beth saw this early on as clashing with the leadership and culture in
one of her buildings. She asked another question when she wrote “if school leaders believed this for their teachers, how would that shape the culture of the school environment?” She was definitely aligning herself as someone who questions and encourages rather than critiquing and telling. “When conversations [with teachers] begin with positive feedback then follow with a what if question, how would this nudge a teacher along in their professional development? How would that affect my role as the instructional coach?”

A conflict with her philosophy about “raising questions” also emerged as she thought about herself as a classroom teacher leader and now an appointed teacher leader as an instructional coach. She reflected that the people she knew well responded to her differently. “The conversations that I have with them are just that, they just seem more conversational and not as much coaching.” Opposing this were the teachers she was just getting to know. “They didn’t know me as well as a classroom teacher, so as a coach they seem to look to me more for answers so their conversations are different in that respect. They perceive me more as an answer giver.”

Beth shared her anxiety and nerves with trying new things like most people. She referred to her work with a second grade teacher as she wrote “this is new for me. I must admit that I was nervous showing her how to teach some of the strategies…I approached this challenge with a what’s the worst thing that can happen attitude?” She accepted the fact that she didn’t know it all and that she can’t be an expert at everything. “I knew I would learn a lot, and yes, make some mistakes. But I knew that would make me a better coach and teacher.”
Another episode that demonstrated her existing fears or anxieties of being perceived as an expert by teachers occurred in a first grade class. Beth shared that “one of my greatest fears is showing up at school unprepared. In fact, I’ve had dreams about this and have awakened in a cold sweat.” Beth showed how her fears were unfounded. “The students learned a few things, even from this rookie first grade teacher.”

Both of these episodes refer to Beth’s vulnerability. This a term that she used when describing her work as an instructional coach doing some unfamiliar things. She wrote about teachers that “don’t want to make mistakes and look bad in front of their students.” She knew that “learning something new is hard, and teachers make mistakes too.” It is in this context that she used the term vulnerable. “I don’t think you learn anything without being willing to be vulnerable. Vulnerable to making mistakes. Vulnerable to the unexpected. Vulnerable to not being accepted.”

Connections to this feeling of vulnerability as a new instructional coach and her understanding of school culture emerged. “How does a school culture support [the] notion of vulnerability? I think the answer is by embracing the idea that all people in a school are learners.”

**Issues/Concerns/Barriers**

Beth continually reflected and shared about her challenges, which mainly centered upon the way she navigated the differing principal leadership styles and the contrasting building cultures of her coaching assignment. “Working and meeting with
principals has been the most challenging part of the job.” She shared some struggle with identifying her role, but not nearly as much as the other instructional coaches.

Despite her battles with building relationships with both principals, she identified the effectiveness of their roles. Perhaps she saw the differing styles being used due to the culture of the school, or the culture of the schools developing due to the leadership styles of the principals. She shared that each principal was working to improve instruction and learning. The principal “emerges as an advocate, developer, and linking pin in relationship to the teacher’s efforts to improve the process of teaching and learning.”

Beth identified spontaneity as an issue in her work. Perhaps it is the unpredictability that emerged from conversations with teachers. It seems that she embraced and welcomed it as part of her work. In one building she saw the lack of spontaneity as an obstacle to her success. “Because so much of what happens at that school needs to be approved or endorsed by the principal, my work is less spontaneous and less authentic. It feels more contrived because the same question keeps coming up. What does [the principal] want?”

Beth was tuned into the way school culture can impact her work. In one reflection she wrote “more thoughts on the culture of each of my schools and how the culture influences professional development. I’m beginning to see that it’s all about trust.” Beth was sharing that trust is a key ingredient in her effectiveness and that the culture influences her ability to build that trust. In her words “trust seems to be foundational to teacher inquiry. If teachers are trusted to think deeply about why they teach, what they teach, and how they teach, and if they are trusted to try new things to
answer [these questions], they are motivated to persevere through the murkiness of inquiry and professional development can prevail.”

Beth looked for answers to questions of culture such as “how do we handle the challenges that come up based on the cultures of the schools? Can a culture be changed? Is it better to adapt to the culture as opposed to trying to change the culture?” Beth attempted to answer her own questions by writing “cultures of schools seem to be based on philosophies and work styles of the principal. Work styles seem to be based on personal preferences and personality types. None of those things are easy or even possible to change.” This showed that Beth was not resigning herself to the challenges, but trying to see why these challenges existed and how she could work through or around them.

The philosophies of directive and non-directive coaching emerged in Beth’s thinking. She perceived that at this school “some teachers have been told that they should work with me.” This did not align with her thinking about the coaching role as she felt “that this puts me at such a disadvantage because I’m guessing it feels like a punishment of some kind to some of the teachers instead of as an opportunity.” This disadvantage was explained when she wrote “I can’t blame [the teachers], especially if the culture is one that views the coach as someone who helps to clear up deficiencies.” This concerned her deeply as she shared “my pool of teachers to work with seems to be getting more and more shallow.”

It was apparent that Beth had a philosophy of how teachers could grow and develop and she saw the critical role of the principal in this process. “If the principal trusts teachers to try new things, and encourages them to do so without fear of judgment
and without fear of criticism, teachers will their own professional development and be empowered by inquiry.” The thinking of her work emerged when she wrote, “If the only goal for doing anything is to please the principal, productive and innovative learning on the part of teachers cannot take root. When principals force their own desires and wishes on teachers, motivation turns into caution and inhibition.” This statement encompassed Beth’s thinking of her work and the conflict she experienced with navigating leadership styles.

Her leadership had to evolve. She reflected on this as she witnessed herself changing from a classroom teacher leader to an appointed teacher leader with a broader scope. “As a classroom teacher leader, I felt more comfortable speaking up about things…offering information or maybe challenging in a way that I wasn’t quite sure if it would work for me as a teacher.” She identifies that her responsibility is to herself and the students in her classroom. In this new role, this broadens. “As an instructional coach teacher leader, I weigh my words more because it seems like what we as coaches say now carries more weight.” The title makes a difference. “It seems to have more of an impact because I have this label, this title, being an instructional coach. So I feel like I really think about my words before I say them.”

This has caused change for her in how she interacts. “It makes me tentative to say too much. I find myself listening a lot more as a coach and speaking less…as a classroom teacher I would just kind of say whatever was on my mind.” She didn’t see this as a negative, though. It “isn’t necessarily a bad thing, I think it has served me well to listen more and speak less as a coach.”
Critical Experiences

Beth continually struggled with her feelings about her work. She wondered if she was successful. She wrote about some as “embracers” and others as “balkers.” She saw that there is value in working with both groups, one that is easier than the other. “The embracers certainly are easier to work with and more pleasant, but the balkers are the ones who keep me on my toes.”

She constantly reflected and thought about the cultures and leadership of the buildings in which she was assigned. Her reflections show that she continued to look for ways to find success and build relationships with the principals and the teachers in the buildings. One building demonstrated significantly more challenge for her. Initially, it seemed to Beth that she was not in agreement with one of the principals, but through time and effort she began to find success and common ground.

Following a professional development session in late fall she discovered that “business at both buildings is very good.” Requests from teachers were beginning to grow and Beth questioned. “I couldn’t help but wonder what had changed.” She realized the effect the building leader could have on the school culture and how the school culture impacted her work, and the tide was turning now in her building of greater challenge. “All along I’ve been trying to understand how the culture of a school affects professional development, and how the building leader sets the tone in a school. That school has the same leader. The culture hasn’t changed drastically, but what I think did change, ever so slightly, is the willingness of the school leader to step out of her comfort zone a tiny bit.”
Beth had patience and persistence, but also realized her own role in this conflict of beliefs. “I realized that I was a bit guilty of what I was accusing her of doing. I was guilty of wanting her to bend to my way of thinking, much the same way she seemed to be wanting others to bend to her way of thinking.” Beth began to reflect from the viewpoint of this principal. “I wanted her to trust and give up control. I realize now that she wasn’t ready to do that without time to process what the changes would look and feel like.”

This was a real turning point for Beth. From this point in time it seemed that she was less frustrated. She knew that progress would occur and how her actions, behaviors, and beliefs played a role. “There is a glimmer of trust that has spurred on a new sense of learning and professional development at [this school]. I need to trust more too, and know that all people need time to adjust to change, principals and teachers alike.”

Beth came to the realization that in many ways she was also playing out the attitude of this principal. Beth had a vision for what she wanted to happen and where she wanted this teaching staff to go, but didn’t take into account that the principal was not yet ready. Her statements revealed that she had to allow time for reflection, thinking and then acceptance. When this happened the principal took the lead toward facilitating change. What Beth possibly saw as uneasiness by the principal was actually questioning and reflecting in order to make meaning on her own terms.
Sources of Support

Even though Beth shared of her struggle to relate effectively with each principal, she also identified these leaders as sources of support. She identified the role they serve in their respective buildings. She may not have always agreed with the style of leading, but she saw the genuine effort that each had to establish “high expectations for the faculty and staff. One was overtly involved in almost everything that happens in the school, and one seemed to hand over the reins and let teachers make their own decisions based on what is expected.” She certainly saw that their goals were similar though the pathway may differ. “Both have a clear goal of providing the best education possible for their students. Both are supportive of teachers.”

She realized the importance of the principal support for herself and for teachers. “If there is support from principals to focus on the learning and try new things, even at the risk of not getting it perfect…teachers will take the focus off their teaching and put the focus on learning.” This statement demonstrated her belief in the importance of learning as opposed to teaching, but her perception of leadership created a personal challenge. She perceived that at one school “teachers are told what they can, should, can’t and should not do. This seems to indicate to me that there is more focus on teaching than on learning.” In contrast Beth realizes that there might be some worth and credence to this approach “because sometimes it seems like the conversations are going nowhere. When do you just tell someone? If you do this too soon, you risk closing the door. If you never do it, an entire school year could go by without any real change occurring.”
Beth began to understand that in order to receive support from one of the principals, she must provide support. “I gained some insights this week into the overtly involved supervisor’s thinking.” Beth was very interested and excited to move the teaching staff into a workshop approach to reading instruction. This shift was proving to be difficult for her in this building. Following a conversation she shared about a “level of discomfort [this principal] feels when there are gray areas and she related this to the discomfort her teachers are feeling with trying a new approach.” Beth continued by saying that “she too is uncomfortable with this new approach.” Beth reflected on this and possibly found the reason for her struggle. “I wonder if the teachers would feel less discomfort if their supervisor felt less discomfort?” She reflectively identified that her pathway to success may be in developing a relationship with the principal. “I’ve had a chance to talk with both of my principals…I’m going to reflect on the conversations and think about how their involvement affects my work.” With that understanding she could then be in a better position to meet the teachers on familiar ground. “I feel like I’m starting to better understand the culture at each of my schools. Now I just need to figure out how to navigate the terrain.” This navigation may really have been her work through the principals because “school leaders set the tone for the culture of a school. Leaders who have a spirit of collaboration free teachers and instructional coaches to think deeply and work together to improve student learning.”

The idea of navigating her work through the principal had a clear line. She knew that what she did with a specific teacher most likely needed to match what this principal wanted to occur. Beth then realized that her work with teachers would differ. “Although I would rather have the teachers that I work with come to the answers on their own, some
“A source of support with much less struggle for Beth was the instructional coaching team. “I knew the coaching team would be my support system, but I didn’t realize just how much I would depend on my fellow coaches.” She genuinely valued the members of the team and the talents they possess. “It didn’t take long to realize that each of us brings something unique yet unifying to the coaching team.” She identified unique as being “eager, lifelong learners who [know] the importance of performing for the good of the team.”

This group of first year coaches did not know each other very well, but Beth saw that the group was able to “instantly click” and then grow. Growth came through time
and building relationships. “Just as we had to build relationships with teachers and administrators in our buildings, we had to build a relationship with each other.”

Like the other instructional coaches she shared that the team may be the best part of the job. “On a daily basis, I realize how fortunate I am to work with such a dynamic crew of people that supports me by answering questions, brainstorming solutions, and providing advice and encouragement as we learn together what it means to be an instructional coach in [this school district].”

In a unique way I saw that Beth created her own source of support through her actions. The “thing that has helped me too is having a big presence in both of my buildings. So being there in classrooms, being seen in the hallways, people seeing me working with other teachers, and the teachers that I am working with sharing with their colleagues things I have done. I think that has helped me a lot.”

Evolving as an Instructional Coach

A theme that Beth began to reflect upon late in the first year is that of purpose. This word “seems to be everywhere. In my readings, in my conversations, in workshops and trainings. I can’t seem to get away from the notion of teaching with purpose and making learning purposeful.” She brought this thinking from her previous role as a teacher to her current role as an instructional coach. “How can I as a coach help teachers be more purposeful in their practices, and how can I be more purposeful in my own practices?” She realized the duality of this by reflecting on it and sharing, “I realized that
I need to be more clear about my purpose for working with teachers and I need to ask better questions from the get go.”

