

2017

Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching, Factored by Experience and Levels of Education

Tina Hicks Whitten

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Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching, Factored by Experience and
Levels of Education

By
Tina H. Whitten

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2017

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Tina H. Whitten under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Acknowledgements

Completing the coursework and the dissertation required to earn a doctorate degree in two and a half years is no easy task. Without the help of the following people, I could never have succeeded in fulfilling this dream of mine.

To Dr. Jim Palermo – Thank you for seeing me through this process by offering your guidance and wisdom and especially for prompting me to embrace the chi-square test!

To Dr. Charles Perkins – Thank you a million times for your cooperation, help, encouragement, and time. This research could never have been possible without you. Your willingness to work with me through this process will never be forgotten.

To Kelly Campbell – Thank you for embarking on this journey with me. For me, knowing that someone else was just as tired and stressed as I made the late nights, early mornings, tears, fast food breakfasts, travel, and hotels bearable.

To Kim, Chris, Liv, Addy, and Chance – Thank you for your unfailing support. Each of you has encouraged me to pursue this goal, and I appreciate your confidence in me from the beginning of the journey. Thank you for being such a great source of joy in my life. I love you all.

To Momma and Daddy – Thank you for believing in me from the very beginning. You never doubted for a second that I could do it. You have encouraged my academic interests throughout my entire education, and having your support has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life. I love you.

To Eric – Thank you for being my champion and for allowing me to chase my dream. Thank you for doing your part and mine so many times in the past several months. Your patience has been remarkable and your support has been undying. There

were many times I questioned my ability to get through it, and you were always there to gently pull me along. I could not have survived the stress and long hours without you. I love you.

To Lily Grayce – You are my reason. You are my greatest blessing. Making you proud of me has been my supreme accomplishment. You were my greatest source of encouragement and my favorite distraction from the grueling work. Thank you for bringing me into the world. I love you so so so!

Abstract

Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching, Factored by Experience and Levels of Education. Whitten, Tina H., 2017: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Instructional Coaching/Teacher Perceptions/Elementary/Experience/ Education

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching compared to their years of experience and their levels of education. This researcher worked cooperatively with one rural school district in north, central North Carolina and used an online survey instrument with both open- and closed-ended questions to gather data. Two hundred sixty-three elementary classroom teachers were asked to complete the survey; 131 teachers did so with a response rate of 49.8%. Chi square statistical tests were run for the Likert responses on the quantitative portion, and open-ended coding was used for the qualitative piece. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional coaching according to their levels of education and little significant difference in perceptions according to years of experience. Open-ended responses indicate that further research should be done to explore instructional coaching training needs, time limitations, other non-coaching responsibilities, and roles of instructional coaches.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Research Problem	4
Theoretical Framework	4
Research Questions	7
Overview of the Methodology	7
Definition of Terms	8
Significance of the Study and Audience	10
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	10
Organization of the Dissertation	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
The Need to Change	13
Adult Learning Theory	14
What is Instructional Coaching?	18
Instructional Coaching as a Form of Professional Development	21
Roles of Instructional Coaches	27
Best Practices for Instructional Coaching	32
Professional Development, Instructional Coaching, and Teacher Efficacy	37
Benefits of an Instructional Coaching Program	40
Challenges of an Instructional Coaching Program	42
Summary	45
Chapter 3: Methodology	46
Research Questions	46
Setting	48
Population and Sample	48
Research Design	49
Instrumentation and Data Collection	52
Data Analysis Procedures	56
Limitations	59
Delimitations	60
Conclusion	60
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	62
Quantitative Portion	62
Qualitative Portion	62
Population and Sample	63
Instrumentation	64
Descriptive Data	65
Statistical Analysis of the Research Questions	67
Research Question 1	68
Research Question 2	74
Research Question 3	77
First Qualitative Question, Survey Item 6	78
Second Qualitative Question, Survey Item 12	85
Third Qualitative Question, Survey Item 16	93
Fourth Qualitative Question, Survey Item 21	98
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations	112

Research Question 1	113
Research Question 2	116
Research Question 3	117
Other Observations and Considerations.....	119
Implications.....	123
Recommendations for Further Research.....	124
References.....	127
Appendices	
A Permission for Survey Use.....	135
B The Survey Instrument.....	137
C Request to District for Permission to Use Data from Survey	140
D Permission from District to Use Data Collected from Survey.....	143
E Introduction to Survey Email to Participants.....	145
F Percentage of Responses Based on Years of Experience	147
G Percentage of Responses Based on Levels of Education.....	152
Tables	
1 Number of Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Questions Representing Each Best Practice.....	54
2 Data Collection and Analysis for Research Questions	57
3 Frequency Distribution of Number of Years in the Teaching Profession	66
4 Frequency Distribution of Levels of Education	66
5 Chi-square and Significance Results from Survey Items	69
6 Survey Item 4 – Percentage of Responses	70
7 Survey Item 5 – Percentage of Responses	72
8 Survey Item 8 – Percentage of Responses	73
9 Chi-square and Significance Results from Survey Items	76
10 Percentage of Responses on Qualitative Items	78
11 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (0-5 Years of Experience)	79
12 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (6-10 Years of Experience)	80
13 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (11-15 Years of Experience).....	81
14 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (16-20 Years of Experience)	81
15 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (More than 20 Years of Experience)	83
16 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (Bachelor’s Degree).....	84
17 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (Master’s Degree)	85
18 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (0-5 Years of Experience).....	86
19 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (6-10 Years of Experience)	87
20 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (11-15 Years of Experience)	88
21 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (16-20 Years of Experience).....	89
22 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (More than 20 Years of Experience).....	90
23 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (Bachelor’s Degree).....	91
24 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (Master’s Degree)	92
25 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (0-5 Years of Experience).....	93
26 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (6-10 Years of Experience)	94
27 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (11-15 Years of Experience)	95
28 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (16-20 Years of Experience)	96
29 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (More than 20 Years of Experience)	96
30 Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (Bachelor’s Degree)	97

31	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (Master's Degree)	98
32	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (0-5 Years of Experience)	99
33	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (6-10 Years of Experience)	100
34	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (11-15 Years of Experience)	100
35	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (16-20 Years of Experience)	101
36	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (More than 20 Years of Experience).....	102
37	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (Bachelor's Degree)	103
38	Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (Master's Degree)	104
39	Compilation of Open-ended Responses	109
Figures		
1	Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 1	120
2	Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 2	121
3	Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 3	122
4	Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 4	123

Chapter 1: Introduction

In medicine, doctors who are new to the profession or specialty are required to be coached through internships and residencies. In legal professions, senior law partners coach junior law associates. In civil aviation, captains work together with copilots to share authority and responsibility for the operation and safety of the aircraft. Now, educators are adopting coaching as a strategy to build teacher efficacy, increase student achievement, and advance school reform.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires school districts to employ highly qualified teachers who not only hold a bachelor's degree and full certification but also "demonstrate adequate content knowledge in each core subject they teach" (Birman, Boyle, & LeFloch, 2009, p. 12). NCLB also provides funding to states to assist in the improvement of the qualifications of teachers. Districts are allowed to choose from a variety of efforts including providing ongoing professional development for teachers whether those teachers are considered highly qualified or not (NCLB, 2001).

Many districts are cutting budget resources that once provided teachers with opportunities to access professional development, like workshops and conferences that take place outside the school building. Even while the funding for professional development has been vastly reduced, the requirements for student growth and achievement have continued to increase (Shanklin, 2009). Some states are considering the issue of merit pay which will tie student achievement scores to a teacher's salary. Other states consider teacher evaluations to play a major role in job security or tenure (Sojourner, Mykerezzi, & West, 2014).

Sources estimate that 50% of the teachers currently in our classrooms will either retire or leave the profession over the next 5-7 years. The statistics for teacher turnover

among new teachers are startling. Some 20% of all new hires leave the classroom within 3 years. In urban districts, the numbers are worse. Close to 50% of newcomers leave the profession during their first 5 years of teaching (Research Spotlight, 2013).

A factor with significant influence on teacher retention and student achievement is meaningful professional development (Drage, 2010). Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991) hypothesized that professional development is the “sum of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s career from pre-service teacher education to retirement” (p. 326). The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) stated that teachers need continuous opportunities to develop skills that meet the needs of diverse learners. According to Wong (2004), the ultimate goal of professional development for teachers should be improving student achievement which can best happen through ongoing and meaningful education and development.

The “workshop” model is the traditional form of professional development most teachers experience. The workshops typically last a day or less and focus on one discrete topic (classroom management, phonics, assessment, etc.). Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) found that this type of professional development does not allow time for teachers to reflect upon the subject, try ideas in the classroom, or reflect upon the results. “Rigorous research illustrates the shortcomings of the occasional, one-shot workshops that many school systems tend to provide, which generations of teachers have derided” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 9). When the workshop model of professional development is presented, only 10% of teachers actually use the new strategy (Bush, 1984), which points to the poor track record workshops have when trying to change teacher practice and raise student achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapely, 2007). While 90% of teachers reported participating in

professional development, most of those teachers also reported that it was totally useless (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009).

The body of research on the use of instructional coaching as a means of raising student achievement levels and improving teacher efficacy and retention is growing (Shanklin, 2009; Teemant, Wink, & Tyra, 2011). According to Vanderburg and Stephens (2010), teachers who worked with an instructional coach for 3 years (consecutively) were more likely to try new approaches, felt at ease learning new strategies and techniques, and were able to differentiate for struggling students or students who needed more challenge. These results are echoed in other research studies as well. Job-imbedded professional development by instructional coaches offers support teachers need to modify and enhance their practice as new curriculum, resources, technology, and strategies are revealed (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Joyce & Showers, 1982).

Instructional coaching is showing promise as the most effective way to provide professional development, support, and follow-up of effective strategies that increase student learning (Barkley, 2005; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Killion & Roy, 2009). Increasing teacher skills through instructional coaching by modeling, practice, and feedback can increase the effectiveness of teachers and improve student learning (Knight, 2007).

Coaching has proven to be one of the primary tools of staff development for teachers and administrators alike. Coaching provides a vehicle by which to achieve goals, improve strategies, and make a difference for students and colleagues. With coaching, teachers discover – usually for the first time—how to reflect on their teaching in ways that add value to their methods and an enhanced level of professionalism. (Barkley, 2005, p. 4)

The Research Problem

While there is a growing body of research that promotes instructional coaching as an effective type of professional development, there are still some gaps in the literature about teacher perceptions and attitudes toward instructional coaching. According to Cornett and Knight (2008), there are two reasons for this. First, there is no outlet for publication that exists for this form of educational research. Second, there are many forms of coaching that are newly developed approaches. “These approaches began with people developing theories and practices, conducting exploratory research, and refining those theories and practices through experimentation, implementation, reflection and revision” (Cornett & Knight, 2008, p. 192).

This study was developed to address the gaps in the literature by exploring teacher perceptions of instructional coaching and determining if those perceptions differ according to levels of experience or advanced degrees and certifications. Very little is known about teacher perceptions of instructional coaching due to a lack of exploration and research around this topic (Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework this study employs is instructional coaching informed by adult learning, known as andragogy. The central question of how adults learn has gotten the attention of researchers since the founding of adult education as a professional field of practice in the 1920s (Merriam, 2001). Now, almost 100 years later, we still have no one theory or model of adult learning that explains what is known about adult learners. “What we do have is a mosaic of theories, models, sets of principles, and explanations, that, combined compose the knowledge base of adult learning” (Merriam, 2001, p. 3).

In 1968, Malcolm Knowles took the European definition of andragogy as the “art

and science of helping adults learn” and contrasted it with the idea of pedagogy which is the “art and science of helping children learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). Since then, the field of adult education has been defined separately from other fields of education (Merriam, 2001). Knowles (1984) described five assumptions of andragogy:

1. Self-concept. A person’s self-concept grows from a dependent personality toward holding a self-directed self-concept as he or she matures.
2. Adult Learner Experience. A person gathers a growing bank of experiences that becomes an increasing resource for learning as he or she matures.
3. Readiness to Learn. A person’s readiness to learn becomes more related to their social roles as he or she matures.
4. Orientation to Learning. A person’s orientation to learning becomes problem-centered with an immediate application of knowledge as he or she matures.
5. Motivation to Learn. A person’s motivation to learn becomes more internal than external as he or she matures.

In addition to these five assumptions of adult learning, Knowles (1984) suggested four principles that should be applied to adult learning. First, adults must be involved in the planning of their instruction. Second, the basis of learning activities should come from the experience of the learners, including their past mistakes. Third, subjects that can provide an immediate impact on the adult’s personal or professional life prove to be most interesting to adult learners. And finally, adults prefer a problem-centered curriculum rather than a content-oriented one (Kearsley, 2010).

Knight (2007) described the theoretical framework for andragogy as it informs instructional coaching as “a partnership approach, seeing coaching as a partnership between coaches and teachers. This approach is articulated in seven principles, which are

derived from research and theoretical writing in a variety of fields, including adult education” (p. 37). Instructional coaches use the partnership principles as criteria for reflecting on their work in the past and for work they plan to do in the future (Knight, 2009).

The partnership principles employed as instructional coaches work with teachers as adult learners described by Knight (2009) bear many similarities to the principles of adult learning chronicled by Knowles (1984). The seven partnership principles (Knight, 2007) are

1. Equality. The teacher/instructional coach partnership is an equal one.
2. Choice. Teachers should be able to choose what they learn and how they learn it with regard to their perceived needs.
3. Voice. The voices of teachers should be respected in order for teachers to feel empowered in their professional learning.
4. Dialogue. Collegial inquiry and dialogue between partners should be authentic and honest.
5. Reflection. Teachers should reflect upon their professional learning.
6. Practice. Teachers should apply their new knowledge and new learning to their real-life teaching practices.
7. Reciprocity. Instructional coaches should expect to learn as much from the teachers with whom they are working as those teachers are learning from them.

Each of these principles is further explored in Chapter 2 of this study.

Research Questions

Quantitative portion.

1. To what extent does a teacher's experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?

Qualitative portion.

3. How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

Overview of the Methodology

This mixed-method study was implemented in survey form. The survey was distributed electronically via Survey Monkey to all elementary school teachers in the district by the assistant superintendent of the district with whom the researcher is working. Permission was obtained from the superintendent of the district. The district took responsibility for the administration of the survey, and the researcher obtained permission to use the data. According to Creswell (2012), surveys are used to describe trends and determine individual opinions about issues or programs. In this cross-sectional survey design, the researcher collected the data at one point in time about teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. "A cross-sectional design can examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices. Attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are ways in which individuals think about issues whereas practices are their actual behaviors" (Creswell, 2012, p. 377). An electronic survey has many advantages including gathering data quickly and having responses quickly coded into spreadsheet form. Electronic surveys are cost-effective in that the researcher avoids the cost of printing the surveys and

mailing them to individual schools or printing the surveys and driving them to the designated schools (Creswell, 2012).

The survey instrument used in this study is titled Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). This tool was developed "to determine to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices as beneficial professional development practices" (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). The researcher used questions in the beginning of the survey to determine the demographics of the participants and then proceeded to use Gordon's (2013) series of questions. Most of the survey was comprised of close-ended questions, and participants responded using a Likert-type scale. Four of the survey questions were open-ended and qualitative in nature. For this portion of the survey, participants were asked to type responses into the spaces provided. These questions were additions to the survey developed by Gordon. The researcher obtained permission from Gordon to add this qualitative portion to the existing survey.

By using the mixed-methods process, the researcher hoped to triangulate the data in an effort to have a valid, reliable study. Mixing different types of research and data can strengthen a study (Green & Cracelli, 1997). "Because all methods of data collection have limitations, the use of multiple methods can neutralize or cancel out some of the disadvantages of certain methods" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 97).

Definition of Terms

Andragogy. The art and science of adult learning based on five assumptions determined by Knowles (1984): self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn.

Implementation. A specified set of activities designed to put into practice an

activity or program of known dimensions (Halle, 2012) “that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change” (Standards for Professional Learning, 2015, p. 12).

Instructional coaching. “Instructional coaches are onsite professional developers who teach educators how to use evidence-based teaching practices and to support them in learning and applying these practices in a variety of educational settings” (Knight, 2007, p. 43).

Professional development.

High quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused activities that are designed to improve teacher knowledge and skills in the academic subjects they teach in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 89)

Student achievement. The measure of the amount of academic content a student learns in a determined amount of time (Cunningham, 2012).

Teacher effectiveness. The ability of a teacher to establish learning goals, promote student interaction with new concepts and knowledge, facilitate student practice to deepen understanding, hold appropriate classroom management, communicate high expectations for students, and create standards-based assessment practices which are effective, and determining student proficiency at multiple levels (Marzano, 2007).

Teacher efficacy. “Teachers’ confidence in their ability to promote students’ learning” (Hoy, 2000, p. 6).

Significance of the Study and Audience

This study was led to broaden the body of research that has been conducted on the perceptions of teachers on instructional coaches. This study will be important for school leaders and administrators who must identify effective professional development strategies as mandated by NCLB (2001) and the reauthorization of the legislation in 2009. Understanding how teachers at all levels of experience and education perceive instructional coaching could help district leaders revise the training instructional coaches receive to include the five assumptions of andragogy (Knowles, 1984) and incorporate what is known about adult learning to include needs of diverse learners.

Lack of funding continues to be a problem for the state of North Carolina; and in the district in which this study was conducted, instructional coaches have been threatened with losing their positions. Identifying how instructional coaches can positively impact all teachers' practices and student achievement could help district leaders understand the value of instructional coaches and see the need to secure positions of instructional coaches at the county level. The results from this study could also impact how principals use instructional coaches at the school level to transform teaching and learning in order to produce gains in student achievement.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The participants in this study teach in schools that have instructional coaches, but their knowledge (or lack of) of how instructional coaching should work could skew data results. The teachers in the study may not be aware of the research around the effective, best practices of instructional coaches. Moreover, personal attitudes or opinions about the instructional coach in the teachers' settings could also skew data. Often teachers have personal experiences with instructional coaches that could affect their opinions positively

or negatively and these personal relationships would not be addressed by the data.

Because teachers in different schools need different strategies or professional development to further their efficacies, the instructional coach program will be different from one school to another. The teachers may have interpreted questions differently from one another on the survey as they self-reported their feelings and views. Self-reporting data could be skewed due to limitations that include how honest a participant was when reporting his/her perceptions and how much time and effort he/she spent in answering the questions (Creswell, 2012).

The population was delimited to all elementary teachers in one school system in a rural school district in north, central North Carolina. Therefore, the data from this study may not be able to be generalized to other districts or educational systems. While all elementary teachers in the school district were asked to participate, there may be differences in the perceptions and views of those who chose to participate in the study and those who did not. Complete confidentiality was assured to all participants invited.