She has evolved enough to realize her actions play a major role in what a teacher will think or do. She commented on this by sharing, “A simple question like what is it you want to achieve from our time together, or how do you think this will help your kids, could be the first step to establishing a purpose for talking, planning, and/or co-teaching.” It’s a two way street and “once we both understand our purpose for collaborating, we can plan the steps to make the goal (purpose) a reality.” Beth summed this up when she wrote “I would like to think that I have changed in that I am getting used to not having the answers.” This represented a change in her attitude about the role and the expectations that she had for herself. “At the beginning I always wanted to have the answers for people and be able to point them in a direction…but I know that there’s just not one direction, and sometimes there really aren’t answers.”

Beth shared that even though changes took place externally, perhaps the biggest difference in her work was her own internal change. In one of her buildings she worked with a new principal. This certainly would have an impact upon the school culture and she acknowledges that. “I guess what changed is I felt more comfortable going into classrooms, not necessarily because the culture changed as much as I felt like I had [changed].” This change seemed to be her own confidence setting firmly upon her established purpose. She commented “she felt more comfortable challenging people that I had worked with [previously].” The relationships previously established were paying dividends. “I felt like I knew them better and I felt like I could push their thinking a bit
more...helping them to think about things in a different way that I might not have been as comfortable doing.”

How did Beth create this comfort, or how was it created within her? It seems that experiencing new things built her comfort and confidence. “I felt more comfortable with grade levels that I had never taught before.” Credit also goes to her team. She was “able to go to the coaching team and ask them, you know those who had more experience in those lower grade levels, especially in kindergarten through first grade...asking them how to approach different situations that came up.”

Even though her confidence and comfort had grown, she did not rest on her success. “I feel like I have so much to learn yet.” She responded to her feelings of growing adequacy in the role of an instructional coach. “I feel confident when I go into a coaching situation. I do feel adequate to respond to the needs or to support teachers...I’ve grown in that I feel more confident.”

**Leadership Change**

At the conclusion of the first year an unexpected change occurred. This instructional coaching team of teacher leaders had been identified and then developed by a curriculum director. The participants in this study grew into their roles under the direction of this person. A philosophy of leadership and of coaching had been established. Then, as the first year concluded, this supervisor of the participants in this study informed the instructional coaching team of his impending departure. The
instructional coaches would soon be under the direct supervision of a new curriculum director.

This change had a great impact upon the team of instructional coaches and varying degrees of bearing upon the individuals. Two instructional coaches in this study were more greatly impacted than the third. In this instance of change there was some regression on the development of the instructional coaches and the instructional coaching team. The participants in the study shared personal and professional impacts.

Several of the instructional coaches had greater difficulty with adjustment. Carla felt poorly about her reaction to the changes. “I navigated this change poorly. We let it get to us. We literally fell apart.” Lisa too identified a loss of momentum. “Someone new to the role with different beliefs about what an instructional coach should be made it difficult to continue the momentum.” Just as learning was required in the first year, now it had to happen again. “It was difficult navigating a different leader’s perspectives.”

Each of the participants responded in different ways in the attempt to learn the “new culture.” Carla attempted to “refocus” on beliefs. “I realized that I love teaching and I have very passionate beliefs that I will not compromise. Realizing these things has been what I needed to do to be successful in the coaching role.”

Lisa shared that she “navigated this change by venting and asking a lot of questions.” Questioning was an action that “seemed to clear up some misunderstandings as well as define differences.” Lisa determined that she needed to “look less at the differences in the leadership styles.” She identified the strengths of each supervisor she worked with and accepted that there was a change. With these statements, it was evident
that Carla and Lisa at first struggled with accepting the change and then developing their own personal strategies for adjusting to changes.

Beth also endured the change in leadership, but did not experience the same feelings as the other instructional coaches. Beth had a different response that affected her relationship with the other coaches but had less impact on her work in her assigned buildings. Beth identified that there was initially “a lot of strife and unhappiness with the new leadership.” She identified how this drove a wedge in the team. While some of the instructional coaches pulled together in resistance of changes in practice, Beth felt it was best for her to put greater focus on her work within her assigned buildings. “I tried to avoid the [conflict] by spending a lot more time in my buildings instead of with the coaching team.” Her reaction contrasted with the reaction of the other instructional coaches. Beth coped with this by “focusing my time, attention, and energy on the teachers, students, and principals in the two buildings I was assigned to work.”

This leadership change of the direct supervisor of the instructional coaches fractured the team. The reaction of the individuals differed. Two coaches in the study pulled closer together and had trouble accepting change. The third of the participants in the study tried to stay away from any unhappiness by focusing on her individual work and less on the work of the team. Lisa identified what happened with the team of instructional coaches.

Our team chose to handle this change in different ways. I respect what each person had to do in order to navigate and manage the conflict that existed. Most of us got closer and chose to focus on what we were doing with teachers and students to learn and make a difference. Others needed
to isolate themselves more and just focus on the teachers in their buildings.
Chapter 5  Analysis of Participant Stories

Introduction

For some, teaching is filled with excitement and enthusiasm, with each day bringing new opportunities to positively influence the lives of children. For others, the complexity of the job is overwhelming, with details and pressures that seem impossible to master. For still others, teaching is just a job to get through. Teachers experience many shifts in stages throughout their careers, often meandering back and forth between periods of growth and frustration in response to factors in their personal and organizational lives. Understanding the dynamics of what these teachers are experiencing can serve as a foundation for planning appropriate actions to support their changing personal and professional growth needs (Fessler, 1995).

The previous statement is made in regards to classroom teachers, but theoretically also applies to other educational professionals. This multiple case study examines a group of classroom teachers moving from those positions into designated teacher leadership roles as instructional coaches. The researcher collected self-reported data from this group during the first year of this transition and followed up with additional collections in the two ensuing years. As illustrated in their stories, this group of teacher leaders also experienced contrasts between feelings of successful elation and bitter frustration.

The previous chapter told each of their stories individually through their own words. This chapter will now compare and contrast their stories portraying both the areas
that the participants had in common and those areas that were different. In the final chapter the claims that arose from the data will be discussed and connected to the scholarly literature, including the work of Fessler (1995) and York-Barr and Duke (2004).

This multiple case study provides an opportunity to examine the phenomenon of classroom teacher leaders moving from this role into an appointed teacher leader role as an instructional coach. A multiple case study allows one to look beyond the individual case, to the phenomenon, in this case teachers in transition. According to Stake (2006), the cases provide an opportunity to examine this phenomenon by bringing the findings from the individual case experiences to the research questions. By attending to the activity and context of the case, one is able to make observations about correlations between events that are occurring together (Stake, 2006).

The cross-case analysis involved determining the presence of the themes in the cases, and moving from these data to assertions, with attention to the strength, usefulness and importance of these assertions. This analysis relies on thick, rich description (Stake, 2006) in order to get a better understanding across cases of what helps and hinders a teacher leader in transition. By drawing on the important findings from each case report, assertions could be made about the participants in this study.

The cross-case analysis suggested two overarching themes were consistent across the data collected from the three instructional coaches in this study. The first theme, development as a coach, includes an exploration of both the emotional experiences of these new coaches as well as the relative focus on self-concerns versus impact concerns. The second overarching theme, influences on practice included several significant
sources of influence: 1) the professional development school partnership between the
district and the university, 2) the support of the coaching team itself, 3) the effects on
instructional coaching from the influence of the school cultures and 4) the influence of
the building principals and administrative leadership with whom the coaches worked.

Development as a Coach

Emotional Life of Coaches

Each of the coaches proceeded through different stages in her development as an
instructional coach. This process included cycles of frustration and uncertainty amid
brief glimpses of success. A model of teacher career development was created earlier by
Fessler and Christiansen (1995). Although this model was developed in reference to
classroom teachers, the changes identified in this group of coaches appeared to mirror
some of the ideas from that model.

Fessler (1995) created this model based on previous studies investigating teacher
career development. The Fessler model built on the initial work of Fuller (1969) who
proposed a model that portrayed teachers as moving from a focus or concern for self, to a
focus upon the task of teaching, and finally to a focus on the impact that the teacher was
having upon students.

Fessler (1995) devised a cyclical model taking into consideration the previous
research. This proposed model builds from the induction phase as a new teacher until
departure from the profession. In contrast to earlier models e.g. Unruh and Turner (1970)
and Gregorc (1973), that saw teacher development as linear and non-recursive, the Fessler (1995) model implies that teachers flow through the defined stages within a teaching career, but can move back and forth among the stages, depending on both the organizational context in which the teacher works as well as the teacher’s own personal life events. The stages identified by Fessler and Christiansen (1995) were:

1. Pre-service
2. Induction
3. Competency Building
4. Enthusiastic and Growing
5. Career Frustration
6. Career Stability
7. Career Wind-Down
8. Career Exit

The ebbs and flows of the cycle show teachers moving through periods of excitement and growth as well as periods of frustration as a result of the interaction of personal and organizational factors. The experiences and emotions were very similar for this group of teacher leaders who were appointed as instructional coaches. They have progressed through developmental stages as teachers. Now, in the course of assuming a new role as an instructional coach, another cycle of stages appears to begin. The data indicated that the emotions and thoughts that were prevalent during the period of development as new teacher leaders appeared to parallel the emotions and thoughts they had experienced previously as novice teachers, but they seemed to occur within a more compressed time span. Uncertainty, learning, frustration, and growing confidence were
all experienced in the transition to this new designated teacher leader role, just as they were experienced previously as classroom teachers.

The teacher career cycle is depicted with multiple wheels of influence. Personal and organizational environments impact teachers in their movement in the career cycle influencing both movement to higher stages of development as well as regression earlier stages. To differing degrees this holds true for the participants in this study.

Figure 2 Teacher Career Cycle

All participants demonstrated impacts from the wheel of personal environment. The strongest aspects from the models were from positive critical incidents, crises, and individual dispositions.
Positive critical incidents and crisis both occurred for the participants. The former helped to move the individual forward while the latter caused regression. Each successful experience in the new role helped to propel the novice instructional coach forward on the career cycle. Crises took the form of troubled relationships or lack thereof with teachers and administrators. Other crises common for each participant were navigating new content and unfamiliar grade levels. Each participant had her confidence challenged, as she needed to learn new things and provide instruction or guidance in grade levels that were unfamiliar. The change in the direct leadership also created a common crisis for each of the participants. It is noted that each of the instructional coaches navigated this influence in ways that moved them backward and then forward again in the career cycle, but at different rates.

Each participant had difficulty matching their own individual dispositions to that of the teachers they worked with as instructional coaches. Their strong beliefs of inquiry and self-reflection were found to not be present in all teachers. This was a surprise to the participants as they had the initial thought that all teachers would be like them.

The organizational environment was shown to have a strong influence on the movement of the novice instructional coaches in the career cycle. The participants were influenced by the culture and the leadership of the buildings in which they were placed. The participants discovered differing leadership styles and contrasting cultures. All of the participants also reflected on relationship building, which can be placed as a quality of public trust cited in the model. The participants all had to build trust with teachers who were known to them from their former role as a classroom teacher and in the new role as instructional coach.
All of these factors contributed to the regression that the participants felt on the career cycle. Personal negotiation had to occur in order to atone for these factors in order to again move into a career phase in which satisfaction and excitement for the role could return.

Though no formal assessment was completed before the study, it seems appropriate to assume that each of the coaches was in the higher stages of these teacher development models when appointed to the position of instructional coach. Each was a teacher leader within her teaching team, school, and in the district. It can be assumed, therefore, that each was at a career stage of teaching competency. Each was knowledgeable and proficient in the craft of teaching. Each was at a stage seeking further challenge and professional fulfillment, thus the decision to move to a designated teacher leader role.

When this group of teacher leaders first embarked on their initial year as instructional coaches, optimism abounded within all of them. They were confident and effective teachers. They believed that they were now moving into positions in which they could make even greater impacts with students. The following quotes from Carla and then Lisa indicate this.

• “Many people at this building are eager to work with me, especially the newer teachers.” (Carla)
• “I love this and can’t wait to see what next week will bring!” (Lisa)

They were all innovators and risk-takers within the classroom. They were not afraid to try new approaches in their classrooms if they believed it would make a difference for children. They stayed as current as possible with trends in education. They were exemplars of the term “life-long learner.”
All had a history of working in capacities outside of the classroom. They all had a long list of membership on many district level committees for curriculum writing or revision. They were not afraid to share their talents, knowledge, and experience with others.

All of these characteristics would place each of them within the stages of competency building and enthusiastic and growing in the Fessler (1995) model. The evidence shows that they believed that they would stay within those stages. To some degree each of them would stay in those stages because despite challenges and obstacles, each continued to have the desire to learn and grow. However, comments from all show some levels of frustration that indicate movement back into the emotions and thinking of earlier stages of development.

Each of these new instructional coaches experienced frustration with the way other teachers dealt with change in much the same way as beginning teachers experience frustration with students who are not excited about learning. As classroom teachers themselves, they embraced change. Change was natural for them. Frustration grew out of their realization that not all teachers embraced change the way they did, or not all teachers were as self-driven as they were in their practice as educators.

All entered the role with their own ideas of what an instructional coach was and what an instructional coach could do.