Organization of the Dissertation

This study is organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. The first chapter includes the introduction, the statement of the research problem, the theoretical framework, significance of the study, the research questions, the definition of terms, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the related research and literature to the study. The methodology of this study is described in detail in Chapter 3. The findings of the data analyses are reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

With the adoption of NCLB in 2001 and its reauthorization in 2009, educational reform has been a major focus of education (Seed, 2008). Increased demands and pressures have been placed on teachers due to the goals set by the new standards (Jamentz, 2001; Knight, 2005; Valli & Buese, 2007). To meet the demands of these new goals, school systems were given the directive to provide job-imbedded professional development (instructional coaching) to help teachers improve their instructional practices (Borman, Feger, & Kawakami, 2006). According to Fullan (1993), the only way to bring about effective change in education is to focus on improving the instructional practices of teachers. Guskey and Yoon (2009) maintained that no improvement in teachers' instructional practices can take place without significant professional learning, thus instructional coaching emerges as a common dimension that is rapidly expanding throughout many school districts across the nation (Kowal & Steiner, 2007).

In order to be effective, Yoon et al. (2007) reasoned that professional learning for teachers must be high quality and job embedded. These researchers also indicated other characteristics for valuable professional development including the following.

- Professional development should be sustained, intensive, and content-focused with a focus on lasting and positive impacts on classroom teaching.
- Professional development should expand teacher knowledge of subject areas.
- Professional development should build teacher capacity to teach research-based instructional strategies.
- Professional development should be directly aligned and related to state

academic standards and assessments.

- Professional development should be regularly evaluated to state and academic standards and assessments.
- Professional development should be regularly evaluated for its effects on teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007).

With the directive to enhance professional development by making it job embedded and high quality while doing so with limited funding, many schools have turned to the use of instructional coaches. By using this model of professional development, the focus has shifted from traditional workshops and after-school training sessions that proved ineffective to student learning, growth, and achievement (Coggins, Stoddard, & Zarrow, 2003; Hall, 2005).

The Need to Change

According to Hall (2004), there have been many coaching models that began in the 1930s with a reintroduction and wide-spread implementation of the instructional coaching model in the 1980s; however, this model, for the reasons listed previously, has become more prevalent in school districts within the last decade. Studies on instructional coaching have shown that instructional coaching can positively effect changes in classroom practices by promoting teacher effectiveness (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Cornett & Knight, 2008; Morgan, 2010). Studies also show the most important factor on student achievement other than demographics or economic background is teacher effectiveness (Goodlad, 2004; Marzano, 2003); however, according to Knight (2005), while the impact of instructional coaching on teacher effectiveness has had a fair amount of attention, teacher perceptions of instructional coaching has been an area that is lacking in research.

In order to reform education, changes must take place at the building level by making changes in teacher practices by keeping student learning and achievement as the major goal (Hall & Hord, 2006). There have been several professional development failures in the past that include a lack of transfer of learning, one-time events that are never mentioned again, lack of review or follow-up, working in isolation, and lack of motivation (Bellanca, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Knight, 2007). Finding ways to improve teaching practices without the failures that have been experienced in the past will require a change process (Fullan, 2003). These change processes for teachers and administrators can cause feelings of loss, fear, and anxiety (Fullan, 2007), but change agents and researchers can examine professional development strategies to determine which methods can be successful and ease the pain of change along the way (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009). According to Knight (2007), having instructional coaches provide job-imbedded professional development is extremely effective for delivering and maintaining professional learning initiatives that are determined at the district or state level.

Adult Learning Theory

The use of instructional coaches to provide professional development for teachers requires their knowledge of adult learning theory (andragogy). Educators have studied child and adolescent learning theory (pedagogy) for many years, but little attention has been given to andragogy or how to utilize what is known about adult learning theory to implement an effective professional development program for teachers. Malcolm Knowles was one of the earliest researchers of adult learning theory in the 1970s. Knowles (1984) identified assumptions of adult learning.

1. Self-concept. As a person matures his/her self-concept moves from one of

being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.

2. Adult Learner Experience. As a person matures he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
3. Readiness to Learn. As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.
4. Orientation to Learning. As a person matures his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
5. Motivation to Learn. As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal.

Knowles (1984) further identified four principles that are applied to adult learning based on the assumptions of adult learning listed above. The principles of adult learning are

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem centered rather than content oriented.

Knowles's (1984) theory of andragogy provides many implications for instructional coaches as they work with teachers in job-embedded professional development. The coach works as a mentor to provide support while making sure the professional learning is practical and relevant, allows experience to be reflected upon, takes a problem-solving approach, and encourages collaboration. Adult learners are actively involved in the

learning process such that they make choices relevant to their learning objectives. As such, adult learners also direct their learning goals with the guidance of their mentors. As an instructional coach, it is important to facilitate the process of goal-setting. Teachers need to be given the freedom to assume responsibility for their own choices. When it comes to workload, they also need to be proactive in making decisions and in contributing to the process. (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

Continuing to consider Knowles's (1984) assumptions and implications of adult learning theory, instructional coaches should encourage teachers with whom they work to connect their past experiences with their current knowledge base and activities. Adult learners should be taught ways to bring to their current placement past knowledge, opinions, and experiences. Coaches need to be well versed in how to help teachers in drawing out relevant past knowledge and experiences. The motivation to learn is increased when the relevance of the "lesson" through real-life situations is clear, particularly in relation to the specific concerns of the learner. The need to acquire relevant and adequate knowledge is of high importance. With this in mind, adult learning is characterized as goal oriented, and intended learning outcomes should be clearly identified. Once the learning goals have been identified, alignment of the learning activities can be fulfilled. Instructional coaches should relate assigned tasks to teacher learning goals. If it is clear that the activities in which they are engaged directly contribute to achieving their personal learning objectives, teachers will be inspired and motivated to engage in instructional improvement (Knight, 2005).

Adult learning encourages collaboration. Adult learners thrive in collaborative relationships with their educators. When learners are considered by their instructional coaches as colleagues, they become more productive. When their contributions are

acknowledged, they are willing to put out their best work. The main job of instructional coaches should be to collaborate with the teachers they serve. Coaching cannot be effective in isolation – it must be nestled within other learning structures such as inquiry teams or professional learning communities (PLCs) that are guided and rigorous (Aguilar, 2013).

Pike (2003) further expanded on the original principles of Knowles (1984) with his four laws of adult learning which have built upon the original principles defined by Knowles (1984) and provide useful guidance for learning facilitators. Pike's first law states adult learning is enhanced by hands-on experience that involves adults in the learning process. In addition, adults bring a wealth of experience that must be acknowledged and respected in the training setting. In his second law, Pike suggests that people are more likely to believe something fervently if they arrive at the idea themselves. Thus, when training adults, presenting structured activities that generate student ideas, concepts, or techniques will facilitate learning more effectively than simply giving adults information to remember. Third, Pike notes humor is an important tool for coping with stress and anxiety and can be effective in promoting a comfortable learning environment. Finally, in the fourth law, Pike maintains that learning has not taken place until behavior has changed. Knowing and doing are two different tasks. The ability to apply new material is a good measure of whether learning has taken place (Pike, 2003).

Klatt (1999) also expanded on Knowles's (1984) adult learning principles by identifying three important principles to keep in mind when working with adults in any learning environment. Klatt stated that adults bring a wide variety of experiences with them to in-service sessions and should therefore be allowed to contribute to the learning process. As observed by Knowles (1984), adults value their experiences and want to be

allowed to acknowledge those experiences in learning situations. Second, Klatt declared that adults prefer to focus on real-life problems and situations rather than theoretical ones. Adults view learning as a means to an end rather than the end itself, and the learning must take on personal meaning and have immediate value to the adult's job or situation. Finally, Klatt believed that adults prefer to be self-directing and active, so their learning should be based on experiences. Adults enjoy learning collaboratively and should be provided with opportunities in which they can be active in discovering their own solutions.

Effectiveness of instructional coaching is dependent upon the knowledge of how adults learn. As coaches are preparing professional development opportunities for teachers, they should carefully consider adult learning theory as they examine how they will present new initiatives or ways to improve instructional practices. If adult learning theory is not considered, the professional development could fail (Aguilar, 2013).

What is Instructional Coaching?

Instructional coaching, while becoming utilized more and more throughout the nation, does not have a standard definition. Implementation varies across districts and can be operated by embodying several different models (Knight, 2005); however, the goal for instructional coaching remains the same – to improve classroom instruction. Knight (2007) defined instructional coaching as “intensive, differentiated support to teachers so that they are able to implement proven practices” (p. 29). Kise (2006) defined coaching as “the art of identifying and developing a person's strength. Even when a teacher needs to build skills in areas that are natural weaknesses for them, coaches help them through techniques that utilize strengths” (p. 139). Instructional coaching can be generalized across grade spans and curricula or it can be content

specific; but in either form, it is intended to support teachers in meeting the aims of district- or state-based instructional initiatives or reform (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008).

According to Knight (2004), instructional coaches partner with teachers to help them incorporate research-based instructional practice 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 coaches support teacher reflection about their instructional practices and collaborate with those teachers to create professional goals with a focus on improving instruction (Knight, 2007). In reflexive coaching, coaches are asked for help by teachers who see a need for a change in their instructional practices through analyzing student data or looking at observation tools (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). In directive coaching, coaches are assigned to teachers by an administrator who has analyzed student performance data and teacher evaluations (Bacon, 2003). Knight (2004) attested that coaching should be voluntary along with a partnership philosophy.

Knight (2007) described the theoretical framework of instructional coaching as a partnership approach: “This approach is articulated in seven principles which are derived from research and theoretical writing in a variety of field, including adult education, cultural anthropology, leadership, organizational theory, and epistemology” (p. 31). The seven principles of the partnership approach, according to Knight (2007), are equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity.

- Equality: Instructional Coaches and Teachers are Equal Partners – Coaches believe that teachers’ thoughts and ideas are valuable and listen to teachers with the intent to learn and understand rather than to persuade.

- **Choice: Teachers Should Have Choice Regarding What and How They Learn**
– The coach does not make decisions for the teacher. Because the partners are equal, the choices and decisions are made collaboratively. It is not the instructional coach's goal to make teachers think like them, rather to meet teachers where they are and offer choices.
- **Voice: Professional Learning Should Empower and Respect the Voices of Teachers** – In the partnership, individuals should have the opportunity to express their views. Instructional coaches see coaching as a way to help teachers find their voice by encouraging conversations about instruction among teachers and listen to their opinions.
- **Dialogues: Professional Learning Should Enable Authentic Dialogue** – Partners should engage in conversations to explore ideas and learn together. Coaches should listen carefully and avoid manipulating choices and decisions.
- **Reflection: Reflection is an Integral Part of Professional Learning** – Partners are free to speak about their beliefs and ideas and to make meaningful decisions. These decisions will require collaboration among partners to make sense of their learning. Instructional coaches encourage this collaboration and impress upon teachers to carefully consider ideas before adopting them. Reflective thinkers can choose or reject ideas.
- **Praxis: Teachers Should Apply Their Learning to Their Real-Life Practice as They Are Learning** – Instructional coaching requires facilitation of teacher collaboration focusing on using new ideas and methods in the classroom. Instructional coaches help teachers reconstruct content the way it will be most

useful.

- **Reciprocity: Instructional Coaches Should Expect to Get as Much as They Give** – The goal of instructional coaches should be to learn along with collaborating teachers about their strengths and weaknesses and various perspectives of the teaching strategy as seen through the eyes of the teacher.

An instructional coach is someone whose chief professional responsibility is to bring evidence-based practices into classrooms by working with teachers and other school leaders. Most instructional coaches focus on one-on-one and small group support for teachers, coaches, and school leaders around research-based instructional strategies. The goal is to increase student engagement, improve student achievement, and build teacher capacity in schools (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2010).

According to Moran (2007), there are three principles to coaching: the establishment of collaboration as an asset to the school culture; developing the capacity of others to participate in self-reflection and creative problem solving; and providing professional development opportunities for adults as they acquire new skills sets, new knowledge, and new strategies. Collaboration and partnerships are key to successful instructional coaching – between a coach and a teacher, between teachers, and between the coach and a school (Kise, 2006).

Instructional Coaching as a Form of Professional Development

When examining the importance of professional development offered to teachers to improve their instructional strategies and impact on student learning, the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) showed that many teachers who participated in traditional workshops and conferences were displeased with the type of professional development they had been receiving. Those teachers listed the lack of collaboration,

lack of usefulness, lack of strategies for teaching English Language Learners or special needs students, lack of choice and decision making, and lack of follow-up as complaints for the trainings they received.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) made several recommendations to combat the weaknesses in the traditional professional development systems. The first recommendation was that professional development should be “intensive professional development, especially when it includes applications of knowledge to teachers’ planning and instruction, to provide a greater chance of influencing teaching practices and, in turn, lead to gains in student learning” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 9). According to Guskey and Yoon (2009), follow-up after professional development has been delivered is vital to the success of the sessions. By allowing instructional coaches to take on the professional development of teachers at their schools, this recommendation could be fulfilled. Coaches make sure that professional development is related to meeting the needs of the teachers and are connected to research-based instructional practices. Coaches can continue to follow up with ongoing trainings and reflections and can differentiate the needs for individual teachers (Knight, 2007).

The second recommendation made by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) was to focus professional development on student learning and the teaching of specific content. Research suggests that professional development is most effective when it addresses the concrete, everyday challenges involved in teaching and learning specific academic subject matter, rather than focusing on abstract educational principles or teaching methods taken out of context. For example, researchers have found that teachers are more likely to try classroom practices that have been modeled for them in professional development settings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Reed-Wright (2009) connected

this recommendation with instructional coaching: “Coaches cannot be abstract in coaching teachers. There must be something concrete to work from with teachers” (p. 94). Teachers are more likely to try classroom practices that have been modeled for them by an instructional coach (Knight, 2007).

Another recommendation for professional development made by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) was that professional development should align with school improvement priorities and goals. Research suggests that professional development tends to be more effective when it is an integral part of a larger school reform effort, rather than when activities are isolated, having little to do with other initiatives or changes underway at the school. “If teachers cannot easily implement the strategies they learn, and the new practices are not supported or reinforced—then the professional development tends to have little impact” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 10). Instructional coaches are put in place to help teachers implement the strategies they have learned and to support and reinforce the initiatives (Knight, 2007).

Finally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) declared that professional development should build strong working relationships among teachers. “The nation’s teachers exhibit a strongly individualistic ethos, owing largely to the built-in privacy and isolation of their daily work as it has been organized in most schools” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 11). Teachers have historically operated by the “egg-crate model” in which they spend their days in their own classrooms away from other teachers, which is not conducive to collaboration. Historically, schools have been structured so teachers work alone, rarely given time together to plan lessons, share instructional practices, assess students, design curriculum, or help make administrative or managerial decisions. “However, when schools are strategic in creating time and productive working relationships among

teachers, the benefits can include greater consistency in instruction, willingness to share practices and try new ways of teaching, and success in solving problems of practice” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 11). Instructional coaches can help foster collaborative relationships between teachers by leading PLCs and grade-level meetings and providing small group professional development focused on the choices and needs of the teachers (Knight, 2007). “Coaches are professionals who are able to develop trusting relationships with a variety of people” (International Reading Association, 2006, p. 64).

Many schools and districts across the country have invested in school-based coaching programs. Several comparison-group studies have found that teachers who receive coaching are more likely to enact the desired teaching practices and apply them more appropriately than are teachers receiving more traditional professional development (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Knight, 2009; Marzano, 2003). Instructional coaches can provide teachers with short- and long-term support and differentiate their support based on teacher and student needs (Knight, 2007).

When providing professional development for teachers, Knight (2007) proposed that instructional coaches enlist eight components to respond to the challenges of change. These eight components are enroll, identify, explain, model, observe, explore, refine, and reflect. The first component, enroll, includes strategies for getting teachers on board with the professional development or changes in initiatives. Knight (2007) suggested that coaches use one-to-one interviews as the most effective way to enroll teachers. These interviews help instructional coaches achieve three goals: (a) they are a way to gather specific information about teacher and administrative challenges and student needs in order to tailor coaching sessions; (b) they are a way for instructional coaches to educate teachers about the methods, philosophies, and opportunities that instructional coaching

can provide; and (c) they provide an opportunity for instructional coaches to develop one-to-one relationships with the teachers. While interviews are, according to Knight (2007), the best way to enroll teachers, another strategy would be to give small group presentations. These presentations could explain the opportunities that exist for teachers' professional growth, to clarify the partnership philosophy between the teacher and the coach, and to sign up teachers who want to work with a coach. Large group presentations are another way to enroll teachers as well. During these presentations, instructional coaches can ensure that all teachers hear the same message.

After enrolling teachers through some process (large or small group presentations or one-to-one interviews), the instructional coach will have ideas about which teachers would like to work with them. Hopefully, the entire school will choose to work with the instructional coach; but realistically, the list only includes approximately 25% of the staff. The instructional coach should make every effort to have successful collaboration with these teachers so that the "word of mouth process will eventually lead to widespread implementation of the teaching practices provided by the coach" (Knight, 2007, p. 73). With each teacher the coach has identified as a partner, the pair must then identify which proven practice they would like to implement. The instructional coach with the teacher partner will clarify, synthesize, break down, see the practice through the teacher's eyes, and simplify (make the complex clear) the practice on which they are working (Knight, 2007).

Instructional coaches spent a great deal of their time in classrooms modeling lessons, observing teachers, and talking with teachers about strengths and weaknesses (Sweeney, 2010). Some teachers are intimidated by having someone observe them. Knight (2007) and Sweeney (2010) contended that having instructional coaches model

for teachers first while they observe will make the process more informal and less daunting. According to Killion, Harrison, Bryan, and Clifton (2012), one of the best ways for instructional coaches to support teachers is to visit their classrooms to model or co-teach and then meet with the teacher to facilitate reflection.

After the teacher has watched the coach present a lesson using the practice chosen, the coach will observe the teacher using the same practice. An observation tool has been decided upon together, and the instructional coach “watches for the critical teaching behaviors they identified using a copy of the co-constructed observation form that the teacher used to observe the coach when he or she did the model lesson” (Knight, 2007, p. 45). The instructional coach should remove personal judgments while doing the observation and refrain from seeing themselves as evaluators. “Coaches should see themselves as a second set of eyes in the room, using the observation forms as tools for recoding relevant data about how the lesson proceeds, and attend to the teacher’s efforts to use the critical teaching practice” (Killion et al., 2012, p. 38).

After instructional coaches enroll, identify, explain, model, and observe, they should explore the data that were collected with the teachers. This meeting should happen as soon as possible after the observations and should be based on mutual respect between the partners. This is not the opportunity for the instructional coach to be the “expert” on the teaching strategy, nor is it the time to tell the teacher what he/she did right or wrong (Knight, 2007). This is the time for instructional coaches to hold learning conversations where both parties use the data collection to begin a collegial dialogue around what was learned. The discussion of data does not have to include only the observation tools but can include student data that were collected as well. The instructional coach works with individuals to facilitate conversations around data-driven

instruction (Killion et al., 2012). These conversations should communicate positive aspects of the lesson by using a “language of on-going regard” (Knight, 2007, p. 47). Instructional coaches should recognize the importance of direct and specific feedback in these conversations (Aguilar, 2013). According to Knight (2007), the feedback should be direct, specific, nonattributive, and a skill every instructional coach develops and practices daily until it becomes a habit.

The last two of the eight components identified by Knight (2007) to complete the cycle of professional development are refine and reflect. As teachers refine their practices, the instructional coach offers as much support as the teachers need, but no more.

After a teacher has mastered a new teaching practice, the coach and the teacher choose to move on to some other intervention. The teacher and the instructional coach keep learning together, working as partners to ensure that students receive excellent instruction. (Knight, 2007, p. 49)

Coaching supports teachers in examining their practice through ongoing and intensive professional development. “Coaching must be embedded into teachers’ daily lives, however, and considered part of their everyday work, not something extra or voluntary” (Killion et al., 2012, p. 135).

Roles of Instructional Coaches

Because the potential of instructional coaching has become so great, school systems eager to increase student achievement have hastily tried to implement coaching in their districts (Deussen et al., 2007; Russo, 2004). Coaching is prevalent in large urban districts and smaller rural districts (Russo, 2004) and has been adopted by federally funded programs such as GEARUP (Knight, 2005) and Reading First (Deussen et al.,

2007). Due to the number of districts interested in the implementation of a coaching program, there has been a call for papers from both professional and trade journals outlining a set of standards or roles for instructional coaches (Aguilar, 2013; Deussen et al., 2007; Killion et al., 2012). The International Reading Association (2006) recognized a set of principles for instructional coaching as well as the expansion of a new establishment for information about coaching at the University of Colorado, Denver. Kansas and Pennsylvania each have well-known projects in place to research and provide information about roles, responsibilities, and best practices for instructional coaches (Knight, 2004; Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2010).

Because the idea of instructional coaching grew so rapidly, research was significantly behind and, to some extent, still is (Knight, 2005). Educators were starting instructional coaching programs with “little data about what coaches do and whether coaching has an impact on student learning” (Knight, 2005, p. 2). Therefore, a clarification of the qualifications, roles, and backgrounds was and is needed. According to Deussen et al. (2007), a clear picture of the roles of coaches and the skills they need “will help guide research to determine the link between professional development, teacher efficacy, and student achievement” (p. 76). Morgan (2010) found that teachers often resisted the help of the instructional coaches because they were confused about the purpose of the program and the roles of the instructional coach. Danielson (2007) maintained that instructional coaches were often confused about their roles themselves and were doing other tasks such as becoming a principal designee when the administrator was off campus.

Coaching has been organized around the theory of cognitive apprenticeship (Costa & Garmston, 2002). In this theory, in order to elicit changes in teaching practices,

coaches should examine the decisions, choices, and reflections a teacher makes in the environment of teaching. Therefore, the role of the instructional coach is to use inquiry-based examinations and investigations to draw knowledge from the teachers' own thought processes (Knight, 2007). According to Reed-Wright (2009), the centerpiece of instructional coaching is learning to question. "Questioning is essential to teachers' learning. It is critical in the dialogue time to help them be aware of what they are learning about" (Reed-Wright, 2009, p. 106). The Pennsylvania Department of Education uses the work of Danielson (2007) to offer guiding questions for instructional coaches to use in four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

There are many roles that instructional coaches can play, including

- Assisting teachers in implementing new curricular programs (Poglinco et al., 2003).
- Consulting with and mentoring teachers (Costa & Garmston, 2002).
- Supporting teachers as they "apply knowledge, develop skills, polish technique and deepen their understanding" (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 19).
- Planning and conducting research and writing grants (Walpole & McKenna, 2004).
- Leading discussion groups (Sweeney, 2003) or study or book groups (Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

Deussen et al. (2007) found that coaches were spending some of their time doing work that was not consistent with their roles. Thirty-six percent of instructional coaching time was spent doing other activities such as bus duty, attending meetings, administering

assessments, doing paperwork, and substituting for absent teachers. Even more confusing in many cases is that the term coach is used in different ways across schools in the same school district. There are full-time coaches who work in multiple buildings, full-time coaches who work in a single building, and full-time teachers who also serve as part-time instructional coaches in their building (Cornett & Knight, 2008).

Reed-Wright (2009) listed 10 roles instructional coaches may have on a weekly basis, according to the number of times these roles were mentioned in her case study. The roles were similarly related to other instructional coach roles found in the work of Knight (2005).

- Modeling
- Questioning/Probing
- Dialoguing
- Reflecting
- Listening
- Using concrete evidence
- Making read-writing connections
- Videotaping while observing teachers for playback
- Side-by-side coaching
- Thinking aloud

Killion et al. (2012) also offered 10 roles of instructional coaching based on their research and evaluation around effective coaching. The 10 roles are listed along with the purpose of the role.

1. Resource provider – To expand teacher use of a variety of resources to

improve instruction.

2. Data coach – To ensure that student achievement data is used to drive decisions at the classroom and school level.
3. Curriculum specialist – To ensure implementation of the adopted curriculum.
4. Instructional specialist – To align instruction with curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
5. Mentor – To increase the novice teacher’s instructional skills and to support school-wide induction activities.
6. Classroom supporter – To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction.
7. Learning facilitator – To design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning.
8. School leader – To work collaboratively (with formal and informal leaders) to plan, implement, and assess school change initiatives to ensure alignment with and focus on intended results, and to monitor transfer or practice from professional development into action.
9. Change catalyst – To create imbalance with the current state as a motivation to explore alternatives to current practice.
10. Learner – To constantly seek to become better at what he/she does (Killion et al., 2012).

In addition to the roles described above, Morgan (2010) found that coaches spend a lot of time gathering instructional resources for teachers. Coaches often use this role to begin establishing trust and building relationships with teachers. While coaches often start out in this role to create buy-in from teachers, Morgan noted that coaches must not

only utilize this role in their coaching careers or they may not make a difference in instruction. Building relationships is an overarching theme in the literature about the roles of instructional coaches (Aguilar, 2013; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Killion et al., 2012; Knight, 2005). Reed-Wright (2010) maintained that coaches spent a great deal of time cultivating relationships with teachers: “The relationships with were built over a period of time, usually 6 to 9 months” (p. 83). Coaches lead meetings or professional development meetings often in addition to the time they spend with teachers individually. Coaches continue to want to take full advantage of their contact with all teachers in the school in order to improve instructional strategies throughout the grade levels and contents (Morgan, 2010).

Best Practices for Instructional Coaching

According to Knight (2005), “the intense pressure to foster significant improvements in student achievement can lead some leaders to promote many school improvement efforts within a single year. However, promoting too many interventions can actually be counterproductive” (p. 20). This opinion is echoed by Schmoker (2011) as he wrote, “We will never master or implement what is most important for kids if we continue to pursue multiple new initiatives before we implement our highest-priority standards” (p. 15). Knight (2007) insisted that there are simply four teaching best teaching practices that instructional coaches should share with teachers. He referred to these as “The Big Four” which include classroom management, content, instruction, and assessment for learning.

Classroom management must be in place before the instructional coach and teachers can focus on other issues that are related to student learning (Knight, 2007). Teachers need to spend less time dealing with disruptions and more time engaged in the

work of teaching. Instructional coaching must work with teachers to implement proactive and positive classroom management (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, Skyles, & Barnes, 2010). “Coaches can help by guiding teachers to articulate and teach expectations, effectively correct behavior, increase the effectiveness of praise statements and increase students’ opportunities to respond” (Knight, 2007, p. 23).

In reference to content, Knight (2007) maintained that instructional coaches should help teachers decide which content standards take priority over others and be able to explain that content to teachers clearly. Helping teachers determine priority standards is important. According to Ainsworth (2003), the number of standards should not be excessive and should account for about half of what is in our curriculum-pacing guides (Marzano, 2003). This is difficult for school districts and for teachers to decide (Schmoker, 2011) and could definitely be a place in which instructional coaches take initiative (Knight, 2005).

For instruction, Knight (2007) submitted that instructional coaches must have a deep understanding of content and should work with teachers to implement research-based instructional strategies such as “advanced organizers, modeling the thinking involved in whatever process is being learning, asking a variety of questions, and ensuring that students are experiencing engaging, meaningful activities” (p. 23). According to Schmoker (2011), the essential parts of effective teaching include clear learning objective, teaching/modeling/demonstrating, guided practice, and checks for understanding. Instructional coaches should have the ability to lead teachers through this cycle of effective lessons (Knight, 2007).

Formative assessment helps make huge gains in learning. “The results of formative assessment are used to adjust teaching and learning – so a significant aspect of

any programme would be to use this type of assessment” (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003, p. 10). Formatively, students are assessed to determine what their weaknesses are, what resources they need to improve, and data to determine whether improvements have been made (Black et al., 2003). Knight (2007) suggested that coaches work with teachers to implement assessment so teachers can determine whether their students are learning the content and if not, determine what resources or strategies the instructional coach can provide to increase student learning.

There are other research-based models that consider the best practices of instructional coaches. Safir (2008) stated that there are four best practices that instructional coaches should maintain while working with teachers: building relationships and trust, helping teachers plan with the end in mind, modeling best practices, and connecting teachers to resources. Teachers need to be able to trust the instructional coaches with whom they work. Coaches must spend time building relationships with the teachers or their best efforts could be damaged (Crane, 2012). According to Safir, teachers can often feel as though they are drowning in grading student work and writing lesson plans and are not able or willing to think about planning engaging lessons with specific learning outcomes and assessments that will measure student understanding. Therefore, the instructional coach should be able to help the cooperating teacher by planning around curriculum guides that will help the teacher focus on the end in sight. Like good teaching, effective coaching often involves the modeling of best practices (Safir, 2008). According to Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), those practices that instructional coaches and teachers should focus on include identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting

objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and cues, questions, and advance organizers. An important job of instructional coaches is to connect teachers to resources (Knight, 2005; Safir, 2008). Those resources may include providing coverage for a teacher to visit other classrooms, ideas about research-based strategies, time to cooperatively plan together, and online learning resources (Crane, 2012; Marzano & Simms, 2013).

According to Brady (2005), there are several characteristics of high-performing coaches: confidence, leadership, open communication, collaboration, optimism, and authentic/compassionate yet focuses on student data. Brady (2007) remarked that there are six critical areas of practices instructional coaches must maintain in order to be effective. Many of those practices mirror the practices mentioned above. The first practice Brady (2007) held as relevant is the establishment of trusting relationships and open communication. “Teachers must trust coaches as another pair of eyes and ears gauging how their instruction affects learners – but without fear of punitive reporting to the principal” (Brady, 2007, p. 47). In turn, principals must trust the coaches to “be their allies” (Brady, 2007, p. 47) in raising student achievement while understanding that coaches must “honor teacher confidences” (Brady, 2007, p. 47). The second practice Brady (2007) asserted is that instructional coaches must understand adult learners. Teaching teachers is not the same as teaching children, and coaches should never act in a condescending way to teachers. “Coaches must demonstrate that they know how adults learn, give colleagues time to process new information, and resist sending the message that someone is trying to fix them” (Brady, 2007, p. 47). Third, coaches should continually update knowledge about subject content and instructional best practices. Coaches are trained by expert, external consultants and then lead trainings for the

teachers in their buildings. A fourth area of best practice for instructional coaches is to master the art of coaching. “Coaches and their principals must be ahead of the curve in learning how to help teachers in a nonthreatening way to dissect a lesson and promote internal reflection and problem solving” (Brady, 2007, p. 48). The goal is to analyze what is going well in teachers’ classrooms and to help build teacher capacity to expand on what is working and change what is not. Fifth, instructional coaches must link student work to data and assessments so teachers will modify instruction. “Coaches should use a variety to data including student work and local assessments, as neutral comparison points in a discussion with a teacher” (Brady, 2007, p. 48). These data are based in fact and are difficult to argue. Often, reluctant teachers can accept this nonjudgmental approach more easily as they recognize that some of their students are not learning the content, and the coach should step in to hold discussions about remedial teaching. Finally, Brady (2007) believed that instructional coaches should network with others who do the same work. “Coaches develop a strong network of learning and mutual support, drawing on others’ expertise. These support networks allow coaches to remain grounded in the work of student achievement and operate strategically as catalysts for change” (Brady, 2007, p. 48).

Pankake and Moller (2007) argued that best practices for instructional coaches are not operational tasks such as “inventorying textbooks, substituting for the principal at meetings out of the building or dealing with discipline referrals” (p. 34). Coaches should be directly involved in those activities that will improve teaching and learning. The best practices and primary responsibilities of instructional coaches should be

- to help staff see how a new instructional approach relates to the shared visions for student learning.

- to lead decision making about the school's professional learning plan.
- to design professional learning experiences.
- to facilitate groups to examine, design, and use appropriate teaching strategies.
- to be available to answer teacher questions about teaching and learning.
- to mentor new teachers.
- to work with individual teachers who request assistance.
- to pull together assessment data for teachers to use in their decision making.
- to seek outside resources to support teachers.
- to build relationships with parents and community members to support student learning.
- to work with central office leaders to ensure school goals align with local, state, and national standards.
- to advocate beyond the school for policies and resources that support the staff's shared vision for student learning (Pankake & Moller, 2007).

Professional Development, Instructional Coaching, and Teacher Efficacy

The goal of professional development is to improve instructional strategies that will improve student learning (Marzano et al., 2001). According to Hill (2009), billions of dollars a year are spent on workshops, in-service trainings, and professional development in the United States. Since NCLB, local and federal agencies have spent appropriated funds on professional development to increase student achievement without the results that were anticipated. Research has shown that there is no link to the traditional professional development teachers have received and the increase in student

achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

According to National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996), teacher quality is evident in the three premises necessary to reform schools. They are

1. What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn.
2. Recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools.
3. School reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions under which teachers can teach and teach well (NCTAF, 1996).

Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that teacher quality differences explained the largest portion of the variation in reading and math achievement. Jordan, Medro, and Weersinghe (1997) found that the difference between students who had three consecutive highly effective teachers and those who had three consecutive low-effect teachers was 34 percentile points in reading achievement and 49 percentile points in math. These Tennessee and Texas studies showed that teacher qualities related to higher achievement are content knowledge, teaching experience of 5 years or more, teacher training and credentials, and overall academic ability (Jordan et al., 1997; Rivkin et al., 2005).

According to Wenglinsky (2000), an analysis of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that professional development was a key factor in predicting student achievement. Classes that were taught by teachers who received professional development outperformed peers by 107%. Students taught by teachers who had credentials in the areas they taught only outperformed peers by 39%. Wenglinsky claimed that "changing the nature of teaching and learning in the classroom may be the

most direct way to improve student outcomes” (p. 11). Sanders and Rivers (1996) also supported the link between teacher quality and student achievement. Their study, using the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) found that teacher quality counted for a 50% range in student achievement. The researchers concluded that teacher effect was the largest contributing factor to student achievement.

Guskey and Yoon (2009) found that the success of professional development initiatives was dependent upon follow-up. Job-embedded instructional coaching and professional development “showed positive improvement in student learning when significant amounts of structured and sustained follow-up after the main professional development activities were given” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497). Ross (1992) found that student achievement was higher in classrooms of teachers who had more contact with their coaches and in classrooms of teachers with greater efficacy. Teacher efficacy measures the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement.

Teachers who believe they will make a difference are more likely to see coaching as an opportunity to expand and consolidate their teaching techniques. In contrast, teachers who see student learning as swamped by uncontrollable forces might regard coaching as nothing but more work. Similarly, teachers with strong beliefs in their own effectiveness would be more willing to accept the risk of negative feedback from a coach. Coaches are more likely to be motivated by high-efficacy teachers who believe instructional improvement is worthwhile (Ross, 1992, p. 52).

Shidler (2009) also found a significant correlation between teacher efficacy and instructional coaching. Her study looked at the link between hours spent coaching

teachers in the classroom for efficacy in content instruction and child achievements/outcomes. The implications for coaching practice included balancing time between four components to effective coaching: (a) instructing for specific content, (b) modeling techniques and instructional practices, (c) observing teacher practices, and (d) consulting for reflection. “Coaching for increased teacher efficacy has been an essential component to various educational reforms. Those seeking to improve teacher performance leading to enhanced student outcomes on various state assessments have also incorporated coaching into the methodology” (Shidler, 2009, p. 453).

Benefits of an Instructional Coaching Program

Instructional coaching aligns with Annenberg Institute for School Reform initiatives for school improvement. According to King et al. (2015), the benefits of instructional coaching include investment in human capital, sustainability, equity and internal accountability, and connecting school and district. Effective instructional coaches build leadership and instructional capacities by applying andragogy and change theory. Instructional coaches support school improvement efforts of the district and school communities and hold the potential to provide differentiated, targeted support groups. Well implemented coaching models endorse collective responsibility throughout a school district for student learning. Coaches can powerfully facilitate professional development that supports system-wide initiatives (King et al., 2015). “When employed and supported effectively, instructional coaching enhances district professional development systems by providing school and central office personnel with sustained, targeted supports to build knowledge, improve practice, and promote student achievement” (King et al., 2015, p. 2).

Research around the evidence of improved student learning as a direct outcome of

instructional coaching is not yet well documented (Poglinco et al., 2003); however, as instructional coaching is increasingly used and its effect measured, researchers anticipate more and more associations to be established between coaching and student achievement. A mounting body of research submits that coaching is a confident element of effective professional development (King et al., 2015).

According to Neufeld and Roper (2003), coaching connects professional development to direct instruction using varied opportunities to improve instructional strategies. Studies show that instructional coaching leads to improvement in teacher instructional capacities (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al., 2003). “Teachers apply their learning more deeply, frequently, and consistently than teachers working alone; teachers improve their capacity to reflect, and teachers apply their learning not only to their work with students, but also to their work with each other” (King et al., 2015, p. 2). Effective instructional coaching can also improve cultures and conditions in schools (Neufeld & Roper, 2003), proving that the influence of instructional coaching goes further than only improving content instruction.