- An instructional coach is “someone that supports teachers in the direction that they would like to take their professional development.” (Carla)
- An effective coach is the person who listens best and then knows how to help or where to find the right help and support; ultimately, to be the person who encourages the classroom teacher to inquire and ask their own questions and look for their own ways to include best practices, to create a trusting and safe environment for classroom teachers to feel comfortable and excited to try new
things.” (Lisa)

- Coaching is “so based in your attitude, and the way that you look at things, [I was] hoping to find ways to encourage teachers to think critically about what they are doing and why.” (Carla)

These statements revealed an attitude of optimism. They believed that the position would have its challenges, but because all teachers would be like them, it would not be too difficult. Their journey also showed how each of their beliefs about teaching, learning, and coaching were shaped. The idea of directive and non-directive coaching entered into their thoughts and their dialogue. Because as individuals and as a team they leaned toward the philosophy of non-directive coaching, they began to have some struggles. Some teachers they tried to work with just “want to be told what to do.” Some principals they worked with have a stronger leadership style toward directive coaching.

- “I am not here to fix or teach. I am here to help people get better.” (Carla)
- “[Supervision] becomes an intrinsic role of every teacher…and not one person that dictate or guides it all.” (Lisa)
- “It is much easier to operate in one [school] over another…[in this building] it is much easier to think of the what-ifs and the possibilities of trying new things…[while] it is more challenging in [this] setting…it’s much more difficult to think of the what-ifs in this setting.” (Beth)
- “Because so much of what happens at that school needs to be approved or endorsed by the principal, my work is less spontaneous and less authentic. It feels more contrived because the same question keeps coming up. What does [the principal] want?” (Beth)
- “Some teachers have been told that they should work with me.” (Beth)
- “If the person in charge forces their ideas on others, what purpose does that serve? How does this empower or motivate people?” (Beth)

Because of the assumptions and beliefs they possessed when entering the position, the thought of engaging in more directive coaching was uncomfortable. It didn’t mesh with the initial thoughts or definitions of coaching that were currently ingrained in this new group of instructional coaches. This created some personal feelings that are
construed as being more typical of an educator in the career frustration stage.

“Teachers who lead are respected as teachers by their colleagues and administrators” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 289). This group of educators were all very successful teachers. They were respected by their colleagues. Their supervisors all viewed them as being responsible, dependable, and competent. They were now being entrusted with advancing the skills of other teachers within the school district. This was a challenge that they accepted, but it also contained difficulties. This new group of instructional coaches would face the difficult task of motivating others. Some of the teachers they worked with did not have the same intrinsic drive. As a result they were now back into a phase of competency building. They had to learn how to motivate others. While developing these new capabilities of learning how to motivate others, they also had to overcome their own frustrations with the need to engage in that very process, not unlike beginning teachers who much develop classroom management skills and sometimes resent the need to deal with student behavior.

Carla noted that she saw the individual teachers playing a primary role in identifying their own areas for improvement and developing their own pathways toward learning and growing. This would have been parallel to how she acted as a classroom teacher. She saw this as important so that each teacher saw “that they have a drive and purpose behind their own professional development.” For Carla the impetus for growth and change comes intrinsically from within each teacher. Her role as coach is to support and guide this process, not to initiate it. Frustration grew from the discovery that some teachers needed her to initiate it.

As a new instructional coach she was “hoping to find ways to encourage teachers
to think critically about what they are doing and why.” She didn’t expect that she would have to take the lead and point this out. She didn’t expect to discover that some teachers were satisfied with the status quo and did not want to take the risk imposed by change. She began to question her ability as a coach. “How can we support teacher that are not familiar with this kind of thinking?” Reminiscent of beginning teachers who doubt their capability of engaging in tough teaching tasks successfully, she was now wondering how she could be successful in this new position. She discovered that all teachers are not like her. She began to think of what personal characteristics she would need to more fully develop in order to achieve success as an instructional coach.

• “Patience and time are essential, but are there other ways to encourage or support this type of thinking?” (Carla)
• “I know I need to listen. I know people are trying to make changes. I see that and I recognize that it is difficult. I don’t know where to begin.” (Carla)
• “Not all teachers want to learn another way because they are nearing the end of their career…what has been done has worked this long, why change?” (Carla)

Lisa also experienced some of these same realizations. To this point, she had spent her entire teaching career in the same building teaching the same grade level. She had evolved as an educator largely due to her own motivation. Now she was envisioning how difficult it could be to instill the same desires in others. She knew that she wanted to encourage change that would result in improvement. Challenge and sometimes frustration occurred. As a new instructional coach she knew that it was her role to promote change, but now she was seeing that some teachers were not like her. She was realizing that it would be difficult at times. This is not unlike new teachers who begin suddenly to recognize that not all of the students they teach will be like them. She noted this when she said, “I think about the label of an instructional coach and how that can be
perceived. Walking that line of honoring and respecting what is already being done very well while encouraging something new or different in a non-threatening way is the goal of any instructional coach.”

Lisa wanted to be a leader of change, but she now saw that this was something that was not inherent in every teacher. She knew what she wanted to have happen, but also knew that she couldn’t force it when she said, “The ideal is that [supervision] becomes an intrinsic role of every teacher…and not one person that dictates or guides it all.” She had to take a step back and reflect. She had to learn some new things about herself and about others. In terms of career stage, she was moving back to the issues and dilemmas of competency building. She was now in a new role and she was being forced to learn some new skills that she had not needed as a classroom teacher.

- “I come back to relating this role to a classroom. Every teacher wants their students to become motivated to understand and tweak their own learning, so the same should go for teachers and their learning.” (Lisa)
- “Getting [self-motivation] in place at each building means working with everyone involved. Every day I am gaining more insight into how that will feel, look, and happen in each building.” (Lisa)

Beth started in the role as instructional coach with similar ideals for the role. She stated that she saw herself as a coach with a purpose “to raise questions rather than to provide solutions.” She too was seeing her role of a leader that capitalizes on self-motivation. As a classroom teacher Beth was intrinsically motivated to grow and learn. One thing that Beth noted about teachers she was coaching was in the way they responded to her. She was struggling with how to “coach” them. The first group was the teachers who already knew her. She was trying to change the relationship from that of colleague to a new one of coach. The change was hard. “The conversations that I have
with them are just that, they just seem more conversational and not as much coaching.”
This group may have been holding on to the previous relationship that they had with Beth. Now as an instructional coach, she was trying to change that relationship, not unlike beginning teachers who find the need to move from friend to more of a leader who is able to move students beyond their comfort zones.

She also experienced challenges with the group of teachers that she didn’t know as well. She was trying to move them in the same direction but running up against different obstacles. “They didn’t know me as well as a classroom teacher, so as a coach they seem to look to me more for answers so their conversations are different in that respect. They perceive me more as an answer giver.” This didn’t fit the picture Beth had for the role. She had hoped to inspire personal reflection and intrinsic drive toward growth and improvement. As a classroom teacher she was self-driven. She identified this as a personal trait when she said, “As a classroom teacher leader I felt comfortable offering information or maybe challenging in a way that I wasn’t quite sure if it would work.” As a classroom teacher she took risks. She tried new things. She now embarked in this new role and she discovered that not all teachers shared her same degree of motivation. Some might be more willing to change or try new things if told or directed to do so. She was used to asking questions of herself and of others. It wasn’t her intent to be the teacher leader with all of the answers.

Beth too experienced the emotions and thoughts of competency building. She had to learn and relearn some skills that enabled her to be an outstanding classroom teacher and to be an identified candidate for this teacher leadership role. Beth understood that this would be a process. She would develop skills that would enable her to be a better
listener. She would gain insight into how to develop productive relationships. She would also see how important trust would be in this growth process. Beth said, “I’m beginning to see that it’s all about trust.” Beth saw that teachers needed to trust her. She still wasn’t going to tell them what to do, but she needed to have the relationship that would allow her to influence and guide the self-direction and intrinsic motivation of the teacher. She summarized her thinking when she said, “Trust seems to be foundational to teacher inquiry. If teachers are trusted to think deeply about why they teach, what they teach, and how they teach, and if they are trusted to try new things to answer [these questions], they are motivated to persevere through the murkiness of inquiry and professional development can prevail.” The professional development she refers to is what the coach can provide, but being maximized by the questions raised personally by the teacher.

This element played out for her in the relationship she had with one principal. It took time for Beth to realize that her frustration was born out through her inability to be patient with the development of trust. Beth was working with a group of teachers who were very ready to teach reading in a new way. Beth was thrilled that they had embraced this and she was ready to support them. The principal at this time was cautious and not yet ready to allow this to happen. In hindsight, Beth realized that this cautionary slowness of change was normal and necessary. The principal needed trust. Beth said, “I wanted her to trust and give up control. I realize now that she wasn’t ready to do that without time to process what the changes would look and feel like.” Through this scenario Beth was building her competency as a teacher leader. She became less frustrated with others and with the pace of change. Her reflection of “I need to trust more too, and know that all people need time to adjust to change” illustrates her own growth.
Beth was learning that all teachers were not like her, but with the right influence she could achieve levels of success with all.

- “Although I would rather have the teacher that I work with come to the answers on their own, some teachers just need more guidance, prompting, and support.” (Beth)
- “When a teacher can’t come to a conclusion on their own, I am getting more comfortable knowing when to step in and guide them as needed.” (Beth)

Each of the instructional coaches also experienced the feelings of enthusiasm and growth in her development into the new teacher leadership role. As classroom teachers all were consistently eager to grow and learn about the craft of teaching. In this new position the view that each had broadened. In the past the primary view was of the classroom. Each individual had direct control over what happened in the classroom and decisions reflected this. Lisa recalls this. As a classroom teacher “the level of control that you might have over what you are going to prioritize or do is in your control.” She also shared, “When I was in the classroom and something didn’t go well, or I wanted to try something different I could just do that. Whether it worked or not just [affected] me and my classroom.” Lisa’s primary area of concern was her classroom. Secondary areas of concern would include the team and the school. As classroom teacher leaders these individuals had awareness of what happened within their teams and in their schools. Now, each was experiencing a view of the school district. This was eye-opening and surprising.

- “I was now seeing a big picture of things.” (Lisa)
- “[I am] so much more aware of all the other factors that are part of a [school] district; the good, the bad, and ugly, whatever it might be.” (Lisa)
- “I couldn’t believe the difference in social dynamics between buildings and across the district.” (Lisa)
- “[My] lens had become much wider.” (Lisa)
• “I am quickly becoming more aware of the varying perspectives and ideologies that exist.” (Lisa)

This expanded view created feelings of uneasiness. The instructional coaches were now in unfamiliar territory. The comfortable role of classroom teacher was replaced with a designated district leadership role. In this role new and different knowledge is gained, but this creates loss in other areas. Carla identified this when she said, “You kind of lose a little bit of credibility because you don’t have a classroom.” Lisa echoes these feelings when saying, “Where do I belong?” Teachers who may have been close colleagues in the past now questioned her in unfamiliar ways. Carla recalled that teachers made comments like, “you aren’t a teacher and you don’t understand.” Lisa shared that these feelings to her were like an “identity crisis.” Beth also experienced this. She reflected on how she became more cautious and guarded with what she said. “As an instructional coach teacher leader, I weigh my words more because it seems like what we as coaches say now carries more weight.” She recognizes this, but also reflects on how it has caused her to lose some confidence, which shows a return to a competency-building phase in the profession. Beth stated, “It makes me tentative to say too much. I find myself listening a lot more as a coach and speaking less.”

There were now the feelings of being out of control or of not knowing. These are the same feelings often experienced by novice teachers. Confidence and feelings of competence and control waned. Lisa shared these feelings. “I feel like you have to be in the know of more things in this role than I felt like when I was in my own classroom.”

Vulnerability was a word used by all of the novice coach participants. They perceived themselves as starting over. They perceived that teachers would expect them
to know all of the answers. Lisa definitely felt this way. “I feel like you have to be in the know of more things in this role than I felt like when I was in my own classroom.” Carla identified vulnerability as “putting yourself out there.” Lisa stated that “the feelings [she had] connect to the vulnerability I felt in this new role.” Beth shared vulnerability by sharing that “this is new for me, I must admit that I was nervous.” Beth also accepted vulnerability as being part of the role. “I don’t think you learn anything without being willing to be vulnerable. Vulnerable to making mistakes. Vulnerable to the unexpected. Vulnerable to not being accepted.” She added to this when talking about her work in classrooms with teachers. “I needed to struggle. I needed to feel uncomfortable. I needed to be in the thick of things…If I expected teachers to put themselves out there and try new and scary instructional practices, I needed to do the same. I became comfortable feeling vulnerable.”