Instructional coaches respond to specific needs suggested by data, allowing improvement efforts to target the improvement of instructional strategies (King et al., 2015). According to Barr, Simmons, and Zarrow (2003), using data to monitor the coaching program will generate coherence in a school to tie different levels of the structure by concentrating on strategic capacities of need that are recommended by evidence. “Coaching is an embedded, visible support that attempts to respond to student and teacher needs in ongoing, consistent, dedicated ways” (King et al., 2015, p. 88).

According to Coggins et al. (2003), the new learning done by teachers using the instructional coaching model is more likely to transfer into the classroom. Coaches work

collaboratively with teachers to guide and support their experiences with new teaching strategies, and the coach and teacher hold each other responsible for implementation of new initiatives (Barr et al., 2003). Neufeld and Roper (2003) submitted that because instructional coaching takes place in the setting in which teachers are working, the learning and experimentation becomes more real for the teachers.

“An essential feature of coaching is that it uses the relationships between coaches, principals, and teachers to create the conversation that leads to behavioral, pedagogical, and content knowledge change” (King et al., 2015, p. 88). Lyons and Pinnell (2001) believed that effective coaching distributes leadership by allowing the coach to support the principal’s goals and initiatives by constantly keeping the focus on teaching and learning. Payne (1998) asserted that instructional coaches promote collaborative collegial cultures in which teachers feel ownership and responsibility for improvement efforts. School climate, insufficient support, limited leadership and instructional capacity, and teacher isolation are combatted by instructional coaching programs (King et al., 2015). Teachers who receive coaching are more likely to incorporate new teaching practices into their classrooms (Joyce & Showers, 1996). According to Knight (2007), an increase of 70% was found when instructional practices were modeled by coaches. Truesdale (2003) found that teachers who did not receive support from instructional coaches stopped using the new knowledge after 15 weeks, while those who received coaching increased the transfer of new learning into their classrooms.

Challenges of an Instructional Coaching Program

The Annenberg Institute has taken the opportunity to work with, learn from, and observe in districts that are involved in instructional coaching as part of their professional development structure. Over time, some challenges have been noted that could hinder

effective instructional coaching. One challenge facing instructional coaching programs is focusing too much on the classroom and isolating coaching from systemic goals. An advantage of instructional coaching is that it is based at the classroom and school level so the coaching is a practical, efficient model for professional learning; however, “this same strength can create an array of divergent approaches to teacher learning and to building content knowledge, particularly in large or decentralized systems” (King et al., 2015, p. 5). The maximum consistency is when coaching is directed by system-wide goals and ideals that are grounded in experience and research and evading contrasting methods at the school level and unproductive, weak support from the district office (King et al., 2015). For coaching to be effective, the school district must show commitment to the coaching program. Coaches will need professional development designed to identify strategies and expectations of the system (Knight, 2007).

Coaching is only one component of a professional development structure. It is not the only answer. According to King et al. (2015), coaching can sustain professional learning and act as a bridge between school and district goals, but it must be clearly linked to other professional development opportunities and extensive modules of improvement such as “small learning communities or district-wide frameworks” (p.5). If coaching is the only form of professional education, it runs the hazard of generating remote pockets of effective teaching and learning in individual schools rather than supporting improvements for both schools and districts (King et al., 2015).

Often, coaching models fail to reach resistant teachers. When coaching is voluntary, resistant teachers can choose not to participate. When coaching is required, resistant teachers often feel resentment (Knight, 2007). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) was cautious in recommending instructional coaching as a professional development

model because teacher reactions to instructional coaching have not been fully realized in research. While not entirely evident in many areas of research, teacher resistance has surfaced as a prevalent theme across several studies (Borman et al., 2006; Deussen, 2007; Knight, 2009). In instructional coaching programs that were mandated, coaches stated they were often perceived by teachers as evaluators or supervisors (Borman et al., 2006). Veteran teachers are more likely to resist coaching than teachers who are beginning their careers (Borman et al., 2006; Richard, 2003). According to Knight (2004), teachers will eventually grow more comfortable with having a coach once trust is established, and the resistance will start to dissipate. Borman et al. (2006) maintained that perceiving teachers as administrators would also contribute to the resistance some teachers feel toward instructional coaching.

Another challenge to an instructional coaching program is the lack of assessment indicators and documentation of impact that coaches are actually having on teaching and learning. While there continues to be an increasing demand for evidence that instructional coaching increases student achievement, there is a lack of proven examples. Due to this deficit in research, districts are allowed to build their own procedures and content, but these models must then be followed to determine their success (King et al., 2015). Effective coaching models should use gauges to measure the changes in their practice and evaluate the value of their work; however, the time and knowledge to methodically gather a range of evidence remains a challenge (Coggins et al., 2003).

Russo (2004) listed other logistical challenges to coaching programs. Training and support for coaches is a challenge, since coaches need their own professional training. Safeguarding teacher release time and buy-in to join in the coaching initiative is another issue. In some cases, officials are underestimating what it takes to do the work,

the implications of removing these people from schools, and what it would take to train them (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). There is also the issue of cost with some states spending upwards of \$6 million on coaching programs (Russo, 2004). Finally, there are a number of cultural challenges created by coaching. “In many situations, the coach’s role in a school is almost entirely new and different—he or she is neither administrator nor district overseer nor classroom peer. Schools and school systems are simply not used to these positions” (Russo, 2004, p. 3).

Summary

The ultimate goal of any instructional coaching program is an increase in student achievement. According to Moran (2007), there are three principles upon which the premise of instructional coaching lie: collaboration as an asset, developing capacities to engage in creative problem solving and reflection; and the provision of many professional learning opportunities to support adults in new, effective, instructional techniques, skills, and strategies. “Instructional coaching is not a quick fix, but when it comes to creating an exemplary faculty, quick fixes are rarely the answer. Instructional coaching involves dedicated, persistent meaningful collaboration among teachers, coaches, and principals” (Knight, 2005, p. 21).

Killion et al. (2012) believed that school leaders must continue to examine adult learning theory, the role of the instructional coach, teacher perceptions of instructional coaching, and best practices of instructional coaches. Done well, coaching works to change teacher practice and student achievement. If done poorly, coaching could have little effect. Coaching supports teachers in investigating and reflecting upon their practice through concentrated, persistent professional learning. Coaching must be embedded into the daily lives of teachers and considered part of their everyday work.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of instructional coaching in the elementary school and to determine to what extent variations in groups of teachers by experience and level of education impact their perception. The following section is a detailed account of the research design and approach selected for this inquiry in teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. Included in this section is a description of the setting and the population from which the sample was chosen as well as an explanation of the strategies used to support the mixed-methods design. A description of the methods used to analyze and interpret the data is also included. The theoretical frameworks undergirding this study were instructional coaching and andragogy.

The following questions guided this study.

Research Questions

Quantitative Portion

1. To what extent does a teacher's experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?

Qualitative Portion

3. How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

This mixed-methods study employed a survey consisting of both quantitative and qualitative questions. The survey instrument used in this study is titled Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). This tool was developed "to determine to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices

as beneficial professional development practices” (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). Quantitative data related to Research Questions 1 and 2 were gathered and analyzed through an electronic, self-administered, attitudinal survey (Survey Monkey software). Qualitative data related to Research Question 3 were gathered and analyzed within the same survey and responses were coded thematically. The researcher used questions in the beginning of the survey to determine the demographics of the participants, and contributors proceeded by responding to Gordon’s (2013) series of questions and the researcher’s four qualitative open-ended questions. For the quantitative portion, close-ended questions were used and participants responded using a Likert-type scale. For the qualitative portion, participants were asked to answer four survey questions that were open-ended and qualitative in nature by typing responses into the spaces provided. These questions were additions to the survey developed by Gordon. The researcher obtained permission from Gordon to add this qualitative portion to the existing survey. By using the mixed-methods process, the researcher hoped to triangulate the data in an effort to have a valid, reliable study. Mixing different types of research and data can strengthen a study (Green & Cracelli, 1997). “Because all methods of data collection have limitations, the use of multiple methods can neutralize or cancel out some of the disadvantages of certain methods” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 97).

This research was done in a collaborative effort with the school district. The superintendent of this public school system was interested in using the data and the data analysis to inform the training needs and job descriptions of the instructional coaches in the district. This researcher used the district’s Survey Monkey account to create the electronic survey and the assistant superintendent of the district took responsibility for administering the survey by sending the electronic link through email to all classroom

teachers in 15 elementary schools across the district. Permission to use the district's data was obtained by the researcher. After the survey was conducted, the results were analyzed by using a chi square statistical test for each demographic group of experience and for the demographic group of advanced degrees or additional certifications. The data collected from the qualitative questions were analyzed through coding of themes. The quantitative and qualitative data were synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Setting

This study was conducted in a K-12 rural school district in north, central North Carolina. The district consists of 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one early college high school, and one alternative school. At the time this study was conducted, the school district enrolled 13,179 students. Of those students, 6,207 were elementary, 3,071 were middle, and 3,901 were high school children. Demographic data indicated that 62.5% of students were White, 20.2% were Black, 11.4% were Hispanic, 5% were multi-racial, and 0.4% were American Indian. In this district, there were 1,131 licensed, full-time employees; 431 full-time classified employees; and 359 part-time employees. The district was ranked number one for employing more citizens from the county than any other industry in the county. Of the employees of this school system, 545 held master's and advanced degrees, nine held doctoral degrees, and 138 were National Board certified teachers (District Profile, 2015).

Population and Sample

This study focused on elementary classroom teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. Therefore, in this convenience sampling, 263 elementary classroom teachers were invited to complete the survey. Administrators, instructional support teachers,

classified employees, and specials teachers (i.e., physical education, technology, music, and art) were not included in this sample. Each school in the district employed a full-time instructional coach; therefore, all classroom teachers had access to an instructional coach in their building.

Research Design

This study used a concurrent triangulation and transformative approach. This research design is often used when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to “confirm, cross validate, or corroborate findings in a single study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 253). In this mixed-methods study, both the quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. According to Creswell (2009), when data are collected concurrently, the quantitative and qualitative data are gathered at the same time in the project and the implementation is simultaneous. Integration of mixed-methods data means that the researcher uses both kinds of data at once. For example, in data collection, this “mixing might involve combining open-ended questions on a survey with close-ended questions on the survey” (Creswell, 2009, p. 243). The triangulation methods used separate qualitative and quantitative data to offset the weakness found in one type of method with the strength of the other type of data (Creswell, 2012). When triangulating data, the research can result in “well-validated and substantiated findings” (Creswell, 2009, p. 253).

In addition, this concurrent triangulation study was guided by the researcher’s purposes of identifying perspectives of teachers, quantifying those results, and also asking about their ideas for improvement using open-ended questions. This design was made “so that diverse participants are given a voice in the change process of an organization that is studied primarily quantitatively” (Creswell, 2009, p. 257).

Two of the questions in the survey utilized quantitative research methodology. Often, quantitative data are collected using survey instruments. The use of survey data “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2009, p. 145). Elementary teachers in the district completed a survey designed by Gordon (2013), entitled Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Coaching.

Quantitative research is a “method for testing objective theories through an examination of the relationships among variables” (Creswell, 2009, p. 144). The quantitative data for this study were disaggregated in two ways. The data were disaggregated into the four instructional coaching best practice categories identified by Knight (2007), Brady (2007), and Marzano (2007): collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss district and school wide instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback. The data were also disaggregated by the two demographic groups: years of teaching experience and highest level of formal education. This survey used a four-point Likert scale to evaluate elementary teachers’ perceptions about instructional coaching. This quantitative portion of the survey was designed to answer Research Questions 1 and 2.

1. To what extent does a teacher’s experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher’s level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?

The disaggregated data were then compared in order to determine differences among the

demographic groups.

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is an investigation into fully understanding an individual's impressions, behaviors, and attitudes due to their experiences. The teachers in this study had the background and experience necessary to give accounts of their experiences with instructional coaches and their perceptions of instructional coaching. The qualitative research design is an investigative method to be utilized within the context of educational arenas to obtain a deep understanding of a certain event (Creswell, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A qualitative research design was selected as a part of this study because it allows for the use of open-ended questions in an effort to gather more information from participants; and it will provide insight about the perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of those participants (Creswell, 2009; Glense, 2006; Patton, 2002). The open-ended questions expanded the analysis of the quantitative portion of the survey data. The information given by the participants revealed their perceptions based on their experiences. Again, participants were assured of their confidentiality. Janesick (2000) acknowledged, "The qualitative researcher prefers to capture the lived experiences of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives, case by case" (p. 395). Therefore, the qualitative section of this study answered Research Question 3: How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

Because this study included both qualitative and quantitative data, it is considered a mixed-methods study – specifically concurrent triangulation and transformative methods study as mentioned above. The quantitative data results were further explored and explained with the qualitative data (open-ended questions). This mixed-methods design increased the validity of the study because it allowed the participants to expand

upon their answers in the quantitative questions and the two portions were linked through the analysis of the study. The foundation for this method is that the quantitative data provided an overall understanding of the research problem (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Therefore, for this study, the quantitative analysis of teacher perceptions of instructional coaching provided groundwork for the qualitative exploration, and the qualitative investigation provided context and understanding of the experiences as well as ideas about how to improve instructional coaching best practices.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

A survey design was used to collect data related to teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. According to Creswell (2012), an attitudinal instrument lends itself to correlational studies, experiments, and surveys. Surveys are typically used to “describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behaviors” (Fink, 2009, p. 11). For this study, the researcher used a cross-sectional, self-administered attitudinal survey to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

The researcher used the participating district’s Survey Monkey account. Survey Monkey is a survey software program that is easily accessible. By using the district’s account, the researcher was allowed the ability to have unlimited survey questions, data exports to integrate with SPSS for analysis, and the capability to determine if there were statistically significant differences between response groups. This software has many layers of physical and environmental safeguards that were specifically designed to protect the rights of participants.

The survey instrument chosen by the researcher is called Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). Gordon (2013) designed this instrument for use

in her study of perceptions of instructional coaches by teachers. She wanted to determine “to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices as beneficial professional development practices” (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). In Gordon’s study, she articulated her unease about the lack of studies investigating instructional coaching practices from the perspective of teachers toward instructional coaching. She found that, in general, teachers found instructional coaching to be helpful and positive. Gordon called for further research of the perceptions of teachers on instructional coaching using qualitative measures. The researcher wanted to expand upon this study to determine if there was an influence, based on demographics that included years of experiences and advanced degrees, on teacher perceptions of instructional coaching; and, using Gordon’s suggestion, added a qualitative phase to the study.

Gordon’s (2013) survey opens with a few demographic questions that are categorical, including the number of years of teaching experience and advanced degrees or certifications. Once demographic information was completed, the survey moved to a four-point Likert-type scale: 1, rarely; 2, sometimes; 3, usually; and 4, almost always. The questions were designed by Gordon to determine teacher perceptions related to instructional coaching best practices described by including “collaboration on district and school-wide instructional concerns, collaboration on instructional intervention, modeling instructional practices, and observing and providing feedback” (p. 52). Teachers needed 10-20 minutes to complete the survey. Because the researcher used Gordon’s same survey, permission to use the survey has been documented in Appendix A, and the survey itself can be found in Appendix B. Permission to conduct research at the district was requested and is evident in Appendix C. Permission from the district was granted and is displayed in Appendix D.

To determine demographic groups, the survey included items specific to number of years teaching and level of formal education. The subgroups for number of years teaching were 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and more than 20 years. The demographic groups for formal levels of education are designed using North Carolina teacher licensure levels. Those subgroups included bachelor's degree, master's degree, master's degree +30, and doctorate. Regardless of the way participants respond to the demographic questions, the remaining survey questions about perceptions of instructional coaching practices were the same for all participants.

The survey was divided into four areas related to instructional coaching best practices as identified by Knight (2007), Brady (2007), and Marzano (2007). Those areas include collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback. These four subcategories of instructional coaching best practices were represented on the survey in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Table 1 includes the best practices of instructional coaches and the number of quantitative and qualitative questions for each.

Table 1

Number of Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Questions Representing Each Best Practice

Best Practice	Number of Quantitative Questions	Number of Qualitative Questions
Collaboration on district and school-wide concerns	3	1
Collaboration on instructional intervention	5	1
Modeling instructional practices	3	1
Observing and providing feedback	4	1

Gordon (2013) took steps to guarantee the reliability and validity of her survey instrument. Gordon stated the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the four Likert categories for her study ranged between .85-.93, where an alpha for .70 or greater is acceptable (Creswell, 2012). To ensure the content validity of her survey, Gordon asked a district-level administrator and a building-level administrator to review the survey. In addition, a small group of classroom teachers from the school who was not chosen to participate in the study were asked to pilot the survey. These teachers indicated the questions were clear and did not need to be changed. Gordon also field tested the survey with a number of teachers from the district whose scores were not included in the study's data. The reliability of the survey was increased due to the close-ended questions and the uniform data (Fink, 2009), and each respondent was asked the same set of questions (Fowler, 2009). Each participant was allowed to log into the website to answer the survey questions only once.

To ensure the content validity of the additional qualitative questions, this researcher asked the participating district's superintendent, assistant superintendent, and the director of testing and research to review the additional questions. All administrators agreed that the qualitative questions were clear and needed no changes. The researcher asked permission from Gordon to add the questions to the survey, and permission was granted.

As stated previously, the Survey Monkey online instrument was used to collect the data, and results were processed through the provider's analysis software. The data were disaggregated between demographic groups and were compared by using measures of central tendency for each question.

The researcher and the assistant superintendent collaborated upon an introduction

to be included in the email sent to participants containing the survey link. The introduction explained the purpose of the study and how the data would be used by the district and the researcher. The introduction also explained that participation was completely voluntary and reminded participants that they could opt out at any time. Participants were also reminded not to include any identifying information in the open-ended portion of the survey. Questions with identifiers were redacted. The full text of the email introduction can be found in Appendix E.

Data Analysis Procedures

Both quantitative data and qualitative data were necessary to answer the three research questions for this study. A survey tool was utilized. The research questions for this explanatory mixed-methods study were

1. To what extent does a teacher's experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
3. How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

A description of the research questions, approaches, data collection, and analysis methods are found in Table 2. The first two research questions were uncovered through the quantitative section of the Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey (Gordon, 2013). The third research question was answered through the qualitative, open-ended questions that were added to the survey.

Table 2

Data Collection and Analysis for Research Questions

Research Question	Mixed Methods	Data Collection	Data Analysis
To what extent does a teacher's experience impact her perception of instructional coaching?	Quantitative	Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey (Gordon, 2013)	Chi-square Test
To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact her perception of instructional coaching?	Quantitative	Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey (Gordon, 2013)	Chi-square Test
How should an instructional coach modify her professional development approach to impact the needs of diverse adult learners?	Qualitative – opened ended questions	Additional question to Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey (Gordon, 2013) approved by Gordon	Open Coding

The first two research questions ask about teacher perceptions of instructional coaching based on the four categories of instructional coaching best practices. Those best practices are collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback.

Research Questions 1 and 2 call for a comparison of groups. Research Question 1 compares responses of participants based on their years of teaching experience. Research Question 2 calls for the comparison of responses based on the highest level of education earned by participants. Because these questions were comparing categorical data using an ordinal Likert scale, the researcher used the chi-square test (Laerd Statistics, 2013). The test was used to determine whether there is a significant association between the years of experience and perception of coaching as well as the highest level of education

obtained and perceptions of instructional coaching.

The null hypothesis for Research Question 1 was, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to years of experience.” The null hypothesis for Research Question 2 was, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to levels of education.” The researcher performed the chi-square test to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the two categorical variables and then accepted or rejected the null hypothesis using a significance level $p < .05$. The researcher used the SPSS Statistics Software, Version 22 (2015) to run the chi-square tests. The researcher ran the test twice for each quantitative question on the survey instrument. The first chi-square test was run using participants’ years of experience as the category or level, and the second test was run according to participants’ highest level of education at the category or level. The researcher entered the number of each Likert response given for each question. Each question and the results of the statistics test along with the expected results and significance value were displayed in a contingency table.

Open-ended questions on the survey were used to collect qualitative data for this research study. The researcher gained insight into teacher ideas about how instructional coaching could be improved. Because the open-ended questions were asked of all participants, the researcher had more data and many perspectives about what those improvements should be. Focused group interviews of only a few teachers would not allow the amount of responses the district administrators and this researcher were seeking as they made an effort to improve instructional coaching practices in the school system.

The qualitative portion of the survey was organized using the open-coding

process through QDA Miner Lite software. Coding is a process of bracketing chunks of the text of open-ended answers and then writing a word that represents a category in the margins (Creswell, 2012). Once these categories were determined, themes emerged. Then, these common themes were triangulated with the quantitative survey results. Through this triangulation, the researcher explored the comparisons, similarities, and differences between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Limitations

The participants in this study taught in schools that have instructional coaches, but their knowledge (or lack of) of how instructional coaching should work could skew data results. The teachers in the study may not be aware of the research around the effective, best practices of instructional coaches. Moreover, personal attitudes or opinions about the instructional coach in the teachers' settings could also skew data. Often, teachers have personal experiences with instructional coaches that could affect their opinions positively or negatively, and these personal relationships would not be addressed by the data.

Because teachers in different schools need different strategies or professional development to further their efficacies, the instructional coach program will be different from one school to another. The teachers likely interpreted questions differently from one another on the survey as they self-reported their feelings and views. Self-reporting data can be skewed due to limitations that include how honest a participant is when reporting his/her perceptions and how much time and effort he/she spent in answering the questions.

Participation by teachers could have been a major limitation to this study. Fourteen elementary schools in one district were asked to participate in the survey. The

survey information was distributed to the 247 teachers in each school by the assistant superintendent of the participating district. Some teachers may have chosen not to participate in the survey, and the number of responses to the survey could have decreased.

Delimitations

The population was delimited to elementary teachers in one school system in a rural school district in north, central North Carolina. Therefore, the data from this study may not be able to be generalized to other districts or educational systems. While all teachers in the school district were asked to participate, there could have been differences in the perceptions and views of those who chose to participate in the study and those who did not. Complete confidentiality was assured to all participants invited.

Another delimitation of this study is the narrow focus on how teachers perceived instructional coaching. The study measured the relationship of teacher experiences with instructional coaching and their thoughts on how instructional coaches could improve their practice. This study did not focus on the perceptions of instructional coaches, administration, students, or other school specialists.

Conclusion

The participating school district and the researcher collaborated on this study in an effort to improve instructional coaching practices in the school system. The researcher used Gordon's (2013) survey instrument along with additional qualitative questions suggested by the school's superintendent. The researcher used the online survey account that belongs to the school system, and the survey link was sent to participants by the assistant superintendent. The researcher chose a concurrent triangulation research design. Quantitative data to answer the first two research questions were collected through the

use of close-ended ordinal responses on a survey instrument. Qualitative data were collected on the same instrument through open-ended questions in an effort to answer the third research question. Specific demographic data were collected for survey completion, but names remained anonymous to the researcher. The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using chi-square tests and open coding according to years of experience and level of formal education. The researcher presents results from this study in an analysis in Chapter 4 of this study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of instructional coaching in the elementary school and to determine to what extent variations in groups of teachers by experience and level of education impact their perception. The following questions guided this study.

Quantitative Portion

1. To what extent does a teacher's experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?

Qualitative Portion

3. How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

This mixed-methods study employed a survey consisting of both quantitative and qualitative questions. The survey instrument used in this study is titled Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). This tool was developed "to determine to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices as beneficial professional development practices" (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). Quantitative data related to Research Questions 1 and 2 were conducted by gathering and analyzing quantitative data that were collected through an electronic, self-administered, attitudinal survey (Survey Monkey software). Qualitative data related to Research Question 3 were conducted within the same survey and responses were coded thematically. The researcher used questions in the beginning of the survey to determine the demographics of the participants, and contributors responded to Gordon's (2013) series of questions and

the researcher's four qualitative open-ended questions.

For the quantitative portion, close-ended questions were used and participants responded using a Likert-type scale. For the qualitative portion, participants were asked to answer four survey questions that were open-ended and qualitative in nature by typing responses in the spaces provided. These questions were additions to the survey developed by Gordon (2013). The researcher obtained permission from Gordon to add this qualitative portion to the existing survey.

This research was done in a collaborative effort with the school district. The superintendent of this public school system wanted to use the data and the data analysis to inform the training needs and job descriptions of the instructional coaches in the district. This researcher used the district's Survey Monkey account to create the electronic survey, and the assistant superintendent of the district took responsibility for administering the survey by sending the electronic link through email to all classroom teachers in 15 elementary schools across the district. Permission to use the district's data was obtained by the researcher.

This study was conducted in a K-12 rural school district in north, central North Carolina. The district consists of 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one early college high school, and one alternative school. Of the employees of this school system, 545 hold master's and advanced degrees, nine hold doctoral degrees, and 138 are National Board certified teachers (District Profile, 2015).

Population and Sample

This study focused on elementary classroom teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. Therefore, all elementary school classroom teachers were invited to participate in this study. Therefore, in this convenience sampling, 263 elementary classroom

teachers were asked to complete the survey. Administrators, instructional support teachers, classified employees, and specials teachers (i.e., physical education, technology, music, and art) were not included in this sample. Each school in the district employs a full-time instructional coach; therefore, all classroom teachers have access to an instructional coach in their building. One hundred thirty-one elementary teachers responded to the survey for a response rate of 49.8%.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument chosen by the researcher is called Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). Gordon (2013) designed this instrument for use in her study of perceptions of instructional coaches by teachers. She wanted to determine "to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices as beneficial professional development practices" (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). In Gordon's study, she articulated her unease about the lack of studies investigating instructional coaching practices from the perspective of teachers toward instructional coaching. She found that, in general, teachers found instructional coaching to be helpful and positive. Gordon called for further research of the perceptions of teachers on instructional coaching using qualitative measures. The researcher wanted to expand upon this study to determine if there was an influence, based on demographics that included years of experiences and advanced degrees, on teacher perceptions of instructional coaching; and, using Gordon's suggestion, added a qualitative phase to the study.

The survey opened with two demographic questions that are categorical including the number of years of teaching experience and advanced degrees or certifications. Once demographic information was completed, the survey moved to a four-point Likert-type scale: 1, rarely; 2, sometimes; 3, usually; and 4, almost always. The questions were

designed by Gordon (2013) to determine teacher perceptions related to instructional coaching best practices described by including “collaboration on district and school-wide instructional concerns, collaboration on instructional intervention, modeling instructional practices, and observing and providing feedback” (p. 52). Teachers needed 10-20 minutes to complete the survey.

To determine demographic groups, the survey included items specific to number of years teaching and level of formal education. The subgroups for number of years teaching were 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and more than 20 years. The demographic groups for formal levels of education are designed using North Carolina’s teacher licensure levels. Those subgroups include bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, master’s degree +30, and doctorate. Regardless of the way participants responded to the demographic questions, the remaining survey questions about perceptions of instructional coaching practices were the same for all participants.

The survey was divided into four areas related to instructional coaching best practices as identified by Knight (2007), Brady (2007), and Marzano (2007). Those areas include collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback. These four subcategories of instructional coaching best practices were represented on the survey in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

Descriptive Data

The researcher gathered descriptive statistics to provide information about the demographics of the survey participants. The first two questions on the survey required

the participants to indicate their number of years of experience and their highest level of education. The participants in this study were K-5 teachers. Table 3 exhibits the number of years of experience of the 131 participants. According to these data, the majority of participants have been teaching for more than 20 years. The demographics of teachers with experience levels ranging from 6-20 years was extremely balanced with 27 participants in each of those categories, while teachers with 5 years of experience or less accounted for the lowest total.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Number of Years in the Teaching Profession

Years of Experience	N	Frequency	Percent
0-5	131	18	13.7%
6-10	131	27	20.6%
11-15	131	27	20.6%
16-20	131	27	20.6%
More than 20	131	32	24.4%

Table 4 indicates the highest levels of education of the participating teachers. Teachers holding bachelor's degrees accounted for most of the population at 58.8%, while teachers holding master's degrees had the second highest representation with 36.6%. There was a very low representation of teachers holding a master's +30 (3.8%) and a doctorate degree (0.8%).

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Levels of Education

Degree Level	N	Percent	Frequency
Bachelor's	131	58.8%	77
Master's	131	36.6%	48
Master's +30	131	3.8%	5
Doctorate	131	0.8%	1

Statistical Analysis of the Research Questions

After the survey was conducted, the results were analyzed by using a chi square statistical test for each demographic group of experience and for the demographic group of advanced degrees or additional certifications. The data collected from the qualitative questions were analyzed through coding of themes. The quantitative and qualitative data were then synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

The first two research questions asked about teacher perceptions of instructional coaching based on the four categories of instructional coaching best practices. Those best practices are collaboration around school- and district-wide concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback.

Research Questions 1 and 2 called for a comparison of groups. Research Question 1 compared responses of participants based on their years of teaching experience. Research Question 2 called for the comparison of responses based on the highest level of education earned by participants. Because these questions were comparing categorical data using an ordinal Likert scale, the researcher used the chi-square test (Laerd Statistics, 2013). The test was used to determine whether there is a significant association between the years of experience and perceptions of coaching as well as the highest level of education obtained and perceptions of instructional coaching.

The null hypothesis for Research Question 1 was, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to years of experience.” The null hypothesis for Research Question 2 was, “ H_0 : There is

no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to levels of education.” The researcher performed the chi-square test to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the two categorical variables and then made the decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis using a significance level $p > .05$. The researcher used the SPSS Statistics Software, Version 22 (2015) to run the chi-square tests. The researcher ran the test twice for each quantitative question on the survey instrument. The first chi-square test was run using participant years of experience as the category or level, and the second test was run according to the participants’ highest level of education at the category or level. The researcher entered the number of each Likert response given for each question. Each question and the results of the statistics test along with the expected results and significance value were displayed in a contingency table.

Research Question 1

“To what extent does a teacher’s experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?” In an effort to answer this question, the researcher analyzed the responses utilizing the 4-point Likert scale for each of the quantitative questions on the survey. Table 5 represents each of the quantitative questions on the survey and the results of the chi-square tests and p values. The researcher ran a chi-square test using years of experience for the categories for each question. For each of the quantitative questions, there were 131 responses indicating that 100% of the participants answered each quantitative question on the survey. A contingency table for each question used to find the chi square and p values can be found in Appendices F and G.

Table 5

Chi Square and Significance Results from Survey Items

Survey Item	Chi ² Result	P Value	Significance
<u>Collaboration Around School and District Concerns</u>			
3. The IC helps teachers set high standards for teaching.	15.8052	.200324	not significant
4. The IC helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.	22.1981	.035358	significant
5. In my school, there is collaboration between the IC and teachers to address school-wide concerns/practices.	22.2728	.034574	significant
<u>Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention</u>			
7. The IC helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction.	15.5085	.214798	not significant
8. The IC assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.	23.9005	.020984	significant
9. The IC provides teachers with a variety of resources for improving curriculum and instruction in my classroom.	9.1436	.690618	not significant
10. The IC assists teachers with the development of appropriate learning assessments.	20.2966	.061679	not significant
11. In my school, the IC provides collaborative planning opportunities among teachers.	17.2284	.141205	not significant
<u>Modeling Instructional Practices</u>			
13. The IC helps teachers understand how to try new instructional practices in the classroom.	19.1181	.085718	not significant
14. The IC provides teachers with demonstrations of master teaching.	15.4113	.219708	not significant
15. In my school, the IC models instructional practices in teachers' classrooms.	18.2442	.108475	not significant
<u>Observing and Providing Feedback</u>			
17. In my school, the IC observes teachers and provides them with feedback.	15.7036	.205194	not significant
18. The IC gives teachers valuable feedback on classroom practices.	19.7124	.072725	not significant
19. The IC uses feedback to enable teachers to build on teaching strategies.	11.5247	.205194	not significant
20. The feedback from the IC has helped teachers be more reflective of their instruction and assessment practices.	14.7159	.25734	not significant

No significant difference was found in all responses to the survey items, save three (4, 5, and 8). Items 4 and 5 are found in the survey section “Collaboration around School and District Wide Concerns,” and item 8 is found in the section “Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention.” While all percentages for responses can be found in Appendices F and G, the researcher wanted to display the data for those three particular questions here and examine each item’s responses to determine where the significant differences lie. Table 6 displays item 4 from the survey and the percentages of each response given by participants for each category. Percentages are based on the number of respondents in each category. For example, in the 0-5 years of experience category, percentages were found based on 18, which is the number of responses given for that group of participants. Similarly, percentages were calculated using 27 for respondents with 6-10 years of experience, 27 for respondents with 11-15 years of experience, 27 for respondents with 16-20 years of experience, and 32 for respondents with more than 20 years of experience. The data are analyzed a bit later in this study to find percentages based on 131 respondents, which is the total number of respondents on the survey. Item 4 states, “The IC helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.”

Table 6

Survey Item 4 – Percentage of Responses

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5	5%	5%	33.3%	55.6%
6-10	4%	7%	18.5%	70%
11-15	4%	4%	26%	66.6%
16-20	18.5%	22.2%	14.8%	44%
More than 20	6%	12.5%	31.2%	40%

According to these data, the researcher can determine that most teachers (70%)

with 6-10 years of experience believe their instructional coach almost always helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Teachers with 11-15 years of experience also had a high percentage in the “almost always” category with 66.6%. These percentages are higher than the other three groups in that category. Also, the teachers in the 16-20 years of experience group marked rarely much more often (18.5%) than the teachers at the other levels of experience. Only 10% of teachers with less than 5 years of experience, only 11% of teachers with 6-10 years of experience, and only 8% of teachers with 11-15 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Conversely, almost 40% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience said that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set high standards for student performance.

Table 7 displays item 5 from the survey and the percentages of each response given by participants for each category. Percentages are based on the number of respondents in each category. For example, in the 0-5 years of experience category, percentages were found based on 18, which is the number of responses give for group of participants. Similarly, percentages were calculated using 27 for respondents with 6-10 years of experience, 27 for respondents with 11-15 years of experience, 27 for respondents with 16-20 years of experience, and 32 for respondents with more than 20 years of experience. The data are analyzed a bit later in this study to find percentages based on 131 respondents, which is the total number of respondents on the survey. Item 5 states, “In my school, there is collaboration between the Instructional Coach and teachers to address school-wide and district wide concerns and practices.”

Table 7

Survey Item 5 –Percentages of Responses

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5	5%	11%	27.7%	55.6%
6-10	11%	0%	11%	77.8%
11-15	7%	4%	26%	63%
16-20	14.8%	26%	7%	51.8%
More than 20	6.2%	9.3%	37.5%	46.8%

Again, according to these data, most teachers (77.8%) with 6-10 years of experience believed that the instructional coach collaborates with teachers at their schools to address school-wide and district-wide concerns. This is in contrast to the responses of teachers in the other experiences categories for the “almost always” response. When adding the “almost always” response to the “usually” response, both of which indicate a positive answer, teachers in the 0-5 years of experience hold 83.3% of responses, teachers in the 6-10 years of experience category hold 88% of responses, teachers in the 11-15 years of experience category hold 89% of responses, and teachers in the more than 20 years of experience category hold 84% of these responses. However, teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded to this survey item with “usually” or “almost always” with 58.8%.

The other survey item that showed significant differences due to chi square and p values was survey item 8. This survey item was in the instructional coach best practice category entitled “Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention.” The survey item reads, “The Instructional Coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.” Table 8 below displays the percentages for each response for the years of experience category.

Table 8

Survey Item 8 – Percentages of Responses

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5	5%	11%	27.7%	55.6%
6-10	11%	14.8%	11%	63%
11-15	14.8%	22.2%	22.2%	40.7%
16-20	37%	22.2%	3.7%	37%
More than 20	6.2%	25%	31.2%	37.5%

According to these data, 37% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely assists teachers with a variety of resources for their classrooms that promote learning for all students. Because the next highest percentage was only 14.8% for the “rarely” response (by teachers with 11-15 years of experience), there is a significant difference in these responses by participants. When adding the “usually” and “almost always” responses, which indicate a response to the survey answer, the teachers in the 0-5 years of experience had 83.2%, teachers in the 6-10 category had 74%, teachers with 11-15 years of experience had 69.9%, teachers with 16-20 years had 40.7%, and teachers with more than 20 years of experience had 68.7% of their groups respond in this manner. Again, teachers with 16-20 years of experience had the lowest positive response percentage for this survey item. When comparing this percentage to the 83.2% of positive responses from the participants in the 0-5 years of experience category, there is a difference.

For Research Question 1, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 which was, “H₀: There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to years of experience, for the most part.” However, in three of 17 cases involving the best practices of collaboration around school- and district-wide concerns and collaboration around instructional

interventions, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses based on those p values. For survey item 4, the p value was .035358; for survey item 5, the p value was .034574; and for survey item 8, the p value was .020984. Because the researcher was using $p > .05$, these three items showed significant differences.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was, “To what extent does a teacher’s level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?” This question called for the comparison of responses based on highest level of education earned by participants. Because these questions were comparing categorical data using an ordinal Likert scale, the researcher used the chi-square test (Laerd Statistics, 2013). The test was used to determine whether there was a significant association between the highest level of education obtained and perceptions of instructional coaching.