This territory of unfamiliarity created the feelings that pushed these new instructional coaches back into the thinking and emotions of stages of development that they had experienced as novice teachers. They now had to negotiate these feelings reflectively so as to regain confidence. Carla demonstrated how she reflected in this way. “Even if I don’t have my own classroom, I am still acting on and working along with my belief system.” Lisa had similar feelings. She said, “I feel at home and out of place, all at the same time.” The confidence that each had as a classroom teacher had now been challenged. Moving into this district leadership position required each to recycle through a prior phase of growing and learning.
Concerns for Self and Others

The literature on teacher development and change suggests that teachers typically move from an initial focus on the impact of change on self to an eventual focus on the impact of the change on those whom they are responsible for impacting (Fuller, 1975; Hall & Hord, 2001). As might be expected the participants in this study experienced a similar progression in their concerns about the new position as a designated teacher leader. Each looked first at how the change would have personal impact. Lisa illustrates this when she said, “There is so much growing up on my part that has happened and still needs to happen in this new role.” Another example of concern for self early in the experience is demonstrated through the words of Lisa but most likely applicable to all of the novice instructional coaches. “We are learning so much about what it really means to be a teacher and an instructional coach. We are learning more together than at any other points of our career. We learn from each other and push each other.” These quotations shed light on how this group of novice instructional coaches was primarily focused on their own development and not on the development of the teachers for which they are charged provide coaching.

For several participants this personal, inward look continued longer, while for one of the novice coaches the gaze began to move outward more quickly. While all three eventually began to see and reflect on their work with others, there were differences in the time required for this to occur.

• “[I want] to be able to support and grow with other teachers.” (Carla)
• “I am not here to fix or teach.” (Carla)
• “Not having a classroom is a challenge because sometimes as you are trying to work with another teacher, the environment that they have set up is so different
from mine.” (Carla)
- “[Coaching has] been good for me in a lot ways because it’s also made me think about who I am, and what I believe, and what I am saying.” (Carla)
- “I think that more than any other time in my life, [I] had to stop and really think about why am I doing what I am doing and how do I know that this is right?” (Carla)
- “[I have] had more opportunities to question and really look at those pieces of my beliefs.” (Carla)
- “[I] realized the importance of hearing people.” (Carla)

These statements all show a concern for personal development. These coaches are reflecting on what is happening to them and/or what they are doing. The focus is on personal development. Of course this is important. It would be desirable for each of the new coaches to develop in the role. The missing pieces are the statements about how others are changing based on the work of the participant. Ultimately, students need to perform better due to improved instruction.

Later in the first year statements are made that begin to show that focus is now moving outwards. There is a feeling that progress is being made and instruction is improving from the work as an instructional coach. Carla shared her thoughts at the end of year one by saying, “I feel like I’m influencing people in a way that they feel like they are being supported.” She was beginning to place focus on how she was impacting teachers and not only on how she was growing, changing, or struggling. Lisa demonstrated her thinking of others and not just herself. “Whether [something] worked in [my] classroom just [affected] me and my classroom. [As a coach] it’s not always that immediate and it’s not always that easy to see right away what the affect might have, or might not have been.” To see results and feel the satisfaction, Lisa and the other coaches have to rely on the teachers they are working with to make gains.

In contrast to Carla and Lisa, Beth developed a focus toward the teachers and the
impact she was having on instruction much earlier in the experience. She was able to
couple her own personal growth with the changes she was able to realize in the teachers
that she coached. Beth repeatedly commented on the importance of relationships early in
her coaching experience. She saw the value in how it would assist others, not just
herself.

“Investing time to build relationships at the beginning of the year [is important] as
I get into the thick of things as an instructional coach.” Beth demonstrated thinking that
would propel her forward and allow her to impact the teaching of others. She was not
thinking and commenting about her own growth.

• “A piece of advice to a new instructional coach is to find just one or two people in
their building to connect to and let the relationships grow from there.” (Beth)
• “You can’t be in all classrooms, nor do you need to be. Find one or two teachers,
plant some seeds, and more coaching partnerships will grow from there.” (Beth)
• “Relationship building is the foundation to a key element in professional
development-collaboration. When people have established a relationship of trust,
collaboration is much easier.” (Beth)

Beth had a solid idea of her own personal philosophy of coaching. She shared
this by saying that she wanted to be a coach with a purpose that will “raise questions
rather than to provide solutions.” She wanted to promote learning by “encouraging
innovative and creative thinking.” She wanted to be a coach with purpose. “How can I
as a coach help teachers be more purposeful in their practices, and how can I be more
purposeful in my own practices?” Beth demonstrated development of reflection for
impact upon teachers well before the other novice coaches. She says that “I need to be
more clear about my purpose for working with teachers and I need to ask better questions
from the get go.” Beth was initially and constantly thinking about her work not her own
development or learning. This contrasts with the statements and thinking of the other novice coaches. She held on to these ideas in her struggle with one of the principals. She realized that the challenge was just as much her actions as the actions of the principal. “I realized that I was a bit guilty of what I was accusing her of doing. I was guilty of wanting her to bend to my way of thinking, much the same way she seemed to be wanting others to bend to her way of thinking.” All of the instructional coaches were self-reflective but Beth had the ability to reflect sooner in the experience on what she was doing with and for others, not just on what was happening to her.

All of the participants in the study experienced dissonance that caused their emotions and thinking to move regressively within the stages of Fessler (1995) teacher career cycle. They also experienced a return to self-concerns before moving to impact concerns. Carla and Lisa demonstrated more effects from the change to the new designated leadership position. Beth appeared to negotiate this change more effectively, or perhaps more quickly. There were several variables that might have contributed to Beth’s more rapid adjustment.

Before being appointed to the position of instructional coach, Beth had already made multiple changes in her career. She came into teaching following another stint in public education as a school secretary. In this secretarial role she experienced the sense of thinking about the school as a whole instead of a single classroom. She had taught 6th grade in one of the district middle schools. She taught 3rd or 4th grade in one district building and had recently transferred to another building in the district. Before the move to the coaching position change was not a new phenomenon for her. In contrast, both Carla and Lisa had started and remained in the same positions in the same buildings.
throughout their entire teaching careers.

As noted above, at the conclusion of the first year for the participants in this new role, an administrative leadership change occurred. A new curriculum director was appointed who became the supervisor of the coaches. This was critical because this change caused an obstacle for the development of the individual coaches. While the participants were all moving toward an “others approach,” this change caused them to retreat again and look more on how this change in leadership would impact them personally. The pathway toward a focus on serving others was replaced with a focus on concern for self.

Carla reflected back on the first year. She shared how it was a year for “moving forward and pulling people together.” The first year presented an opportunity and a drive for “[doing] more than we thought we could.” It can’t be determined how she would have continued to develop under the same leadership, but she did not embrace the change in leadership. In reflection Carla noted that “we hit some road bumps, which should be expected with a change in leadership…our hope was to keep moving in the second year, instead we stopped.”

Carla was obviously upset by the changes that new leadership entailed. “Our role, our focus, and our process were questioned and challenged.” This shows again the focus on self. Carla perceived that new leadership questioned what she was doing as an instructional coach. “I did not feel comfortable taking chances. In the second year [under new leadership] I spent more time second guessing myself and regretting how quickly things were moving and feeling very out of control.” Carla continued this inward thinking by reflecting on how she perceived the different leadership styles. “The leader
in the second year focused on managing situations and decisions.” The thinking and/or focus were not on others, but on self. “When I was hired for this position I was hired to be a teacher leader. In year two [with new leadership] I was not a leader, I was a facilitator. This shows Carla thinking about her own growth and development and not focusing on what she was doing to help others grow. Ultimately, Carla was able to reflect and see how the challenges of the change may have had some positive effects upon herself professionally. “Going through the process has taught me more than I ever imagined about the type of person that I am.” She added by saying, “I am more comfortable with where I am and how I am seeing the role. I feel like I can kind of let my guard down and work more vulnerably with people.” This shows that she eventually accepted that there was a change and that she was better off accepting it.

Lisa also felt strongly impacted by the leadership change. “The change in leadership from year one to year two affected me both negatively and positively.” The negative was in how Lisa had to change. “[New leadership had] different beliefs about what an instructional coach should be.” Lisa attributed this to the “difficulty navigating a different leader’s perspectives.” Her own perspective changed as well as she commented that “things shifted to feeling more managed.”

The positive was also in her own ability to change. Lisa began to ask more questions. Lisa was “venting and asking a lot of questions to the other coaches and to the new leader.” She felt that this helped her to become more positive about the situation. “To become more positive and focus on what was in my control, I decided to vent less, and let go of personality and leadership differences that existed.” She was accepting the change, but still looking inward upon herself rather than her work with others. She
recognized the differences in the leadership noting for herself that the first leader was inspirational to her and the new leader had contrasting styles. “I started to look less at our new supervisor as an inspirational leader, and more as an excellent task master who knew how to get things done.” Lisa continues to look inward to say that this “really helped me to focus on the benefits that this person brought to the team. I looked for the inspiration from others.”

Beth didn’t have the same level of struggle with the leadership change as the other coaches. “The change in leadership at the district level did not have as much of an impact on my coaching role.” This could be attributed to the fact that she had worked through some struggles already with the new leader. The new leader was one of the principals that she worked with in her initial year and with whom she found the process more difficult initially. It could also be that she was well grounded in her personal philosophy and work ethic as an instructional coach. “To be successful in the coaching role, I worked hard to stay true to what I believe is the most important approach to instructional coaching, which is to approach it as a partnership.”

The similarities and differences in their emotional journey into a designated teacher leader role demonstrate that all three of these instructional coaches reverted to the emotions and thoughts of previous stages in the teacher career cycle as defined by Fessler (1995). All three reverted in similar ways, but all did not begin to begin to move forward again at the same pace.
Influences upon Practice

As noted in the introduction to the chapter, the three coaches reported several primary influences upon the journeys into designated teacher leadership: 1) the professional development school partnership between the district and the university, 2) the support of the coaching team itself, 3) the effects on instructional coaching from the influence of the school cultures and 4) the influence of the building principals and administrative leadership with whom the coaches worked. All of these sources of influence were generally, but not entirely positive. Each had some downside..

PDS Influence

All of the participants in the study had varying degrees of participation and influence from the Professional Development School partnership that existed between the school district and the local university. Carla and Beth were both former interns within the program who graduated and then began their teaching careers in the district. They both continued to be influenced by the practices and beliefs of the partnership as inservice teachers. Both Carla and Beth eventually mentored interns in the same PDS program and gained valuable experience in the practice of mentoring. Lisa was not an intern, but was an active participant in the partnership once she began teaching in the district. She too acted as a mentor to interns in the PDS partnership and received the same benefits and practice as the other participants. This partnership created a safety net for the novice instructional coaches as it provided some grounding of their new practice in designated positions outside of the classroom. At the same time, this connection also
created frustration. Each of the instructional coaches faced scenarios and/or individual teachers who did not share the philosophies espoused by the PDS partnership.

This opportunity to mentor gave each of the participants a foundation to rest upon as they began the newly appointed positions as instructional coaches. Each of the instructional coaches realized that the responsibilities were not all completely new. Providing support and mentoring to new teachers was a responsibility of the position, and this was more easily embraced with the thought of knowing that this had been done before. Carla shared this early in the new position when she said, “Many people at this building are eager to work with me, especially the newer teachers and the teachers that were Professional Development School interns.” This statement shows the affinity that she and others had for this PDS program. She shows that there is a connection that will assist her as she begins this new position as an instructional coach.

Beth was even more direct in stating how she saw the PDS experience as not only being helpful, but also crucial as she and the other participants began working in the newly appointed roles as instructional coaches. As the initial year began Beth said, “As an instructional coach team, we need to reflect on how our thinking and practices have been shaped by our partnership with the Professional Development School.” She even highlighted the importance of teacher inquiry when she said, “Some of the coaches cut their educational teeth in an inquiry-based environment that was fostered by the PDS.” With this statement she really was referring to all of the participants in this study.

Later in that initial year as an instructional coach Beth made a strong statement to support the impact that PDS had upon the coaches. “One claim I feel comfortable making is that the PDS has had a big influence on our instructional coaching team.”
One of the tenets of the Professional Development School is the promotion of teacher reflection and inquiry. Teachers question their own practice as a means of intrinsic self-improvement. This idea of self-questioning and reflection is an ongoing practice that guides the improvement of teachers who have experienced the PDS partnership as either an intern or a mentor. [Teacher leaders] assume a learning orientation in their work” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 289). Carla identified this connection when she stated, “Some teachers want to talk, some want me to tell them what to do and how to do it…[this is] not exactly reflective.”

Though Lisa did not have pre-service training in the PDS program, she too was highly influenced by its presence in the district and her own participation as a classroom teacher. She came to value the same ideas of inquiry and reflection as the other participants. She wanted to be an instructional coach “who encourages the classroom teacher to inquire and ask their own questions.” She shared what she thought her practice as an instructional coach would be. She said that she would “listen and be patient, organize opportunities for collaboration, and support teachers through resources, co-teaching, co-planning, and co-reflection.” She continued to support this line of thinking about coaching by saying, “Every teacher wants their students to become motivated to understand and tweak their own learning, so the same should go for teachers and their learning.” These statements demonstrate that she had adopted the ideas of reflection and inquiry from the PDS partnership in her work as a mentor and that she was now ready to transfer those same philosophies into her work as an instructional coach.

The beliefs and practices of the Professional Development School were instilled in this group of novice instructional coaches. These beliefs and practices were used by
the coaches as they navigated the new role and discovered what could work in their work with teachers. Carla identified how she used the practice of reflection to her own advantage as she reflected on what was working after several months in the role. “Now that I have been in this position for several months I am beginning to see the benefit of listening.” Because her PDS participation helped her be a more thoughtful teacher through the practice of purposeful reflection she was making progress in her own perception of job performance. She shared this by saying, “At this point in the year I am thinking. What is this teacher trying to say? Where are they coming from? What do they really want? How much are they willing to do?” She had learned what it meant to reflect on her own practice. “Maybe I am becoming a more critical listener. By that I mean that I am no longer just listening to what is said but also looking for a deeper understanding of the people that I am interacting with.”

Lisa also practiced self-reflection in her new role as instructional coach. She used this practice embraced by mentors and interns in the PDS partnership as she shared her own questions of reflection in a log entry after the first few months in the role. “How do I prioritize? How long until I suggest? How can I best help? What do I say to that? She had many questions as she navigated through the beginnings of this new role, but she fell back on her experiences in the PDS as a mentor and used the skills that she had developed to self-question and to self-reflect. Her self-reflection netted an idea. “You know that book called The First Six Weeks of School? I feel that we should write a book called The First Six Weeks of Coaching.

Reflection was also part of the coaching practice employed by Beth. As she worked with adults instead of children, she reflected on what was and was not working.
“What is it that makes the job of teaching adults so difficult, yet so satisfying?” As a new instructional coach she knew what she wanted a classroom teacher to use in her practice, but saw that what she had been doing wasn’t working. Her reflection yielded the thought that “it doesn’t mean we aren’t collaborating. It just means that we are collaborating in a different way.”

Beth demonstrated her abilities to effectively reflect on problems that she faced. This ability could be attributed to her many years associated with the PDS partnership. As previously stated, Beth struggled in her initial attempts at coaching in her one building assignment. Through reflection Beth was able to see how many variables created the challenges. “How do we handle the challenges that come up based on the cultures of the schools? Can a culture be changed? Is it better to adapt to the culture as opposed to trying to change [it]?” This statement was made in reference to her shared challenge in her work with one building principal. What she learned through the self-reflection helped her eventually gain some success. Beth shared this by saying, “I realized that I was a bit guilty of what I was accusing her of doing. I was guilty of wanting her to bend to my way of thinking, much the same way she seemed to be wanting others to bend to her way of things.” Self-reflection enabled her to realize that she was as much an influence upon the problem as the building leader.

The outright claim by one of the participants citing the benefit of the influence from association with the Professional Development School is just one piece of evidence that substantiates the value of this kind of support for novice teacher leaders beginning in a new position. Each of the participants indicated how they were influenced in their practice as collaborators from their previous role as a mentor teacher. This provided a
foundation for their future work with teachers as an instructional coach. Each of the participants also shared how reflection was an active part of their work as an instructional coach. This skill was developed as well through work within the PDS partnership.

This group of participants who were competent and proficient teachers accepted the role of teacher leader as instructional coaches. The evidence from their words and their logs shows the benefit of support from another educational entity. In this case it was the Professional Development School partnership. Association with the PDS facilitated the growth of skills and knowledge that eased the transition to the new position and continued to provide support as time in the position ensued. It also presented challenges when working with teachers who may not have shared the ideals of the PDS.

**Coaching Team Influence**

The second area of influence commonly cited by the participants in this study was the formation and existence of the instructional coaching team. All of the participants applied for and then were appointed into the role at the same time. They encountered some of the same obstacles and struggles, and shared how they mutually supported one another in the transition and through challenges. The participants also shared how the team helped them grow professionally as each person brought different talents and strengths to the group. The association with the team assisted with the growth and learning of this group of novice instructional coaches.

- “If I was doing this on my own I don’t think I would be as successful.” (Carla)
- “I don’t lie awake at night worrying or feeling overly stressed about one certain thing or another because I work with our amazing team.” (Lisa)
“[On our team] we can encourage and support each other.” (Lisa)
“[On our team] we can encourage and support each other.”

“I knew the coaching team would be my support system, but I didn’t realize just how much I would depend on my fellow coaches.” (Beth)

The participants were acquainted with each other, but didn’t necessarily know each other. Relationship building was the first step in the establishment of this team that eventually provided support and learning for all. Beth recognized this connection by saying, “Just as we had to build relationships with teachers and administrators in our buildings, we had to build a relationship with each other.” Relationships were established by bringing the group together many months before their work would begin. Formal and informal meetings began in May of the spring prior to the school year of starting to work in the role. There was time for learning about the function of the role and to talk and learn more about each member of the team. Through this time together, trust was built. Cohesion among the group supported the transition for each member of the coaching team from a role of classroom teacher to the unfamiliar role of instructional coach. The participants were appreciative and realized the benefits.

“On a daily basis, I realize how fortunate I am to work with such a dynamic crew of people that supports me by answering questions, brainstorming solutions, and providing advice and encouragement as we learn together what it means to be an instructional coach.” (Beth)

“I keep myself positive and excited about what is to come and I know it is because of our team.” (Lisa)

“I just love our team and feel we are on to something very powerful.” (Lisa)

The participants in this study also believed that the team provided a means for professional growth. As classroom teachers, this group of novice instructional coaches had limited experience in multiple grade levels. They also had defined strengths in their confidence and abilities for certain content areas. While one of the novice coaches was
strong in understanding the teaching of math, another was strong in language arts. While one had a great amount of experience teaching kindergarten, another had many years teaching intermediate elementary grades. The diversity of the team in this regard became an identified strength for the participants.

- “If I was doing this on my own I don’t think I would be as successful right now, because I think that it also takes those other [coach’s] perspectives to help figure out the best way to work with someone.” (Carla)
- “[This other coach] has inspired me to embrace technology and pay attention to the details.” (Lisa)
- “[The coaches] are teaching me how to be a more intentional and confident leader.” (Lisa)
- “Every single time we leave each other I feel exhausted from thinking so much.” (Lisa)
- “We are learning so much about what it really means to be a teacher and an instructional coach. We learn from each other and push each other.” (Lisa)
- “We are learning more together than at any other point of our career.” (Lisa)
- “On a daily basis, I realize how fortunate I am to work with such a dynamic crew of people that supports me by answering questions, brainstorming solutions, and providing advice and encouragement as we learn together.” (Beth)

The participants all shared their belief in the value of the team. The participants in this study and other members of the instructional coaching team came together at the same time, but with contrasting strengths, skills, and interests. As relationships and trust grew the participants were able to take advantage of these differences. They could seek out each other for solutions to problems they were facing in their new and unfamiliar role. They could relate to each other as obstacles were faced. Their statements indicate that the team of coaches not only eases the transition from classroom teacher to instructional coach, but also provides a collegial and collaborative means for professional growth that continues in the position.

While the coaching team itself proved to be a powerful source of support during
the first year of the transition to coaching, the change in the supervisor of the coaching team at the beginning of year two also impacted the dynamics of the relationships among the coaches themselves. Carla reflected on how the change in supervisory leadership was impacting her relationship with her coaching colleagues. “We began to pull apart from each other. We began to lose sight of the long-term goals. We spent more time agonizing over what we [felt] we were allowed to do and not allowed to do.” Lisa also shared the effect on the team. “Our team chose to handle this change in different ways.” This created dissension in the team from Lisa’s viewpoint. “Most of us got closer and chose to focus on what we were doing with teachers and students to learn and make a difference.” Lisa saw the team unity crumbling because some coaches “needed to isolate themselves more.”

Beth, in contrast, dug deeper into her work in her assigned buildings. “No matter what was happening on the coaching team, that had to take a back seat to the work that I did in the buildings.” She spent less time with the coaching team. She “focused on the relationships at the building level instead of the relationships at the coaching team.” This probably enabled her to have greater success with the teachers she was working with, but damaged her relationship with the others on the team. “We were no longer a cohesive team. There was a lot of strife and unhappiness with the new leadership, so I tried to avoid being caught in that strife as much as possible.” She continued to prosper with her work with teachers, but she suffered personally. “It was very difficult not feeling connected to my coaching colleagues.”

When the coaches perceived that their coaching philosophies clashed with the philosophy of the new Curriculum Director, the work of these coaches and their inter-
relationships did suffer. All of the participants in this study shared how they were personally and professionally affected by the change.

**Influence of School Culture**

School Culture was possibly an unanticipated, but strong influence on the development and work as perceived by the instructional coaches in this study. Unanticipated, because the instructional coaches in the study had little experience with varying school cultures. Carla and Lisa had spent all of their classroom teaching experience in a single building. Beth, aside from her very first year and the year prior to assuming the instructional coaching role, had all years of classroom teaching experience in a single building. All of these school buildings were heavily influenced by and actively involved in the PDS partnership. Their instructional coaching assignments provided new experiences with challenges created by the actions and thoughts of teachers that seemed to be associated with the varying school cultures.

Having the opportunity to move into this role and see beyond the walls of the classroom had great impact on this group of teacher leaders. Each of participants were seeing teachers and instruction that previously was not visible or perhaps even considered when confined to their own classrooms.

- “Being in a lot of different classrooms has opened my eyes…it’s made me realize that there are amazing teachers out there and everyone is so different.” (Carla)
- “There are different groups of students and teachers and they all go about it in different ways.” (Carla)
- “I was surprised at the variance…there were the same concepts being taught but with very different approaches.” (Lisa)
- “My perspective is much broader now.” (Lisa)
• “I am becoming more aware of the varying perspectives and ideologies that exist.” (Lisa)
• “I’m getting a better sense of the culture of the schools.” (Beth)

This novice group of instructional coaches was also encountering some experiences that were new, and not necessarily pleasant. Not all teachers and teams of teachers were operating in ways familiar and comfortable to the study participants. The participants in this study as classroom teachers were curious as teachers. They desired to know more about their practice. They were highly engaged in inquiry.

• “Why is there no collaboration?” (Carla)
• “Are we all on the same page?” (Lisa)
• “I knew all teachers as colleagues, but this feels different.” (Lisa)
• “I couldn’t believe the difference in social dynamics between buildings in the district…I was used to an environment where there would always be a smile.” (Lisa)
• “I believe we are seeing the wide spectrum of attitudes toward self-reflection and desire to grow.” (Lisa)
• “Some schools have teachers who are much more comfortable at taking risks, while in others teachers often wait to be told what to do.” (Beth)

The novice instructional coaches had to learn the cultures of the schools in order to relate to the respective staffs of teachers. As instructional coaches they were offering embedded professional development. Culture has widespread influence on teachers including professional development. Beth said, “Culture influences professional development.”

• “When learning is the focus, teachers and school leaders seem to be more comfortable trying new things…in this kind of culture people are invested in the time and effort that goes into professional development.” (Beth)

Beth possibly came to the best realization of how to succeed in varying cultures when she shared “I felt more effective and comfortable working with teachers not because the culture had changed, but because I had. I knew the people better.” This
identifies again the importance of building relationships and in the case of instructional coaching, *knowing your audience*. Beth also identified that she needed to become part of the culture of the building in order to have success.

- “Is it better to adapt to the culture as opposed to trying to change the culture? I think the answer to that last question is YES.” (Beth)
- “What helps me is having teachers seeing me working with their colleagues and having a presence in the buildings.” (Beth)

All of the participants begin to take notice of how building leadership impacts the culture of the buildings. Beth identified this by observing one building leader as being “controlling.” In her words another building leader promotes a “one for all and all for one” atmosphere. These actions and leadership styles have strong influence on the building cultures and in the manner in which the coaches must operate to be successful. Lisa observed this same phenomenon in the contrast of staff meetings at her respective buildings. In one building she shared that the staff buildings “were all about data.” In another she contrasts this by observing a “leader who is learning right along with the teachers.”

All of the instructional coaches learned about the cultures and developed ways to be successful, but Beth sums up the feelings shared by all of the participants when she shared, “It is much easier to operate in one setting over another.” Leadership influenced culture and culture influenced the ability of the instructional coaches to work with teachers. Ultimately, they all wanted to be successful within their assigned buildings and culture played a strong role in that feeling of being able to make a difference in the learning of students. Beth understood the chain that started with leadership. “School leaders set the tone for the culture of the school. Leaders who have a spirit of
collaboration free teachers and instructional coaches to think deeply and work together to improve student learning."

**Building Principal and Administrative Leadership Influence**

The building principal plays key roles in nearly every aspect of the function and culture of a school building. His or her opinions and decisions can have far reaching results. This was no different for the participants in this study as they ventured into unknown territory as instructional coaches. Beth identified the key function of the building leader. “[The principal] emerges as an advocate, developer, and linking pin in relationship to the teacher’s efforts to improve the process of teaching and learning.” Ultimately, as an instructional coach, improvement of teaching and learning was the desired result. The principal was a key cog identified by Beth and the other participants.