The null hypothesis for Research Question 2 was, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to levels of education.” The researcher performed the chi-square test to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the two categorical variables and then accepted or rejected the null hypothesis using a significance level $p > .05$. The researcher used the SPSS Statistics Software, Version 22 (2015) to run the chi-square tests. This second test was run according to the participants’ highest level of education at the category or level. The researcher entered the number of each Likert response given for each question. Each question and the results of the statistics test along with the expected results and significance value were displayed in a contingency table located in Appendix H.

Table 9 represents each of the quantitative questions on the survey and the results

of the chi-square tests and p values. The researcher ran a chi-square test using highest level of education for the categories for each survey item. For each of the quantitative questions, there were 131 responses, indicating that 100% of the participants answered each quantitative question on the survey.

Table 9

Chi-square and Significance Results from Survey Items

Survey Item	Chi ² Result	P Value	Significance
Collaboration Around School and District Concerns			
3. The IC helps teachers set high standards for teaching.	6.3034	.097745	not significant
4. The IC helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.	6.5450	.087904	not significant
5. In my school, there is collaboration between the IC and teachers to address school-wide concerns/practices.	8.0297	.53116	not significant
Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention			
7. The IC helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction.	4.2434	.894672	not significant
8. The IC assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.	10.4884	.312414	not significant
9. The IC provides teachers with a variety of resources for improving curriculum and instruction in my classroom.	2.9202	.967373	not significant
10. The IC assists teachers with the development of appropriate learning assessments.	14.2623	.113295	not significant
11. In my school, the IC provides collaborative planning opportunities among teachers.	3.7747	.925603	not significant
Modeling Instructional Practices			
13. The IC helps teachers understand how to try new instructional practices in the classroom.	13.1438	.156206	not significant
14. The IC provides teachers with demonstrations of master teaching.	9.1675	.421962	not significant
15. In my school, the IC models instructional practices in teachers' classrooms.	14.1469	.117194	not significant
Observing and Providing Feedback			
17. In my school, the IC observes teachers and provides them with feedback.	14.0324	.121176	not significant
18. The IC gives teachers valuable feedback on classroom practices.	12.2779	.19809	not significant
19. The IC uses feedback to enable teachers to build on teaching strategies.	12.2274	.20079	not significant
20. The feedback from the IC has helped teachers be more reflective of their instruction and assessment practices.	14.4288	.10787	not significant

The data listed above show no significant differences in perceptions of instructional coaching based upon the highest level of education obtained by the participants. Due to the results of these data, the researcher must accept the null hypothesis, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to levels of education.”

Research Question 3

For the qualitative portion of this mixed-methods study, the researcher employed four open-ended questions. The researcher used these data to gain insight into teacher ideas about how instructional coaching could be improved. Because the open-ended questions were asked of all the participants, the researcher had more data and many perspectives about what those improvements should be. Focused group interviews of only a few teachers would not allow the amount of responses the district administrators and this researcher were seeking as they make an effort to improve instructional coaching practices in the school system.

The qualitative portion of the survey was organized using the open-coding process using QDA Miner software. Coding is a process of bracketing chunks of the text of open-ended answers and then writing a word or phrase that represents a category in the margins (Creswell, 2012). Once the categories were determined, themes emerged. Then, these common themes were triangulated with the quantitative survey results. Through this triangulation, the researcher was able to explore the comparisons, similarities, and differences between the quantitative and qualitative data.

There were four qualitative questions on the survey. While 131 participants responded to all of the quantitative items, some of the qualitative questions had no response. Table 10 shows the number of participants who answered each of the

qualitative questions and the percentage related to each based on 131 people who responded.

Table 10

Percentage of Responses on Qualitative Items

Survey Item	N	Frequency	Percentage
6. How can the IC at your school improve collaboration around school and district wide concerns and practices?	131	106	81%
12. How can the IC at your school improve collaboration around instructional intervention?	131	103	78.6%
16. How can the IC at your school improve in modeling instructional practices?	131	102	77.8%
21. How can the IC at your school improve in observing and providing feedback?	131	99	75.5%

Each of these qualitative questions was entered into the QDA Miner software by experience levels and then again, separately, according to levels of education. Therefore, the researcher was able to answer Research Question 3: “How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?” The software was able to identify recurring key words for the coding process. The researcher then analyzed each response to add codes or to add items to codes already determined by the software.

First Qualitative Question, Survey Item 6

The first qualitative question on the survey was, “How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around school and district wide instructional concerns and initiatives?” The question was first analyzed in the software and by the researcher in separate batches according to level of experience. Table 11 displays the codes/emerging themes applied to the responses of teachers with 0-5 years of experience.

Eighteen teachers responded to the survey, but only 10 of those teachers responded to this question.

Table 11

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (0-5 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	3
More vertical teaming needed	6
More time is needed to work with teachers	2
IC should offer more resources	1
More flexibility in IC schedule needed	1
Better communication between IC and teachers	1
The IC does a great job	1

According to these data, vertical teaming is a top strategy suggested by teachers with 0-5 years of experience. These teachers also believed that the instructional coach has too many other responsibilities and needs more time to work with teachers. Also requested by these participants are more resources and flexibility in the instructional coach schedule.

Teachers with 6-10 years of experience agreed that more time is needed and that the instructional coach has too many other responsibilities that impede their work with teachers. This group of teachers would like to see the instructional coach provide needed resources and a better level of communication with teachers; however, most of the teachers agreed that the instructional coach should continue to provide the same level of service presently and/or believed the coach was doing a great job. Twenty-seven teachers with 6-10 years of experience responded to the survey, but only 20 responded to this question. Table 12 below displays the codes/themes and the number of times in the responses each theme was mentioned.

Table 12

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (6-10 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	3
More vertical teaming needed	1
More time is needed to work with teachers	5
IC should offer more resources	3
Continue present level of service	10
Better communication between IC and teachers	2
The IC does a great job	12

There were 27 teachers with 11-15 years of experience who responded to the survey, but only 20 of them responded to this question. Table 13 below displays the beliefs of these teachers about how the instructional coach at their school can improve collaboration around school- and district-wide instructional concerns and initiatives. According to these data, several teachers believed that the instructional coach is doing a great job and/or should continue with their present level of service. The common theme continues to emerge that more time is needed to allow the instructional coach to work with teachers and that the instructional coach carries too many other responsibilities that impede their work. These teachers also mentioned that instructional coaches could provide needed resources and could help with implementation of various instructional strategies and should be more visible in the classroom.

Table 13

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (11-15 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	6
IC could help teachers with implementation of strategies	3
More time is needed to work with teachers	3
IC should offer more resources	3
Continue present level of service	5
Better communication between IC and teachers	2
The IC does a great job	13
The IC should be more visible in the classroom	1

For this survey, 27 teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded. Of those 27 participants, 24 answered this survey question. Table 14 displays the codes/themes found after the responses were analyzed.

Table 14

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (16-20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	12
IC schedule should be more flexible to work with teachers	1
More time is needed to work with teachers	6
IC should offer more resources	5
Continue present level of service	2
Better communication between IC and teachers	2
The IC does a great job	5
IC should be more visible in the classroom	4
IC should spend more time working with teachers individually	4
IC should support teachers in the classroom	2
IC should do their job	1

Several members of this group of experienced teachers believed that the instructional coach has too many other responsibilities that impede their work with teachers, and some of these teachers would like the instructional coach to have more time

to work with teachers. These themes continue to recur among every group of teachers. The participants would also like instructional coaches to be more visible in the classroom and provide needed resources. Not as many teachers in this group responded that the instructional coach is doing a great job or that the instructional coach should continue their present level of service. A couple of responses identified support in the classroom and better communication as ways the instructional coach can help with collaboration around school- and district-wide initiatives.

Teachers with the most experience (more than 20 years) were represented with 32 responses to the survey. Of those 32 participants, 26 responded to this survey question. Better communication between the instructional coach and the teachers was a strong theme among this group of teachers and was mentioned 14 times in their responses. This group continued to report that too many other responsibilities and lack of time was a problem for instructional coaches as they work with teachers. Several teachers believed the instructional coach is doing a great job and/or should continue their present level of service. However, some teachers noted that instructional coaches could do a better job in supporting PLCs and supporting instruction and implementation in classrooms. Table 15 displays the results of the responses for these teachers.

Table 15

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (More Than 20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	7
IC should better support PLCs	5
More time is needed to work with teachers	8
IC should offer more resources	1
Continue present level of service	4
Better communication between IC and teachers	14
The IC does a great job	6
IC should support classroom implementation	3
IC should share teachers' concerns with district	1
IC should help support instruction in the classroom	4

After the question was coded according to participant years of experience, it was then coded according to levels of education. Again, there were 131 responses to the multiple choice section of the survey. There were 77 responses of teachers with bachelor's degrees, 48 responses by teachers with master's degrees, five responses by teachers with master's +30 degrees, and one teacher with a doctorate degree; however, not all teachers responded to all of the questions.

When analyzing the first qualitative question according to levels of education, "How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around school and district-wide concerns and initiatives," teachers who hold bachelor degrees were analyzed first. Table 16 shows the number of times each code/theme was mentioned. Of the 77 teachers with bachelor's degrees who responded to this survey, 54 of them responded to this question.

Table 16

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (Bachelor's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	17
IC should better support PLCs	3
More time is needed to work with teachers	13
IC should offer more ideas and resources	6
Continue present level of service	12
Better communication between IC and teachers	8
The IC does a great job	26
IC be more visible to staff	3
IC should spend more time in the classroom	2
IC should establish more effective PLCs	1
IC should gather grade level concerns	1
IC needs more time to plan with teachers	3
IC should co-teach with teachers	1
Establish vertical planning	4

For the most part, teachers with bachelor degrees felt that the instructional coach does a great job (26 mentions) and/or should continue their present level of service (12 mentions). Of course, as mentioned in the data collected above, the lack of time and the level of responsibilities instructional coaches currently have is a detriment to the service they can offer teachers. Teachers who hold bachelor's degrees would like to see instructional coaches be more visible to staff and students, come into the classroom more often, and co-teach with teachers. Planning time seems to be necessary, with a specific focus on vertical planning and planning in PLCs. Teachers with bachelor's degrees would like to have the instructional coaches offer ideas and provide resources and have better communication with their staff and well as provide more support for teachers.

Teachers with master's degrees also believed that instructional coaches are doing a great job with and/or could continue with the present level of service (18 total mentions). Time and too many responsibilities were mentioned again, and some of these teachers mentioned a need for the provision of resources and strategies, establishing

effective PLCs, co-teaching, and having better communication with teachers. Two differences found in responses of teachers with this level of education were that the instructional coach should stay off the cell phone/computer during planning and should “do his/her job.” Table 17 displays the responses of teachers with master’s degrees. Of the 48 teachers with master’s degrees who responded to this survey, 41 of them responded to this question.

Table 17

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 6 (Master’s degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Continue present level of service	6
IC has too many other responsibilities	14
More time is needed to work with teachers	13
The IC does a great job	12
The IC should support teachers in the classroom	4
The IC should provide resources, strategies and ideas	9
The IC should co-teach with teachers	1
The IC should have better communication	1
The IC should establish effective PLCs	1
The IC should stay off computer during planning	1
The IC should do his/her job	1
More time is needed to collaborate	1

There were five participants with master’s degrees +30 who responded to the survey, but only two participants responded to this question. One response was that the instructional coach does a great job, and the other response was that the instructional coach should continue the present level of service. One teacher with a doctorate was represented and that teacher believed that the instructional coach should proceed with the present level of service.

Second Qualitative Question, Survey Item 12

The second qualitative question asked on this instrument was Survey Item 12:

“How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around

instructional intervention?” Again, the researcher entered the information into the QDA Miner software according to years of experience and then again according to levels of education. Each category of teacher responses was analyzed and coded with several themes emerging. Table 18 displays the code/themes from the teachers with 0-5 years of experience. Of the 18 teachers who responded to this survey, seven of them answered this question.

Table 18

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (0-5 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
More time is needed to plan with teachers	3
IC should offer more resources	2
Continue present level of service	1
The IC does a great job	2
The IC should collaborate around instructional intervention	1

According to the data in Table 18, this group of teachers would feel more supported by instructional coaches if they had more time to plan together. These teachers would like the instructional coach to offer more resources and collaborate around instructional intervention. Twice, teachers mentioned that the instructional coach is doing a great job and one mention was made that the instructional coach should continue to provide the present level of service.

Responses from teachers with 6-10 years of experience were analyzed as well. There were 27 responses to the survey from this category of teachers; and of those 27, there were 16 responses to this survey question. These teachers mentioned eight times that the instructional coach in their building was doing a great job and replied four times that the instructional coach should continue their present level of service. The theme of more time to work with teachers was a leading response for needs at six mentions, and

these teachers responded four times that the instructional coach carries too many other responsibilities that impede their work with teachers. This category of participants would also like to see instructional coaches work with PLCs more often and would like to have the instructional coach work in classrooms, perhaps with a small group of students. This group would also like to see vertical team planning encouraged by the instructional coach. Table 19 displays the results from this category of teachers.

Table 19

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (6-10 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	4
More time is needed to work with teachers	6
IC should plan vertically with teachers	4
Continue present level of service	4
The IC should work with small groups	1
The IC does a great job	8
IC should be more visible in the classroom	1
IC should spend more time working with PLCs	5
IC should support implementation in the classroom	2

There were 27 responses by teachers with 11-15 years of experience for this instrument. Of these participants, 19 chose to answer this survey question. Table 20 below displays the codes/themes of the responses for this category of experience level.

Table 20

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (11-15 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	2
The IC should give ideas and support their implementation	1
More planning time for PLCs	1
IC should offer more resources	6
Continue present level of service	2
Better communication between IC and teachers	2
The IC does a great job	10
The IC should model strategies	2
The IC should work with a small group	3
IC should create an intervention bank for the school	1
IC should stop playing on their cell phone or computer	1
IC should schedule peer observations	1

According to these data, this group of teachers, for the most part, believed that the instructional coach at their school is doing a great job and/or should continue the present level of service; however, offering more resources would be beneficial according to some teachers and working with a small group is one suggestion. This group of teachers did not mention that time was a factor (except in planning for PLCs), and the number of responsibilities held by the instructional coach as was mentioned only twice. This is a contrast to what has been reported by other groups for this question and in the other qualitative questions as well. Other requests mentioned by these teachers include the creation of an intervention bank, the scheduling of peer observations, and having instructional coaches stop playing on their computers or phones during times they should be working with teachers or students.

Several requests were made by teachers with 16-20 years of experience as they answered survey item 12. There were 27 responses to the survey by this category of teachers. Of the 27 responses, 20 participants chose to answer this question. The request

that was mentioned most often by this group was for more planning time to work with PLCs and for instructional coaches to give ideas and support for implementation of those ideas in the classroom. Other requests included more time in general and for the provision of needed resources. Having instructional coaches lead conversations in data and have better communication were mentioned as well. Four teachers felt the instructional coaches were doing a great job, and four teachers responded that instructional coaches should continue their present level of service. Table 21 displays these responses.

Table 21

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (16-20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	1
Planning time in PLCs needed	7
The IC should model strategies	2
More time is needed	5
The IC should provide needed resources	3
The IC should give ideas and support for intervention	8
The IC does a great job	4
The IC should work with small groups	2
The IC should continue present level of service	4
The IC should lead conversations about data	1
The IC should have better communication with teachers	1

Teachers with more than 20 years of experience were represented by 32 responses on this survey. Of the 32 participants, 30 teachers chose to respond to this question. Seventeen mentions were made of the instructional coach doing a great job and/or should continue their present level of service. Seven mentions were made that more time was needed in general, and five mentions were made about number of responsibilities instructional coaches have that can impede their work with teachers. Besides these, the highest level of mentions was for the need for instructional coaches to plan and use PLCs

appropriately and for them to provide teachers with needed resources. Vertical teaming was mentioned three times, while modeling strategies and having the instructional coach teach small groups were both mentioned twice. Providing support in the classroom and giving ideas and supporting interventions were each cited once. Table 22 exhibits these responses.

Table 22

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (More Than 20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Too many other responsibilities	5
More time is needed	7
Continue present level of service	9
The IC does a great job	8
The IC should give ideas and support interventions	1
The IC should provide needed resources	4
The IC should plan and use PLCs more appropriately	8
The IC should model strategies	2
The IC should plan vertically with teachers	3
The IC could teach small groups	2
The IC should provide support in the classroom	1

This qualitative question was analyzed again, according to levels of education instead of years of experience. Table 23 displays the responses from teachers with bachelor's degrees. There were 77 teachers who represented this category of teachers. Of those, 51 teachers responded to this survey item.

Table 23

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (Bachelor's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC does a great job	7
IC should continue the present level of service	8
The IC has too many other responsibilities	8
More time is needed	10
The IC should provide resources, ideas, strategies	6
The IC should establish effective PLCs	9
Vertical teaming is needed	2
The IC should spend more time in the classrooms	1
The IC should model lessons for teachers	1
The IC should work with small groups	2
The IC should provide support in the classroom	2
More planning time is needed	4

According to the data listed above, teachers with bachelor's degrees believed that more time is needed in order for instructional coaches to improve collaboration around instructional interventions. These teachers mentioned that the instructional coach has too many responsibilities that impeded their service to teachers. Some teachers would like the instructional coach to spend time in planning, particularly in vertical planning and in PLCs. The teachers felt that time should be spent in the classroom by instructional coaches to co-teach, model lessons, work with small groups, or simply to support teachers.

Thirty-seven of 48 teachers with master's degrees also responded to this question. Table 24 exhibits the responses those teachers gave about how the instructional coach can improve collaboration around instructional intervention.

Table 24

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 12 (Master's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC does a great job	6
The IC should continue the present level of service	4
The IC has too many responsibilities	8
More time is needed	4
The IC should provide needed resources	3
The IC should establish effective PLCs	3
Vertical teaming is needed	1
The IC should spend more time in the classroom	1
More planning time with IC is needed	5
The IC should model lessons	2
The IC should work with small groups	3
The IC should provide support in the classroom	1
The IC should support teachers in the classroom	2
The IC should create an intervention bank for the school	1
The IC should stay off the cell phone in meetings	1

Several teachers holding master's degrees also felt that instructional coaches are doing a good job and should continue serving teachers in the same capacity as they currently do. These teachers also made several mentions of the lack of time as well as the number of responsibilities instructional coaches currently have. Some suggestions made by these teachers include having the instructional coach support them in the classroom by working with small groups, modeling lessons, and being visible. Other suggestions were to establish effective PLCs (which could include the provision of resources, planning time, the creation of an intervention bank, and vertical teaming).