As classroom teachers they were supervised and evaluated by a principal. They had their teaching colleagues as a means of support and at times commiseration. Now, they were no longer viewed as being on equal footing with their former teaching colleagues. It would be imperative for success that they build a relationship with the principal. In order for change or improvement to occur with teachers in the classroom they needed the cooperation of this key individual because as Beth shared, “Working and meeting with principals has been the most challenging part of the job.”

Initially, the relationship building process with the principal was difficult. The novice coaches were in unfamiliar territory. They had to learn how to communicate with this building leader. They had to learn the priorities and beliefs of this person.
All of the participants were assigned in their new roles to cooperate with principals that they may have been acquainted, but with whom they had no previous professional working relationship. Carla perhaps had the greatest challenge in this regard. She was assigned to two relatively unfamiliar buildings, which included the two principals. Both of these principals were still in the process of growing in their positions as well. One had been in the position for a few years after being reassigned within the district from a previous position at the high school. The other principal was entirely new to the district, recently being hired from a high school position in another district.

Lisa’s assignment also included a principal new to the role. The advantage that she had was that this principal was recently hired after several years working directly in the Professional Development School at the university. This background provided beliefs and practices that matched those of Lisa. This aided her transition and growth into the new designated role of instructional coach. Lisa’s other building was led by a principal with many years experience in the leadership role and at that particular building.

Beth’s assignment was also mixed. She was working with a principal who had just been appointed to the building leadership role after several years as an assistant principal in one of the middle schools in the district. The other school was led by a veteran principal of the district and of that building. The challenges of the three novice instructional coaches not only included building relationships with these individuals, but also being someone to facilitate learning in an elementary environment with those principals who were new to their roles either as school leaders, or as leaders in the assigned building, or both.

Carla encapsulated the feelings of the novice coaches moving into newly
designated roles with the expectation to coach teachers they may or may not know and cooperate with principals who were also unknown. “I think it’s been a challenge having buildings that I don’t know anyone in. So like, who to trust and how do you build that trust has been hard.” This speaks to the participants’ position in between classroom teacher and building leader/evaluator. Trust was necessary with teachers and with the principals in order for success as a coach to be attained. All participants shared their challenges in their work with principals. Beth pointedly said, “Working and meeting with principals been the most challenging part of the job.” She succinctly shared the feelings that all participants were feeling. In spite of these challenges all noted that there was a route out of this difficulty. These novice coaches discovered that “keeping an open and honest line of communication with teachers and the principal was the key to working through challenges.”

Communication was a theme shared by all participants. They reflected on how this practice was key if they were to develop a working relationship with the principal that would lead to success in their position as an instructional coach. This practice of communication, as discovered by the participants, often had to be initiated by them. Once this was done and communication patterns were established, growth in the relationship and progress in the work with teachers ensued.

- “My relationship with [this principal] continues to grow. Our weekly meetings are short and sweet but her support is excellent.” (Carla)
- “I feel I need to somehow follow-up with the principal, making sure we are both on the same page, talk about what seems to be similar views.” (Lisa)

Another theme that emerged from the data is that the instructional coaches discovered large benefits when they worked with the principal. This work needed to be
visible to the teaching staff. This openness allowed the teaching staff to see that the principal and the instructional coach were on the same page. This provided credence to the work of the coach in the mind of the coach. Teachers would accept that the support and guidance from the coach had the blessing and/or approval of the principal.

This communication with the principal also led to learning. The coach felt like she was learning from the process of communication and collaboration and ultimately it could be ascertained that the principal learned as well.

- “[One] thing that has been helpful is collaborating together…the more [she] is part of the activities that are going on, the more supportive she has been.” (Carla)
- “[We] need to be on the same page so that teachers can feel the dedication and cohesion from the two of us.” (Carla)
- “We may be more on the same page than I thought.” (Beth)
- “We have both learned so much from working and presenting together.” (Carla)

All principals are different and Beth discovered how her patience would eventually pay off for herself and her teachers in her work with one of her building’s principals. Beth initially felt very challenged in this school. Beth and the teachers were often ready for change that the principal was not ready to endorse. At first, this presented frustration and challenge for Beth. Eventually, she saw how her behavior, thoughts, and actions were no different than those demonstrated by the principal. Instead of resisting or giving-up, Beth realized that she needed patience. “I knew that the teachers were often wondering what [the principal] would think about new things they were trying, so I was respectful of that. I didn’t say anything negative about [the principal]…we just took things a little slower.” Beth realized that practices might have been contrasting between her two principals, but the goals were the same. Beth had to learn to navigate the contrasting cultures of the two buildings, which were heavily influenced by the
leadership styles of the principals.

- “We both want the same things…more motivation, choice, and purposeful work.” (Beth)
- “I knew that the teachers were often wondering what [the principal] would think about new things they were trying, so I was respectful of that.” (Beth)

In order to be a successful coach with the teachers in this building, Beth had to become a collaborative partner with the principal. She had to realize that the goals were the same, and perhaps even the methods. What differed was timing. Beth couldn’t force change to happen. She had to allow change to first be understood and accepted.

- “I remember getting to a point where I felt like [the principal] was finally beginning to listen more. That became evident when questions were being asked of the teachers instead of just telling.” (Beth)
- “I realized that I was a bit guilty of what I was accusing her of doing. I was guilty of wanting her to bend to my way of thinking, much the same way she seemed to be wanting others to bend to her way of thinking.” (Beth)
- “I wanted her to trust and give up control.” (Beth)
- “I realize now that she wasn’t ready to do that without time to process what the changes would look and feel like.” (Beth)

The data shared by the participants presents strong evidence of the importance the principal plays in the potential success of the instructional coach. A working relationship is necessary, but can be problematic to attain. New instructional coaches should take the lead in creating a relationship that allows teachers to see the coach and the principal sharing beliefs.

A change in the administrative leadership of the participants caused a hiccups in the journey of development for the participants moving from their classroom teacher roles to that of district teacher leaders as instructional coaches. At the close of the first year, the instructional coaches were beginning to settle into the role. They had the PDS
experience as a foundation. They had become very well acquainted as a team. They knew each other’s strengths and weaknesses. They had begun to navigate the differing school cultures and learn the leadership styles of the building principals. Without preparation, their direct supervisor was leaving and ultimately a new one would be appointed. The participants felt that momentum gained was lost.

- “We went into the second year with some expectations. We were ready to hit the ground running…our hope was that we would really be able to move. Instead we stopped.” (Carla)

Leaders affect culture and this situation proved to be no different in the perception of the participants. Beliefs and practices that were established and in place were now questioned or changed. Leadership priorities and styles changed. This impacted this group of instructional coaches greatly. For some it was a cause to rally together. For others it was cause to rely and work less with the team of coaches.
Chapter 6  Conclusion

Teacher expertise is at the foundation of increasing teacher quality and advancements in teaching and learning. This expertise becomes more widely available when accomplished teachers model effective instructional practices, encourage sharing of best practices, mentor new teachers, and collaborate with teaching colleagues (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, pp. 258-259).


This multiple case study examined the transition of three classroom teachers from being classroom teachers to appointed teacher leaders in the role of instructional coaches. Throughout the initial year of this new position participants kept a log in which they shared feelings, perceptions, and thoughts about their new work as teacher leaders as instructional coaches. The participants were also interviewed several times during this initial year. Several follow-up interviews occurred in their second and third years in the position after a change in administrative leadership of the coaches had occurred. Their own words and dialogue highlighted the obstacles, struggles, and successes that each experienced.

The study examined how the participants interacted within the context of working with new colleagues and new principals and how the culture of the school buildings
affected their transition into the new position. The study also examined how this newly appointed group of teacher leaders at first relied heavily on each other for support and then due to the circumstances of leadership change, in some instances began to pull away from each other. In spite of their individual excellence as classroom teachers, the move beyond the classroom into this appointed teacher leader position was challenging and difficult.

**Summary of the Findings**

The primary research question for this study was: **How do individuals experience the transition both cognitively and emotionally from functioning as a classroom teacher leader to functioning in the designated teacher leader role of instructional coach?**

Many things including a change in their professional practice, different cultures in which to work, and contrasting leadership styles of principals and supervisors affected this group of participants. What became clear throughout the dialogue with each of the participants is the interconnectedness of these different factors identified by York-Barr & Duke (2004). What currently exists is a body of research that compartmentalizes each of these factors (Neumerski, 2013). “By compartmentalizing our research by type of leader, we are not mirroring the ways in which school leadership is organized or how it plays out on a daily basis” (Neumerski, 2013, p.312). Though this is the structure of this study, this shortcoming will be addressed in a subsequent section recommending future research.
Each participant also answered the sub-questions. As the coach perceives it, how does the leadership and principalship of the building affect this transition? As the coach perceives it, how does the school culture affect the transition? These teacher leaders appointed as instructional coaches did not work in vacuums. Throughout their early transition into the designated teacher leader role they interacted with the environment, or the culture of the buildings. They interacted with the building principals and they interacted with and gained support from each other. This mutual support played a strong role when the participants were forced to endure a transition in their immediate supervisor. The data indicated that the participants either became more united and dependent or more separated and operating independently as the change in their supervisory leadership played out. Several of participants seemed to show regression in relation to the teacher career cycle. Some of the growth of the first year had to be relived again as a new direct supervisor came with a new style of leading. These participants pulled together and sought the support of the team. One participant was not as greatly affected by the change. She was able to adjust to the change with greater ease. The participant reaction in this study demonstrated that leadership change on any level has an impact upon the work of teacher leaders.

Claim 1 - Classroom teachers moving into a designated teacher leader role

experienced many feelings and thoughts that were similar to those they had experienced as novice teachers, including an initially strong focus on self-concerns.

Emotionally, all of the participants experienced similar feelings. The feelings mentioned by all participants were those of vulnerability, uncertainty, and discomfort.
Confidence had to be rebuilt for all of the novice instructional coaches. The move out of the classroom created uncertainty. As classroom teachers they were confident and effective. In the new position, assessing their effectiveness often required relying on the work of others. Classroom teachers had to accept their advice and make instructional changes in order for the instructional coaches to perceive their work as successful. Feelings of vulnerability emerged as more eyes were upon them. In the position of teacher leader as instructional coach, the participants had the feelings of being watched by multiple principals, the curriculum director who served as their supervisor, and teachers who represented those who were accepting and enthusiastic as well as those who were cautious and perhaps even skeptical. The public nature of their work as seen by other adults was in sharp contrast to their work as classroom teachers where students were the public audience.

Confidence waned. This dip in self-confidence was due not only to the emotional upheaval that the new teacher leaders were experiencing, but also due to the fact that familiar support structures had been replaced by contexts that were not as supportive, at least not initially. Whereas a teacher who has played the role of teacher leader in the classroom may well be surrounded by a supportive team (that she may have had a hand in developing), a teacher thrust into the larger role of instructional coach may well encounter teachers and teams who may not share the same thinking and philosophies of teaching and learning.

In parallel to the literature on novice teacher development, the feelings of uncertainty, vulnerability and dissonance resulted in a fairly strong focus on self-concerns during the initial entry into the coaching role. Eventually the coaches began to move from
self-concerns to task and even to impact concerns. However, the evidence of the study demonstrated that these classroom teachers, appointed to teacher leadership roles progressed from self to impact concerns at different rates and that a change in the supervisor of the coaches also impacted the focus of their concerns.

The personal and organizational components of the Teacher Career Cycle (Fessler & Christensen, 1992) were also substantiated in this study. The participants regressed initially as they began in the new role of instructional coach and then began to move forward again as relationships were established and confidence again began to return.

Beth’s transition is the best example of a classroom teacher making a quicker move toward focus impact. Like the others she initially found herself feeling vulnerable and without confidence. She was trying to learn the culture of two separate schools. She was trying to build relationships with two different principals as well as all of the teachers in those schools. At first she was looking at others for the reasons for not moving forward and having success. She reflected on how the actions and decisions of the principal were not aligning to her beliefs.

Then a turning point occurred promoted in large measure by her skill at self-reflection. Beth saw that her thoughts and actions were no different than the principal and some teachers. She shared that she was the one who needed to change, and not to hold out for the expectation that the principal or teachers would change. By looking inward Beth was able to make progress outwardly. Her relationship with the principal began to blossom. With that partnership she began to build more productive relationships with the teachers as well.

Beth also more quickly navigated the leadership change. She had experiences
that other participants did not. She held previous roles in the district that assisted her in
the transition. These roles included building secretary, PDS intern and classroom
teacher. In addition, she functioned in roles in multiple buildings in the years leading up
to this study. All of this provided her with experiences that helped her navigate cultures
and build relationships.

She was possibly more effective in her coaching role following the leadership
change because she kept her focus on what she was doing and less on the actions of
others. She knew her role and accepted that the leadership style was different. This
indicates that guidance may need to be provided in order to have newly appointed
instructional coaches move from a focus on self to a focus on others. The best advice
may be to emphasize reflection on actions of self rather than reflection on action of
others.

Claim 2 – Navigating school cultures and building productive relationships with
principals and other supervisors who had different leadership styles were
some of the most challenging aspects for the participants in learning a new
professional position.

School contexts provided a strong influence upon classroom teachers as they
moved into designated teacher leadership positions outside of the classroom. The data
collected during the study suggested that learning the day-to-day coaching tasks of the
new position were secondary to navigating the new cultures and leadership styles. It was
these challenges that created the most cognitive and emotional dissonance. The initial
frustrations and then the subsequent successes often related to breakthroughs with the
school culture or with the building leadership.
The participants consistently commented upon their work with the building principals. They were cognizant of the need for this collaborative partnership, but in the new position, struggled to attain it. The participants realized that in most cases they would need to take the lead in the establishment of this working relationship. Each of the participants discovered that it was up to them to be the initiator of the relationship with the principal. Each participant eventually followed through on this. Without this movement toward positive relationships, it could be assumed that frustration would have continued to be reported by the novice instructional coaches. This study affirms the importance of the relationship with the principal, but adds that it may need to be fostered by the teacher leader or instructional coach as opposed to waiting for the principal to take the lead.

The words of this group of instructional coaches affirm that not only is the principal relationship critical, but imperative in advancing the coach’s work with classroom teachers. All participants shared how progress or work with teachers took a dramatic and positive turn when teachers perceived or observed that the instructional coach and principal are operating on the same plane.

Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) identified several factors that influenced the relationship between the principal and instructional coach. These factors were present within the context of this multiple case study. The first factor is that the principal and the teacher leader acknowledge that new ground is being built. There are uncertainties and ambiguities. The instructional coaches in this study shared this from the start of their new roles. They discovered that each principal operated in a different fashion. They learned that each principal had contrasting thoughts on how this new role
should be utilized. A significant impact upon the participants as individuals and as a team came about with a leadership change in the curriculum director role, their direct supervisor. With this change they experienced again, a contrast in leadership styles.

The second factor identified by Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992), the possibility that the principal and the instructional coach have different interests and prerogatives, also loomed very large, particularly with Beth. Beth struggled to try to get teachers to implement a new instructional practice within reader’s workshop that allowed more student choice. The principal did not initially endorse this practice. Lisa also found a clash with a principal in delivery style. Lisa was groomed to question and guide as a means of allowing teachers to forge new paths. Lisa discovered one of her principals operated with a style to cite data and provide directives.

A third factor is the way that principals may intend to use individuals in teacher leadership roles. This again impacted Beth and Lisa. They were very cognizant of not wanting to be perceived as individuals who are placed in a role to “fix” teachers. This was not their intent in the instructional coaching role, but did not necessarily conform to the role that the principals had envisioned for the coaches.

Each of the appointed teacher leaders in this study shared an intention of impacting instruction in the classroom. Effective partnering with the principal was necessary for this to occur. This appeared to be in line with the concept of parallel leadership (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002). In a parallel leadership alignment the teacher leaders, and in this case the instructional coaches, engage in activities to promote instructional improvement while the principal engages in strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is the bigger picture or roadmap. The principal is
working in the large context identifying the goal while typically the instructional coach is more tactical, providing the tools and methods to reach the goal. For this group of instructional coaches it appeared that most principals did not immediately remove themselves from leading in the instructional realm. This was most specific to Beth’s work, but to the satisfaction of her and the other instructional coaches the principals eventually allowed work to occur within that realm that was acceptable to both the coach and the principal. The principals stepped back and allowed the instructional coaches to work with teachers autonomously. The principals openly endorsed the work of the instructional coaches. This has been reported to be difficult for principals (Crowther et al., 2002). Beth specifically commented on the process that transpired. The principals needed time to understand and then allow her as the instructional coach to facilitate change.

“School culture is widely recognized as a dominant influence on the success of improvement initiatives in schools” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 269). Previous studies by Deal & Peterson (1998), Griffin (1995), and Talbert and McLaughlin (1994) substantiate this finding. Improvement is the final step and ultimate goal in any change initiative tried in schools. School culture was found to be something that impacted the participants in the study. It was found that the culture could be either a conduit toward gaining success in the role or be a barrier that had to be learned and understood in order to proceed in the act of coaching.

Carla was basically an unknown individual in the schools where she was assigned. Teachers had no knowledge of her work or her excellence as a classroom teacher. She did not have a reputation of expertise on which to build with the staff
members of these schools. Smylie (1992) supplied a possible reason for Carla’s initial difficulties. His study found that teachers could have collegial relationships among themselves, but not necessarily with others, in this case an appointed teacher leader. Smylie (1992) found that collegiality could be present as long as teachers saw each other as equals. Carla was appointed to a role that would violate this premise. It is possible that the teachers did not see Carla as an equal. She was unknown to them and someone appointed into a leadership role without their approval.

To a greater degree than any of the other participants, Carla reported teacher negativity. Her buildings had teachers with many years of experience and/or teachers with great reluctance to take risks of changing instructional practices. Duke (1994) coined this as the “crab bucket culture.” This is a school culture with teachers that drag each other down instead of supporting and inspiring each other. Carla struggled greatly with teachers who resisted and continually questioned the practices that Carla was sharing, such as giving students greater choice.

Lisa had a completely opposite challenge in regard to her assignment. In one building she previously served as a classroom teacher. She was very well known and respected by the teachers in this building. A challenge for Lisa in this building culture was in defining her new role. Previous studies by Little (1998) and Moller & Katzenmeyer (1996) identify egalitarianism as an obstacle for the work of teacher leaders. Egalitarianism “fosters the view that teachers who step up to leadership roles are stepping out of line” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p.272). Lisa struggled with finding her way in the teacher leader role with individuals who were previously her equals as classroom teachers. It was difficult for her to recreate collaborative relationships in this
new structure that would be effective.

The Professional Development School partnership was a special circumstance that was a real advantage for this group of novice instructional coaches. This allowed Lisa and the others to more easily negotiate through the possible culture of egalitarianism. For many years the teachers within this district had been accustomed to “others from their ranks” taking on positions outside of the classroom and within the function of the PDS. For at least a decade prior to this group assuming teacher leader roles as instructional coaches, there was a practice of having classroom teachers as leaders within the PDS. These teacher leaders were known as PDAs (Professional Development Associates). They acted as supervisors for the student teaching interns from the university and usually assisted with the instruction of the methods courses for this group of pre-service teachers. After a few years in this role these teachers would return to the classroom and be replaced by others taking on the PDA role. Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) and Little (1988) shared that this can provide cultural and practical shifts in the thinking among teachers that breaks down an atmosphere of egalitarianism. In school cultures, such as those with PDS partnerships, “there is a school-wide focus on learning, an expectation for participation, and a view that teacher leaders are positive examples for the teaching profession” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 272). The PDS partnership certainly enabled this school district to experience less of this phenomenon of egalitarianism. The participants also commented on how each gained knowledge and skills about teacher leadership by working within the PDS partnership. This experience greatly aided the transition from classroom teacher to district teacher leader.
Claim Three – These teachers who move into positions outside of the familiarity of the classroom had their personal assumptions and beliefs about teachers challenged as they carried out the designated teacher leadership role of instructional coach.

Each of the participants in this study moved from familiar environments. All had experienced many years of success as classroom teachers. They had built confidence in their instructional abilities. They had established strong relationships with colleagues. The years of development in their environments had established firm notions and beliefs that were evident in their practice. The participants all had assumptions that all teachers would be similar to them and their former colleagues in these beliefs. It was a shock and then a challenge to this group of novice instructional coaches that some teachers did not share the same beliefs.

The Professional Development School was a strong influence for each of the participants. This relationship greatly impacted practice. The participants developed strong practice and abilities to be reflective and inquiry oriented. These were tenets strongly espoused by the Professional Development School relationship. The participants embedded these dispositions, skills, and practices into their daily work of planning, instruction, and collaboration. This group of novice instructional coaches all noted the challenge of trying to work with other teachers who didn’t share these same beliefs. Learning how to work with others who don’t share similar beliefs of practice were obstacles that had to be faced, accepted, and overcome. The participants in the study eventually reached a state of accepting this, but were continuing to try to find ways to overcome the difference.
All of the participants’ shared beliefs about teachers lead to a philosophy of instructional coaching that placed them more predominantly toward indirect coaching as a primary means of practice. The continuum would place indirect coaching on one end and direct coaching on the other. The participants were presented with differing assumptions about teaching and differing views on how coaching should be enacted by the building principals. The study showed that the participants encountered principals that functioned on both ends of the continuum. This created another challenge to be negotiated.

The participants viewed themselves and fellow teachers as subjects of change. Through the practices of collaboration, self-reflection, and inquiry change in the instructional practices of teaching would occur. The participants showed that they wished to use the strategies of indirect coaching in order to influence this change. They wanted to question and challenge the work of teachers to a point of creating personal dissonance in the work of those being changed. This in turn would create personal choice for teachers to change and possibly improve practice.

In contrast, some principals believed and wanted the coaching practice to be more on the direct coaching end of the continuum. These principals desired for the instructional coaches to judge the practice of teachers and then provide direct guidance or suggestions on changes to be enacted. This placed teachers in contrast as objects of change. Principals with these beliefs desired for the instructional coaches to “fix” the practice of teachers.

The beliefs of fellow teachers and of principals were new phenomenon for the novice instructional coaches. These beliefs did not match the professional beliefs of the
participants. Through years of practice and influence from other sources such as the Professional Development School, foundations of beliefs were established within this group moving from the classroom to the role of instructional coach that were challenged by both the contexts within which they worked and by some teachers with whom they worked.

**Connections to Previous Literature on Instructional Coaching**

This study built on the prior literature in the area of instructional coaching and teacher leadership with a focus on the important factors in transitioning into the coaching role from the role of classroom teacher. As could be expected, this study affirmed some of the ideas in the literature but also added some new insights.

**Coach Learning**

One of the claims in the literature that was affirmed by this study was the amount of learning experienced by the coaches, as they perceived it, as they transitioned into the new role. This group of novice instructional coaches had established a level of expertise as classroom teachers and had been placed in a position to model, share, and encourage with the purpose of improving instruction with others. York-Barr & Duke (2004) make the claim that moving proficient teachers, such as those in this study, to positions of leadership outside of the classroom has inherent benefits. These benefits include the opportunities to engage in collaboration with colleagues and administrators in ways that
might not be possible in the classroom setting. Teacher leaders appointed to leadership positions outside of the classroom also learn more about the school and the school district. Their lens of observation is broadened as they view the “big picture” of the educational organization.

“One of the clearest effects of teacher leadership is growth and learning among the teacher leaders themselves” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 259). A major theme discovered among the participants was not only their reliance on the coaching team, but also the increased and significant learning that each of the instructional coaches shared in the interviews or in their logs. Carla shared this by saying, “I think it’s been good for me in a lot ways because it’s also made me think about who I am, and what I believe.” Lisa in a powerful statement summarized her feelings of personal growth. “We are learning so much about what it really means to be a teacher and an instructional coach. We are learning more together than at any other points of our career.”

**Readiness for Coaching**

The participants in this case study appeared to be both similar and different from what the literature suggests about the personal factors that tend to make teachers most likely to find the instructional coaching role attractive. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) identify several factors that when present, increase the likelihood of success for a teacher leader. These factors are both professional and personal and include excellent skills as a teacher, a well developed philosophy of education, being in a stage of the career when giving to others is possible, having an interest in adult learning, and having a personal life
that allows for the time and energy necessary for this position of leadership. “Many of these readiness factors imply that teacher leadership is best suited for teachers in midcareer and midlife” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 267). This wasn’t the case with two of the three participants in this study. Though all were in the early-middle years of experience in their teaching careers, Carla had two young children and Lisa was new to parenthood.

These personal factors, on the surface, would appear to be obstacles for Carla and Lisa. This wasn’t the case. It was clear for both of these teacher leaders that the demands of family did not greatly impede their transition into the role nor their ultimate effectiveness as instructional coaches. Both Carla and Lisa demonstrated strong interest in learning. They were highly motivated to learn more about teaching and equally motivated to assist others in learning about teaching. Their experiences within the Professional Development School certainly influenced them in this regard. The building cultures in which they transitioned from also allowed them to have certain readiness factors in place for teacher leadership roles. These building cultures were collaborative and featured building leadership that encouraged and supported risk-taking and professional growth.

**Conditions Influencing Teacher Leadership Success**

York-Barr & Duke (2004) presented a conceptual framework based on previous studies and findings regarding teacher leadership. The framework depicts the ultimate goal of coaching as impacting student learning, but these researchers share what the
literature suggests as the building blocks that are necessary to allow this impact to occur. According to this framework certain conditions are likely to exert a significant impact on the degree of success which coaches experience. These conditions include the existence of a supportive culture and a supportive principal and colleagues. “Conditions known to support the work of teacher leaders include the active support of their principals and colleagues” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 290).

Schools must identify supports that can advance the leadership work of teachers” (York-Barr & Duke, p. 291). The evidence from this multiple case study largely supported the conditions found within the York-Barr and Duke framework. The evidence clearly demonstrated that the culture of the school either helped or hindered the work of the instructional coach.