Five teachers with master's +30 degrees responded to the survey, but only two responded to this survey. One teacher indicated that the instructional coach does a great job, and the other teacher said that the instructional coach should continue his/her present level of service. One teacher holding a doctorate degree responded to this survey and also to this item by writing that the instructional coach should continue to do what he/she

is doing presently.

Third Qualitative Question, Survey Item 16

The next qualitative question on the survey that was required to answer Research Question 3 is item 16 on the instrument. This question reads, “How can the instructional coach at your school improve in modeling instructional practice.” Again, the researcher entered the information into the QDA Miner software according to years of experience, then once more according to levels of education. Each category of teacher responses was analyzed and coded with several themes emerging. Table 25 displays the code/themes from the teachers with 0-5 years of experience. Of the 18 teachers who responded to this survey, six of them answered this question.

Table 25

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (0-5 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
More time is needed	2
The IC should model lessons	4
The IC should be available for support	1
The IC should observe teachers	1
The IC should set up peer observations	1
The IC should continue present level of service	1

According to these data, the teachers with 5 or less years of experience should model lessons for teachers. This category of participants felt that more time, in general, should be spent with teachers and that instructional coaches should be available for support. Other requests mentioned once by these teachers include having the instructional coach set up peer observations and continuing the present level of service.

The next group of responses analyzed by the software and the researcher involved teachers with 6-10 years of experience. Of the 27 participants who represented this group, 20 teachers chose to respond to this question. Table 26 demonstrates the

responses of participants to this survey question.

Table 26

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (6-10 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
ICs should model lessons for teachers	13
More time is needed	6
The IC has too many other responsibilities	3
The IC does a great job	1
The IC should continue the present level of service	3
The IC should plan more often with teachers	1

These data show that teachers with 6-10 years of experience felt that having the instructional coach model lessons for them would be most beneficial. Having more time to work with the instructional coach was mentioned six times, and the feeling that the instructional coach has too many other responsibilities was mentioned three times. These are themes that have been recurring across all experience levels and qualitative survey items. Three teachers mentioned that instructional coaches should continue with their present level of service, and one mention was made that the instructional coach is doing a great job. One request was made for having the instructional coach plan more often with teachers.

Teachers with 11-15 years of experience were represented by 27 participants on this survey. Of these participants, 17 responded to this question. Table 27 presents responses given by this category of teachers. Again, there was mention of the instructional coach having too many outside responsibilities (four mentions) and the need for more time (two mentions). Some teachers responded that the instructional coach was doing a great job (four mentions), and two mentions were made about coaches continuing their present level of responsibilities. The suggestion requested most often was the need for instructional coaches to model for teachers (six mentions) with their focus being on

beginning teachers (three mentions). A request that had not yet been mentioned in previous answers was for the instructional coach to co-teach with their colleagues (three mentions). Other ideas were for instructional coaches to meet with grade levels about their concerns, offer support in teacher classrooms, and share new resources and knowledge.

Table 27

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (11-15 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Too many other responsibilities	4
The IC should meet with grade levels about their concerns	1
The IC should continue with present level of service	2
The IC should model lessons	6
The IC should offer support in the classrooms	2
The IC should model more lessons for BTs	3
The IC needs more time	2
The IC does a great job	4
The IC should share new resources and knowledge	1
The IC should co-teach in classrooms	3

Twenty-seven teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded to this survey. Of those participants, 21 chose to respond to survey item 16. For these participants, having the instructional coach model lessons for teachers had the most mentions with nine. The recurring themes of more time needed and too many responsibilities emerged again with six and five mentions respectively. Two mentions were made that the instructional coach is doing a great job, and two mentions were made that the instructional coach should continue the present level of service. Three requests were made for instructional coaches to spend more time in the classroom, two requests were made for instructional coaches to establish effective PLCs, and two requests were made for instructional coaches to co-teach with teachers. Table 28 reflects these data.

Table 28

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (16-20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Too many other responsibilities	5
More time is needed	6
Continue present level of service	2
The IC does a great job	2
The IC should model lessons for teachers	9
The IC should spend more time in the classroom	3
The ICs should establish effective PLCs	2
The IC should co-teach with teachers	2

The last category of responses to be analyzed by the researcher and the software program is teachers with more than 20 years of experience. This category is represented by the most with 32. Of those participants, 28 responded to this question. This group of teachers was most vocal about the need for more time and the belief that the instructional coach has too many responsibilities that impede their work with teachers. Four requests were made for coaches to model lessons for teachers, and three requests were made for coaches to go into classrooms to support teachers. One request was made for instructional coaches to videotape model lessons for teachers to watch as their schedules allow. Table 29 displays the results for this category of participants.

Table 29

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (More Than 20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Too many other responsibilities	9
More time is needed	12
Continue present level of service	2
The IC should model lessons for teachers	4
The IC should go into classrooms to support teachers	3
The IC should videotape model lessons for teachers	1

This qualitative question about how the instructional coach can improve in

modeling instructional practices was also analyzed according to participant levels of education. There were 77 teachers with bachelor's degrees who responded to this category. Of those 77 participants, 50 teachers responded to this survey item. Table 30 displays the coded/themed responses of those teachers.

Table 30

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (Bachelor's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should continue the present level of service	6
The IC does a great job	4
The IC has too many responsibilities	8
More time is needed	16
The IC should spend more time in the classroom	2
The IC should model lessons more often	14
The IC should collect teachers' concerns	1
The IC should establish effective PLCs	1
The IC should provide an observation schedule	2
The IC should co-teach	1
The IC should videotape a model lesson	1
The IC should teach small groups	1
The IC should set up peer observations	1

Teachers with bachelor's degrees continue to mention the lack of time and the amount of responsibilities of instructional coaches. Some teachers feel that instructional coaches do a great job and should continue their present level of service. Having the instructional coach model more lessons was a theme that was recurring for this group and had the second most mentions (14) – needing more time got the top mention with 16. Some teachers with bachelor's degrees suggested that the instructional coach could set up observation schedules, perhaps among peers, which was also mentioned. Again, a request was made for teachers to spend more time in the classroom where they could co-teach or model lessons.

Teachers with master's degrees were, of course, also asked how instructional

coaches could improve modeling practices. Their responses are listed below in Table 31.

Table 31

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 16 (Master's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should visit classrooms	2
The IC does a great job	6
More time is needed	8
The IC has too many responsibilities	7
The IC should model more often	17
The IC should set up a schedule for modeling	1
The IC should co-teach with teachers	4
The IC should provide needed resources	1

The number one response for teachers with master's degrees was that the instructional coach should do more modeling in the classroom. Of course, the issue of time and responsibilities had several mentions as well. Other suggestions from this category of teachers were to have the instructional coach co-teach and provide resources that are needed. Again, several teachers felt that the instructional coach was doing a great job and should continue their present level of service.

For this survey item, two of five participants with master's +30 degrees responded with having the instructional coach continue with the present level of service. The teacher with the doctorate degree responded that the instructional coach should be available to do model lessons.

Fourth Qualitative Question – Survey Item 21

The next qualitative question on the survey that was required to answer Research Question 3 is item 21 on the instrument. This question reads, “How can the instructional coach at your school improve in observing and providing feedback?” Again, the researcher entered the information into the QDA Miner software according to years of experience, then once more according to levels of education. Each category of teacher

responses was analyzed and coded with several themes emerging. Table 32 displays the code/themes from the teachers with 0-5 years of experience. Of the 18 teachers who responded to this survey, six of them answered this question.

Table 32

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (0-5 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
Provide support for differentiation	1
The IC does a great job	3
The IC has too many other responsibilities	4
The IC should provide support in the classroom	1
The IC should observe more often	2
The IC should provide effective feedback	2

According to these data, some teachers with 0-5 years of experience felt that the instructional coach has too many responsibilities (four responses) that impede their work in observing teachers and providing feedback. Observing more often and providing feedback were requests made by these teachers with two mentions each. While one mention was made for having the instructional coach provide support for differentiation and another mention was made for having coaches provide more support in the classroom, three teachers felt as though instructional coaches were doing a great job with this task.

Teachers with 6-10 years of experience were represented by 27 teachers on this survey. Of those 27 participants, 12 chose to respond to this question. Table 33 shows the data collected from these participants. Teachers in this range of experience overwhelmingly believed that the instructional coach should provide more effective feedback for teachers, and it was mentioned 10 times in their responses. They also answered with eight requests to have the instructional coach observe them more often. Again, the issue was raised about the lack of time (four mentions). Six teachers believed

that the instructional coach was already doing a great job with this practice, and one teacher felt that their instructional coach should proceed with the present level of service. Other ideas were mentioned once each and included making an observation schedule, offering instructional support, and helping teachers with the creation of lesson plans.

Table 33

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (6-10 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should observe more often	8
More time is needed	4
The IC does a great job	6
The IC should provide more effective feedback	10
The IC should help create lesson plans	1
The IC should create an observation schedule	1
The IC should offer more instructional support	1
The IC should continue the present level of service	1

Participants with 11-15 years of experience were represented by 27 teachers. Of those 27 participants, 19 responded to this survey item. Table 34 displays the responses of those teachers.

Table 34

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (11-15 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should continue their present level of service	4
The IC has too many other responsibilities	13
More time is needed	5
The IC does a great job	6
The IC should provide effective feedback	7
The IC should observe more often	4
The IC should visit classrooms	3
The IC should acknowledge things well done	1

Again, the issue of too many other responsibilities was noted with 13 mentions, and the lack of time was referenced as well. Several teachers believed that the

instructional coach was doing a great job and/or should continue in their present level of service. More teachers felt the instructional coach should provide more effective feedback (seven mentions) than teachers who requested more observations (four mentions). Three teachers requested instructional coaches to visit classrooms more often, and one mention was made that instructional coaches should acknowledge when things went well.

Twenty-seven teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded to the survey, and 21 of them chose to respond to this open-ended question as shown in Table 35.

Table 35

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (16-20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should spend more time in the classroom	4
More time is needed	6
The IC has too many other responsibilities	6
The IC should provide effective feedback	8
The IC should observe more often	7
The IC does a great job	6
The IC should continue their present level of service	2
The IC should spend more time collaborating around instruction	1
The IC should work with students in a small group	2

Other than the responses given for several questions about the lack of time, the level of responsibility of instructional coaches and excluding the responses indicating that the instructional coach does a great job and/or should continue with what they are doing at this time, the requests made most by this group of teachers included observing more often and providing effective feedback. These teachers also felt that instructional coaches should work with students in a small group and spend more time collaborating around instruction.

Teachers with more than 20 years of experience were represented by 32

participants on this instrument; and of those, there were 27 responses to this survey item. Fourteen teachers indicated that the instructional coach had too many other responsibilities, and 13 teachers felt that more time, in general, was needed. Four teachers mentioned the need for more observations, and five mentions were made about providing effective feedback. One teacher requested an observation schedule be made for teachers, and another asked for support in differentiating lessons for students. Table 36 demonstrates those responses.

Table 36

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (More Than 20 Years of Experience)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC should visit classrooms more often	3
More time is needed	13
The IC has too many other responsibilities	14
The IC does a great job	2
The IC should observe more often	4
The IC should provide support for differentiation	1
The IC should provide effective feedback	5
The IC should continue the present level of service	3
The IC should prepare an observation schedule	1

Participants answering this question were also analyzed according to their levels of education. Teachers with bachelor's degrees were represented by 77 respondents to this survey. Of those 77, 46 participants answered this survey question which called for responses to ways the instructional coach can improve in observing and providing feedback. Table 37 displays those coded/themed responses.

Table 37

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (Bachelor's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
The IC does a great job	6
The IC should continue the present level of service	4
More time is needed	11
The IC has too many responsibilities	11
The IC could help in differentiation	1
The IC should observe more often	11
The IC should provide effective feedback	8
The IC should visit classrooms	5
The IC should help teachers plan lessons	1
The IC should co-teach with teacher	1
The IC should provide more classroom support	1

According to the data listed above, the responses that were mentioned most often included the need for more time, the idea that the instructional coaches have too many responsibilities, and instructional coaches should observe more often. Eight teachers mentioned that the instructional coach should provide effective feedback. Six mentions were made that coaches were doing a great job, and four teachers mentioned having coaches continue their present level of responsibility. Another suggestion, made by five teachers, was that coaches should help teachers plan lessons, co-teach, and offer more classroom support to teachers.

Teachers holding master's degrees were represented in this survey by 48 teachers. Of those 48, 39 responses were given for this item. Table 38 displays coded/themed responses from teachers in this category.

Table 38

Codes/Themes for Survey Item 21 (Master's Degree)

Code/Theme	Number of Times Mentioned
IC has too many other responsibilities	9
More time is needed to work with teachers	10
The IC does a great job	5
Continue present level of service	3
The IC should observe more often	10
The IC should provide effective feedback	8
The IC should visit classrooms more often	3
The IC should set up an observation schedule	4
The IC should work with small groups	1
The IC should co-teach with the teacher	1

The top two responses from teachers in this category included more time needed and having the instructional coach observe more often. The two responses with the next most mentions included the instructional coach having too many outside responsibilities and providing effective feedback. Eight mentions were made that the instructional coach does a great job or should continue the present level of service. Some other suggestions made by teachers included having the instructional coach set up an observation schedule, providing additional instructional support, and working with small groups.

In summary, the researcher used a survey with both quantitative and qualitative items to answer three research questions. Research Question 1 asked, “To what extent does a teacher’s experience impact her perception of instructional coaching?” According to the quantitative data collected by the research, there was no significant difference regarding teacher perceptions of instructional coaching except on three survey items. The first survey item with a significant difference in responses based on years of experience was item 4, “The instructional coach helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classroom.” According to these data, the researcher can determine that most teachers (70%) with 6-10 years of experience believe their

instructional coach almost always helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Teachers with 11-15 years of experience also had a high percentage in the “almost always” category with 66.6%. These percentages are significantly higher than the other three groups in that category. Also, the teachers in the 16-20 years of experience group marked rarely much more often (18.5%) than the teachers at the other levels of experience. Ten percent for teachers with less than 5 years of experience, only 11% of teachers with 6-10 years of experience, and 8% of teachers with 11-15 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Conversely, almost 40% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience said that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set high standards for student performance.

The second survey item with a significant difference in responses based on years of experience was item 5, “In my school, there is collaboration between the instructional coach and teachers to address school-wide and district-wide concerns and practices.” Again, according to these data, most teachers (77.8%) with 6-10 years of experience believe that the instructional coach collaborates with teachers at their schools to address school-wide and district-wide concerns. This is in contrast to the responses of teachers in the other experiences categories for the “almost always” response. When adding the “almost always” response to the “usually” response, both of which indicate a positive answer, teachers in the 0-5 years of experience hold 83.3% of responses, teachers in the 6-10 years of experience category hold 88% of responses, teachers in the 11-15 category hold 89% of responses, and teachers in the more than 20 years of experience category hold 84% of these responses; however, teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded to this survey item with “usually” or “almost always” with 58.8%.

The other survey item that showed significant differences was survey item 8. The survey item reads, “The instructional coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.” According to the data, 37% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely assists teachers with a variety of resources for their classrooms that promote learning for all students. Because the next highest percentage was only 14.8% for the “rarely” response (by teachers with 11-15 years of experience), there is a significant difference in these responses by participants. When adding the “usually” and “almost always” responses, which indicate a response to the survey answer, the teachers in the 0-5 years of experience had 83.2%, teachers in the 6-10 category had 74%, teachers with 11-15 years of experience had 69.9%, teachers with 16-20 years of experience had 40.7%, and teachers with more than 20 years of experience had 68.7% of their groups respond in this manner. Again, teachers with 16-20 years of experience had the lowest positive response percentage for this survey item. When comparing this percentage to the 83.2% of positive responses from the participants in the 0-5 years of experience category, there is a difference.

For Research Question 1, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis which was, “H₀: There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to years of experience, for the most part.” In three of 17 cases involving the best practices of collaboration around school- and district-wide concerns and collaboration around instructional interventions, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses based on those p values.

Research Question 2 was, “To what extent does a teacher’s level of education impact her perception of instructional coaching?” According to the data collected

regarding this demographic, there was no impact regarding level of education on teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. Chi-square tests were run for all questions with a p value of $< .05$ needed to establish a significant difference. There was no survey item that had a significant difference when comparing levels of education and teacher perception of instructional coaching. Due to the results of these data, the researcher must accept the null hypothesis, “ H_0 : There is no significant difference of the perceptions of elementary teachers of instructional coaching according to levels of education.”

Research Question 3 was answered using the qualitative, open-ended portion of the survey. This question was, “How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as he/she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?” The responses to the open-ended questions in the survey were analyzed according to years of experience and according to levels of education. It is interesting to note that every category of demographic for every open question contained the same four responses in addition to some others. Often, teachers wrote that the instructional coach does a great job and/or the instructional coach should continue their present level of service. It is helpful to acknowledge that some teachers believed that instructional coaches are doing a great job and/or that the instructional coach should continue doing what they are doing; however, these responses do not contribute to how instructional coaches can improve their work with teachers. By putting these responses aside and looking at the other responses, one can see what teachers at varying levels of experience and education feel they need from instructional coaches to feel more successful. Table 39 displays a compilation of responses of each question based on levels of education and years of experience in order to easily see what suggestions were offered by participants. This compilation does not include responses related to the instructional

coach doing a great job or continuing their present level of service. This compilation includes responses that received more than one mention by teachers. Some master's +30 responses and doctorate responses were not included if the response indicated that the instructional coach does a great job and/or should continue their present level of service.