All of the participants in this study cited the importance of building relationships as they started in the newly appointed role. At times there may have been obstacles or barriers to effective collaboration, but it was a practice held in high regard.

All participants shared their goal and desire to build relationships with teachers in their assigned buildings. The difficulty of reaching this goal differed by context of the building assignment. Carla and Beth had to build relationships with teachers who were largely unknown, while Lisa had to recreate relationships with colleagues that she had worked with for many years in her classroom teacher role. The participants knew that “the success of teacher leadership depends largely on the cooperation and interaction between teacher leaders and their colleagues” (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 229).

The new instructional coaches in this study faced an even more daunting relationship building task than is typical for most new coaches. The previous literature
implies that instructional coaches or teacher leaders have roles in a single building and work with a single principal and a single teaching staff. This wasn’t the case with this group of teacher leaders. The greater challenge for the teacher leaders in this study was that each had to negotiate the relationship building with not just one principal, but with two. The multiple building assignments created this challenge. It also forced the participants to learn and then negotiate two building cultures. All of the participants in the study observed differing school cultures. This was a totally new experience for Carla and Lisa as their entire careers were in one school. They had experienced one school culture and were surprised by the variability from one school to another.

**Coach Development**

One of the interesting findings of this study is the notion that the development into the role of designated teacher role mirrors in many ways the development into the role of teacher. These coaches experienced similar emotions to those of new teachers including vulnerability, uneasiness, and a lack of confidence. They also found themselves, as do new teachers, recognizing that they need to develop new skills and competencies, e.g. finding ways to motivate experienced teachers who were resistant to change. Finally, they also placed a stronger focus on self-concerns during the initial transition into the role, moving toward impact concerns later in the transition and at different rates. This concept of the developmental stages of the transition into designated leadership roles deserves further inquiry and exploration.
Suggestions for Future Research

Teacher leadership has an important role to play in our schools if instruction is to improve. Improving teaching is not just a responsibility for principals and other administrators, but also rests with classroom teachers and other formal and informal teacher leaders (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). York-Barr and Duke (2004) with their conceptual framework help us distinguish some of the many factors necessary for teacher leaders to work toward greater student achievement. A missing piece in the research seems to be in regard to the behaviors enacted by teacher leaders in their daily practice (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003). This study begins the examination of the actions and thoughts of the designated teacher leaders and provides evidence that further study is needed concerning the development of designated teacher leaders. In addition to the suggestion above concerning future inquiry into the developmental stages of entering into designated teacher leadership roles, there are other areas worthy of future research.

Many in the profession still harbor the egalitarian ideals that permeate the history of teaching as a profession. These ideals often discourage teachers from taking on leadership roles and then once a teacher rises or is appointed into such a role, a culture often exists that limits the potential for impact by the teacher leader (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Not all contexts have the luxury of the presence of a Professional Development School partnership, which in this context set the foundation to offered an alternative to the barriers of egalitarianism. There often exists a gap between the expectations for teacher leaders such as instructional coaches and the capacity of school cultures to enable these individuals to grow to meet the challenge. Future studies should
examine the context and culture of schools that facilitate the transition into designated teacher leader roles. What are the characteristics of school cultures that create the climate for effective instructional coaching by teacher leaders?

This study focused upon the novice instructional coaches moving into the newly appointed teacher leadership roles, and indicated that the principals faced significant tasks in defining their roles as building leaders. How can principals be supported to improve their work as instructional leaders by collaborating with appointed teacher leaders? What skills in the principalship could be enhanced to maximize the work of the teacher leader toward increased student achievement? Neumerski (2012) makes a point about the connectedness of the principalship and teacher leaders in the research. I believe that this study confirms that “we [need to] rethink our approach to instructional leadership research, developing an integrated, cohesive literature base” (Neumerski, 2012, p. 335). Furthermore, this study illustrated some of the struggles that can occur when leadership changes. All of participants shared the unforeseen obstacles that appeared when their direct supervisor, the curriculum director changed. This change forced this group of instructional coaches to again build relationships and navigate the beliefs of a new leader. All leaders, including principals, teacher leaders, and instructional coaches should be examined simultaneously as to how they allow for the process of coaching to occur and be successful. This future research could continue to examine the development of classroom teachers appointed to teacher leader roles, but the study could include principals and other teachers within the same study. This would enable a researcher to learn of the challenges and development of all of these stakeholders within a school and/or school district. This type of future study could focus
more upon the interactions among the leaders of the school.

To really understand the effective behaviors and characteristics of newly appointed teacher leaders into roles such as instructional coaches, the research will need to broaden as “we know almost nothing about how instructional leadership varies within the different instructional systems throughout the United States” (Neumerski, 2012, p. 336). This study was narrow in its focus with a small number of participants in similar contexts. To generalize across a wider range of contexts, we will need to examine in research larger numbers of teacher leaders moving into other roles in many varying contexts, such as urban schools and in other geographical locations. It will be necessary to examine the process in middle and secondary levels as well.

**Implications**

A large body of research related to instructional leadership centers upon the actions of the principal (Hallinger, 2005). Over time it is becoming clear that it is difficult if not impossible for the burden of instructional leadership to land upon a single individual, with this individual usually being the principal. It is not only impractical, but ineffective (Fullan, 2014). Others need to carry this responsibility, and others need to be prepared to effectively lead if instruction is to have the greatest impact upon learning.

It is imperative that schools and school districts examine their practice of preparing teachers for future leadership positions. Once teachers are groomed and either rise into or are appointed into a leadership position of influence it is also important for schools and school districts to provide mechanisms for relationships among the leaders to
grow. This study shows the importance of the teacher leader/building leader relationship. It is critical that these individual instructional leaders work in conjunction with each other. “If principals expect to reap the full benefits of having teacher leaders in coaching positions, they should create working conditions that encourage positive relationships, reduce risks, and provide leadership development” (Pankake, 2007, p.32). This cannot be expected to naturally occur. This study demonstrated that the teacher leader took the initiative to enable this relationship. Information from this study shows school leaders that it can be their responsibility as well. Principals should actively negotiate the relationship by scheduling frequent but brief meetings and being an accessible resource for novice teacher leaders in coaching positions (Pankake, 2007).

Schools and school districts would do well to prepare their cultures for effective teacher leadership by working to enhance how classroom teachers are used as leaders. Positions or responsibilities outside of the classroom provide opportunities for future leaders to grow and to break traditions of egalitarianism. The Professional Development School in the context of this study did just that. Teachers were given responsibilities and roles that removed them from traditional classroom teacher leader responsibility and roles. Teachers were mentoring and supervising novice teachers. Long-term partnerships such as this open the doors for teacher leaders to emerge and gain experience in a vast variety of different roles.

Another valuable action to be undertaken by school leaders with novice teacher leaders is one of preparation. Regardless of the proficiency of the teacher in the classroom, this study shows that novice teacher leaders appointed into roles beyond the classroom experience feelings similar to those felt by novice, first year teachers. The
teachers in this study all shared how their confidence was shaken in the new role. District and building leaders should prepare novice teacher leaders for this. Assure these proficient teachers moving into unfamiliar roles that this is normal. Experiences in the new role could even be scaffolded to allow novice teacher leaders to grow into the new role. The participants in this study shared how they initially struggled with students of different grade levels, but also with adults. Pankake (2007) shares that principals and district leaders should assist new instructional coaches as they “learn to work with diverse adult perspectives, to make public presentations, and to navigate relationships with reticent teachers” (p. 36). All of the participants in this study had to grow in these areas. Building leaders would do well to anticipate this need with novice teacher leaders.

Some ways of accomplishing this could be by providing opportunities for mentoring and leading professional development. By giving promising teacher leaders opportunities to coach while still active as classroom teachers will assist the process of growth for teachers moving into roles such as being an instructional coach.

Another means of assisting with growth into the role is through mentoring of new teacher leaders such as instructional coaches. Novice teachers are customarily assigned a mentor. Novice principals often receive a mentor. The same should hold true for teacher leaders moving into roles outside of the classroom. This mentor could be an existing teacher leader acting in the same role, or if that is not possible, perhaps a principal who understands the role.

This study highlights the actions for school districts to take that allow for teacher leaders to thrive in an instructional coaching role. The study demonstrates that the emotions felt by the novice coaches are reflected in the performance and results in the
coaching role. Relationships form the foundation of the work. Mechanisms and structures being in place to build relationships among teacher leaders, classroom teachers, and building principals are paramount to the success of an instructional coaching initiative.

Building and district leaders may need guidance in how to work effectively with partners assuming a role as an instructional leader such as an instructional coach. Often principals are trained to supervise teachers, but not necessarily teacher leaders. This proactive approach could provide great assistance to the transition for the novice instructional coach as well as possibly accelerating the growth of student achievement because the partnerships of the leaders reach a level of effectiveness more quickly.

School cultures also play a significant role in the formation and success of teacher leaders and coaching initiatives. Actions should be taken to enable a school culture to be accepting of coaching. One way to accomplish this is to open the classroom doors to partnerships that can grow leaders and support student growth. The PDS partnership illustrated in this study is but one example.

Finally, don’t assume that outstanding classroom teachers can be outstanding teacher leaders or instructional coaches. Guidance in the form of mentoring or a support team is necessary to withstand the feelings of uncertainty in the new role. These structures will allow novice teacher leaders or instructional coaches to grow into and then thrive in the role to support teachers and increase student achievement.
Appendix A  Interview Protocols

Interview 1 – Spring 2013

1. What is an instructional coach?

2. How have you changed as an educator from where you were a year ago as a classroom teacher?

3. What are your personal and professional successes of this year?

4. What have you learned about the key aspects of coaching and how did you learn them?

5. What are your greatest challenges as you reflect on the year and look ahead to next year?

6. Draw a description of your year showing the peaks and valleys.

Interview 2 – Spring 2014

1. What is an instructional coach?

2. How have you changed as an educator from where you were two years ago as a classroom teacher?

3. What are your personal and professional successes of this year?
4. What have you learned about the key aspects of coaching over the last two years and how did you learn them?

5. What are your greatest challenges as you reflect on the past two years and look ahead to next year?

6. Draw a description of your second year showing the peaks and valleys.
Appendix B  Follow-up Interviews: December 2014

Carla

1. Can you provide any specific examples in regard to relationships from the first year? You wrote: “I've been working so hard to establish relationships based on me not being the watch dog."

2. Can you share any specifics about your realizations about teachers when you entered the coaching role? You wrote: "I began to see that not all teachers are as eager to grow and learn."

3. Can you provide any specific examples about your evolving relationship with your principals?

4. What are the different strengths that each team member brought to the coaching team?

5. Can you share any specifics that helped you be okay with "being vulnerable".

6. How did the leadership from year one to year two affect you as an instructional coach?

7. How did you navigate the change?

8. What did you have to do to be successful in the coaching role?

9. Any other impacts? Team/relationship dynamics? Did this impact your work?
1. Can you provide any specific examples in regard to relationships from the first year? You wrote: "Do they really feel this way, or do they feel that they HAVE to feel this way?"

2. What was some of the "good, bad, and ugly" that you saw in the district when you first got started in the coaching role?

3. Can you provide specifics on how you overcame some initial obstacles: "How do I prioritize? How long until I suggest?" Also, your feelings shared about "Am I being productive enough? Am I helping someone right now? Am I doing enough?"

4. Can you provide any specifics about how your relationship with principal at one of your buildings evolved and became productive?

5. Can you tell me more about your feelings at the start of year 2? "It is year two in this position and I have no idea what I am really supposed to be doing."

6. Can you provide specifics about the evolution of relationships? "The depths of our conversations were shallow." "In the second year the relationships moved to another plane."

7. What are the different strengths that each team member brought to the coaching team? What do you believe you learned from the others?

8. Can you describe how the leadership change from year one to year two affected you as an instructional coach? How did you navigate the change? What did you have to do to be successful in the coaching role?

9. Any other impacts? Team relationship/dynamic? Did this impact your work?
1. Can you provide any specific examples in the evolution of your relationship with principals? Were there any events that you recall about how you started very "guarded?" At one point you wrote "if school leaders believed this for their teachers (how to raise questions rather than provide solutions), how would that shape the culture of the school environment?"

2. Can you provide more specifics about how you grew in confidence when teaching in other's classroom? How you became comfortable with being vulnerable?

3. Can you provide any specifics in regard to your perceptions of how each principal's leadership style, though vastly different, were effective?

4. You asked at one point about "handling the challenges that come up based on the cultures of schools." How did you eventually work through or around these?

5. Do you have any stories/specifıcs to share about the evolution in your work. At one time you talked about "embracers" and "balkers."

6. You wrote about one principal changing ever so slightly..."the willingness of the school leader to step out of her comfort zone a tiny bit." Can you provide examples of what changed?

7. What are the different strengths that each team member brought to the coaching team?

8. What led you to the realization that you had to enter a coaching situation with a "clear purpose?"

9. How did the leadership from year one to year two affect you as an instructional coach?

10. How did you navigate the change?
11. What did you have to do to be successful in the coaching role?

12. Any other impacts? Team/relationship dynamics? Did this impact your work?
References


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