Table 39

Compilation of Open-ended Responses

Survey Item	Years of Experience	Level of Education
How can the IC improve collaboration around school and district-wide instructional concerns and initiatives?	0-5 – less responsibilities, vertical planning, more time 6-10 – less responsibilities, more time, provide resources, better communication 11-15 – less responsibilities, implementation strategies, more time, provide resources, better communication, co-teach 16-20 – less responsibilities, more time, better communication, more visibility, work with teachers individually, spend more time in classroom, co-teach 20+ – less responsibilities, effective PLCs, more time needed, better communication, support implementation, co-teach	Bachelor's – less responsibilities, more time, effective PLCs, better communication, provide more resources, more visibility, spend more time in classroom, vertical planning Master's – less responsibilities, more time, support teachers in classroom, co-teach, work with teachers individually
How can the IC improve collaboration around instructional intervention?	0-5 – more time is needed, provide more resources, less responsibilities 6-10 – more time is needed, less responsibilities, vertical planning, effective PLCs, support implementation 11-15 – more time is needed, less responsibilities, provide resources, work with small groups, better communication, model lessons 16-20 – effective PLCs, provide resources, support implementation, more time, less responsibilities, work with small groups, model lessons 20+ – less responsibilities, more time, provide resources, effective PLCs, model, work with small groups, vertical planning,	Bachelor's – less responsibilities, more time, provide resources, vertical planning, effective PLCs, work with small groups, model, support implementation, Master's – less responsibilities, more time, provide resources, vertical planning, effective PLCs, support implementation, model,
How can the IC improve in modeling instructional practice?	0-5 – more time, model, 6-10 – model, more time, less responsibilities, 11-15 – less responsibilities, model, support in classroom, more time, co-teach 16-20 – less responsibilities, more time, model, support in classrooms, effective PLCs, co-teach 20+ – less responsibilities, more time, model, support in classrooms	Bachelor's – less responsibilities, more time, support in classrooms, model lessons, co-teach, effective PLCs Master's – support in classrooms, more time, less responsibilities, model, co-teach, Doctorate – model
(continued)		
Survey Item	Years of Experience	Level of Education

How can the IC improve in observing and providing feedback?	0-5 – less responsibilities, observe more often, provide effective feedback, less responsibilities 6-10 – observe more often, more time, provide more effective feedback, 11-15 – too many responsibilities, more time, provide effective feedback, support in classrooms, observe more often, 16-20 – more time, less responsibilities, provide effective feedback, work with small group, observe more often, support in classroom, 20+ – support in classrooms, more time, less responsibilities, observe more often, provide effective feedback	Bachelor's – more time, less responsibilities, observe more often, provide effective feedback, support in classrooms, Master's – less responsibilities, observe more often, more time, support in classrooms, provide effective feedback, work with small groups
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When looking at the compilation of responses above of the most common responses (except “great job” and “continue level of service”), it is interesting to note how very similar the responses are across categories. It is even more interesting to note the similarity in responses across survey questions. Undoubtedly, teachers believed that the instructional coach needs more time to work with teachers and should be given fewer responsibilities. All teachers, no matter their level of education or their years of experience called for the instructional coach to provide more resources, establish effective PLCs, and work in various ways to support teachers in the classroom. Modeling lessons, observing often, and providing effective feedback are also suggestions from teachers across the board.

Triangulation of data in this study was very apparent. Because little significant difference was found in the quantitative data, and because responses across categories was so similar in the qualitative data, the researcher found that there is very little impact regarding level of education and years of experience on teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. Suggestions in open-ended questions were given about how the instructional coach can improve in best practices as he/she works with teachers, but

suggestions were very similar regarding education and experience. Chapter 5 provides further summary of the research findings, insight into the themes that emerged from the responses regarding instructional coaching, recommendations for improving instructional coaching programs, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was conducted to determine what impact a teacher's years of experience and level of education has on his/her perception of instructional coaching. Because the data were collected and analyzed from a particular school district exclusively, the recommendations, implications, and considerations are meant specifically for this school district; however, most, if not all, of the efforts recommended here could be generalized to other school districts as well.

This mixed-method study was implemented in survey form and was done in collaboration with a rural school district in north, central North Carolina. This district employs an instructional coach in each elementary, middle, and high school. The survey was emailed electronically to all elementary school teachers. Of the 263 teachers invited to participate, 131 teachers responded for a 49.8% response rate.

The survey instrument used in this study is titled Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching (Gordon, 2013). This tool was developed "to determine to what extent teachers perceive specific instructional coaching best practices as beneficial professional development practices" (Gordon, 2013, p. 39). The researcher used questions in the beginning of the survey to determine the demographics of the participants and then proceeded to use Gordon's (2013) series of questions. Most of the survey was comprised of close-ended questions, and participants responded using a Likert-type scale. Four of the survey questions were open-ended and qualitative in nature. For this portion of the survey, participants were asked to type responses into the spaces provided. These questions are additions to the survey developed by Gordon.

The survey was divided into four areas related to instructional coaching best practices as identified by Knight (2007), Brady (2007), and Marzano (2007). Those areas

include collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback. These four subcategories of instructional coaching best practices are represented on the survey in both quantitative and qualitative ways. By using the mixed-methods process, the researcher was able to triangulate the data in order to have a valid, reliable study.

Research Question 1

To what extent does a teacher's experience impact her perception of instructional coaching? According to the data collected in this study, a teacher's years of experience have little impact on his/her perception of instructional coaching. Only three items from the survey found a significant difference using a chi-square test and p values < .05. Those items were 4, 5, and 8.

Item 4 states, "The instructional coach helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction." According to these data, the researcher can determine that most teachers (70%) with 6-10 years of experience believed their instructional coach almost always helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Teachers with 11-15 years of experience also had a high percentage in the "almost always" category with 66.6%. These percentages are significantly higher than the other three groups in that category. Also, the teachers in the 16-20 years of experience group marked rarely much more often (18.5%) than the teachers at the other levels of experience. Only 10% of teachers with less than 5 years of experience, only 11% of teachers with 6-10 years of experience, and only 8% of teachers with 11-15 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set

high standards for student performance in their classrooms. Conversely, almost 40% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience said that the instructional coach rarely or sometimes helps them set high standards for student performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers with 16-20 years of experience were more impacted by their perception of instructional coaching than teachers in other experience categories.

The second survey item with a significant difference in responses based on years of experience was item 5, “In my school, there is collaboration between the instructional coach and teachers to address school-wide and district-wide concerns and practices.” Again, according to these data, most teachers (77.8%) with 6-10 years of experience believed that the instructional coach collaborates with teachers at their schools to address school-wide and district-wide concerns. This is in significant contrast to the responses of teachers in the other experience categories for the “almost always” response. When adding the “almost always” response to the “usually” response, both of which indicate a positive answer, teachers in the 0-5 years of experience hold 83.3% of responses, teachers in the 6-10 years of experience category hold 88% of responses, teachers in the 11-15 years of experience category hold 89% of responses, and teachers in the more than 20 years of experience category hold 84% of these responses; however, teachers with 16-20 years of experience responded to this survey item with “usually” or “almost always” with 58.8%. This is significant to note.

Both of these items came under survey category “Collaboration Around School-Wide and District Wide Concerns.” The qualitative questions that went along with that section of the survey was, “How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around school and district wide instructional concerns and initiatives?” When looking at the category of 16-20 years that proved to be significantly different in

the quantitative section, the qualitative responses were very similar to responses in the other categories; however, one response was included in this category that was not included in the others. It was “spend more time with teachers individually” (four responses). Perhaps this suggestion needs to be considered by instructional coaches in particular when working with teachers with this level of experience. Instructional coaches may believe that veteran teachers do not need or wish to have individual support from coaches, but these responses would prove that this was not the case.

The other survey item that showed significant differences was survey item 8. The survey item reads, “The instructional coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.” According to the data, 37% of teachers with 16-20 years of experience claimed that the instructional coach rarely assists teachers with a variety of resources for their classrooms that promote learning for all students. Because the next highest percentage was only 14.8% for the “rarely” response (by teachers with 11-15 years of experience), there is a significant difference in these responses by participants. When adding the “usually” and “almost always” responses, which indicate a response to the survey answer, the teachers in the 0-5 years of experience had 83.2%, teachers in the 6-10 years of experience category had 74%, teachers with 11-15 years of experience had 69.9%, teachers with 16-20 years of experience had 40.7%, and teachers with more than 20 years of experience had 68.7% of their groups respond in this manner. Again, teachers with 16-20 years of experience stood out as having the lowest positive response percentage for this survey item. When comparing this percentage to the 83.2% of positive responses from the participants in the 0-5 years of experience category, there is a significant difference.

Item 8 falls under the survey category “Collaboration Around Instructional

Intervention.” The qualitative question that goes with this category is, “How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around instructional intervention?” When looking at the responses of teachers in the 16-20 years of experience category, all suggestions were extremely similar to other categories; however, there was one response that was given more often than in the other categories. “Give ideas and support intervention” was a suggestion made eight times in this category but was only mentioned once by teachers in the 6-10 years of experience category, once by teachers in the 11-15 years of experience category, and once by teachers in the more than 20 years of experience category. Again, perhaps coaches should take this suggestion to heart when working with teachers with 16-20 years of experience. It could be that coaches believe these teachers, due to their many years in the classroom, already have enough ideas and do not need the help in implementation of interventions; however, the opposite, according to these data, is true.

Research Question 2

To what extent does a teacher’s level of education impact her perception of instructional coaching? To answer this research question, a chi-square test was run for every survey item using the demographic information for level of education. There was no significant difference found for any of the survey items. This conclusion is further support by the responses to the open-ended questions categorized by level of education. When comparing the responses by teachers’ level of education, the similarities are obvious. Almost every response given in one category was repeated in the other categories as well. Using these two data points requires the researcher to accept the null hypothesis for Research Question 2. The teacher’s level of education does not impact her perception of instructional coaching.

Research Question 3

How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education? When teachers were asked to respond to the open-ended questions on the survey, many of them wrote that the instructional coach does a great job and/or should continue their present level of service. While this is good, positive feedback, it was not very helpful in answering the research question. Therefore, these responses are included in the data in Chapter 4 but are not used in drawing conclusions or making recommendations for Chapter 5.

Regardless of which open-ended question was asked or what demographic category was examined, two responses were mentioned over and over again. Teachers felt that instructional coaches have too many other responsibilities that impede their work with teachers. Unfortunately, the responses did not expand upon what those responsibilities were. Four teachers mentioned that the instructional coach is working with AIG students, but the other responses were vague. Examples were, “stop piling so much on her” or “the instructional coach has too many other duties.” Regardless, this response was submitted so often by so many participants, it cannot be ignored. Another response given extremely often by participants was that more time was needed. It could be concluded that this response is related to the answers given about responsibilities. In fact, several participants wrote to the effect that “instructional coaches need fewer responsibilities in order to spend more time with teachers.” Giving the instructional coaches less responsibilities could free up more time for them to work with teachers; however, participants who requested more time did not specify how they would like to have that time spent. More information is needed about these responses before a definitive conclusion or recommendation can be made. To begin, district and school

administrators could consider all the duties required by instructional coaches in order to find some things that could be taken away in an effort to have more time to work with teachers. Perhaps principals do not understand the best practices of instructional coaches and could be given some insight or training in how to most effectively utilize coaches in their building.

Teachers with 0-5 years and 6-10 years of experience would like to have vertical planning time with other teachers. Instructional coaches could consider helping novice teachers understand skills, curriculum, and strategies taught in grade levels before and after their own. Teachers in the beginning of their careers may not know what skills their students received the previous year or will need the subsequent year and have very little information about what they ought to be focusing on the current year. This request was made by several teachers in this demographic category and should be considered by instructional coaches.

Teachers with 16-20 years of experience specifically asked for instructional coaches to consider working with teachers on an individual basis. While all other responses were in line with teachers from other categories, this request stood out. Teachers with more experience could be overlooked by instructional coaches because of their veteran status. Coaches might believe that these teachers do not need their expertise due to the number of years they have spent in the classroom. The responses do not go on to explain how the instructional coach should work with these teachers, so some further investigation could be done to determine this. It is important, however, to note that teachers in this specific category are requesting this specific type of help.

Other than the category-specific responses listed above, there were several other requests made by survey participants. These requests spanned all demographic categories

and were not specific to any particular range of experience or level of education. Instructional coaches are asked by these participants to have better communication and provide more resources. The teachers would like coaches to model and co-teach lessons as well as observe more often and provide effective feedback. One suggestion that appeared several times was to establish effective PLCs. Instructional coaches could be offered some professional development in the structure of PLCs and how they could make them work in their schools. Several other suggestions from participants could be included with the formation of successful PLCs. For example, supporting implementation, provision of resources, and working with small groups are teacher requests that could be satisfied naturally through working as a team in PLCs.

Other Observations and Considerations

Although this particular study did not examine teacher perceptions of instructional coaching as a whole, one would be negligent to dismiss these data. For purposes of discussing the following data in terms of means, consider the Likert scale represented by numbers instead of ratings. For example, “almost always” is represented by 4, “usually” is represented by 3, “sometimes” is represented by 2 and “rarely” is represented by 1. For these data, the survey participants are considered as an entity. None of the demographics from the research questions were applied. The following figures represent the survey item numbers that are specific to each best practices category. The mean response for each item is represented on the left, and the actual item number is written across the bottom of the chart. Figure 1 displays the mean response for the survey items under the best practice category entitled “Collaboration Around School and District-Wide Concerns.” The range of means for these data is 3.24 to 3.31. These means lie between 3 – the representation for “usually” and 4 – the representation for “almost always.”

Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers are confident with their instructional coach's abilities regarding this best practice. Instructional coaches should therefore continue some of their current practices but should consider the qualitative data that went along with this best practice. According to that data, teachers would like the establishment of more effective PLCs and vertical planning.

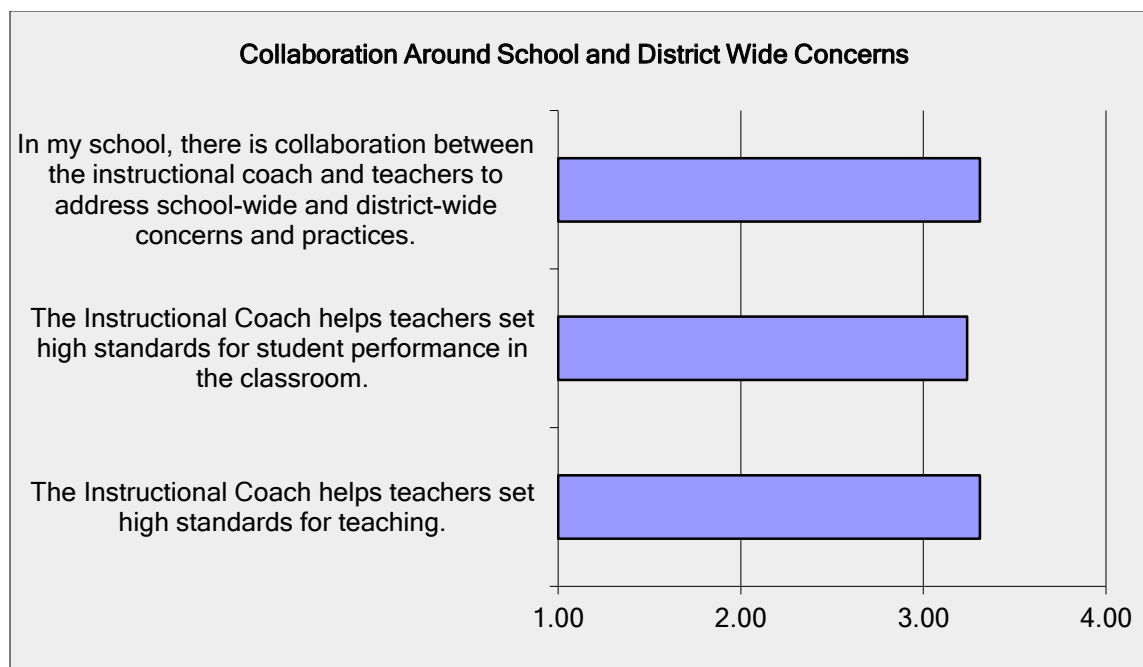


Figure 1. Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 1.

The next best practice category on the survey was “Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention.” This practice was represented with five survey item questions which had means ranging from 2.90 to 3.15 and is represented in Figure 2. While these means were lower than the practice mentioned above, they were still fairly positive regarding teacher perceptions of this best practice. The lowest mean was very close to 3 which represents the response “usually” when regarding these data. Again, instructional coaches could continue some strategies they are doing presently but could

focus on the experience level of 16-20 years while making improvement since that is the level that showed significant difference on one question in this category. Looking at the qualitative responses for this best practice will help improve in this work as well. The responses most often given centered around the themes of establishing effective PLCs, providing needed resources, and supporting implementation. By looking at these specific requests, coaches could progress in this area.

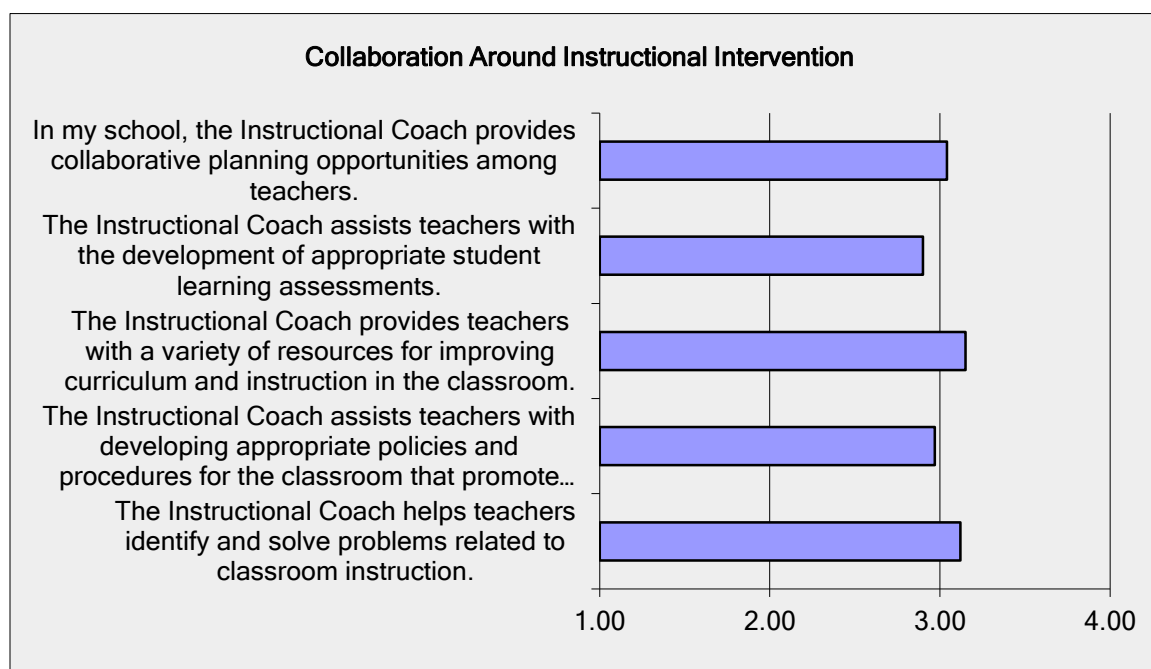


Figure 2. Means for Total Number of Participants in Survey for Best Practice 2.

The next best practice category on the survey was “Modeling Instructional Practices.” This practice was represented with three survey item questions which had means ranging from 2.42 to 2.92. Because 2 represents the response for “sometimes” and 3 represents the response for “usually,” these data point to a need for instructional coaches to work toward improvement in this area. When comparing these data to the responses from the qualitative data, the most obvious suggestion is for coaches to simply

model more lessons and strategies or offer to co-teach with teachers in their buildings.

Figure 3 represents the responses for this best practice category.

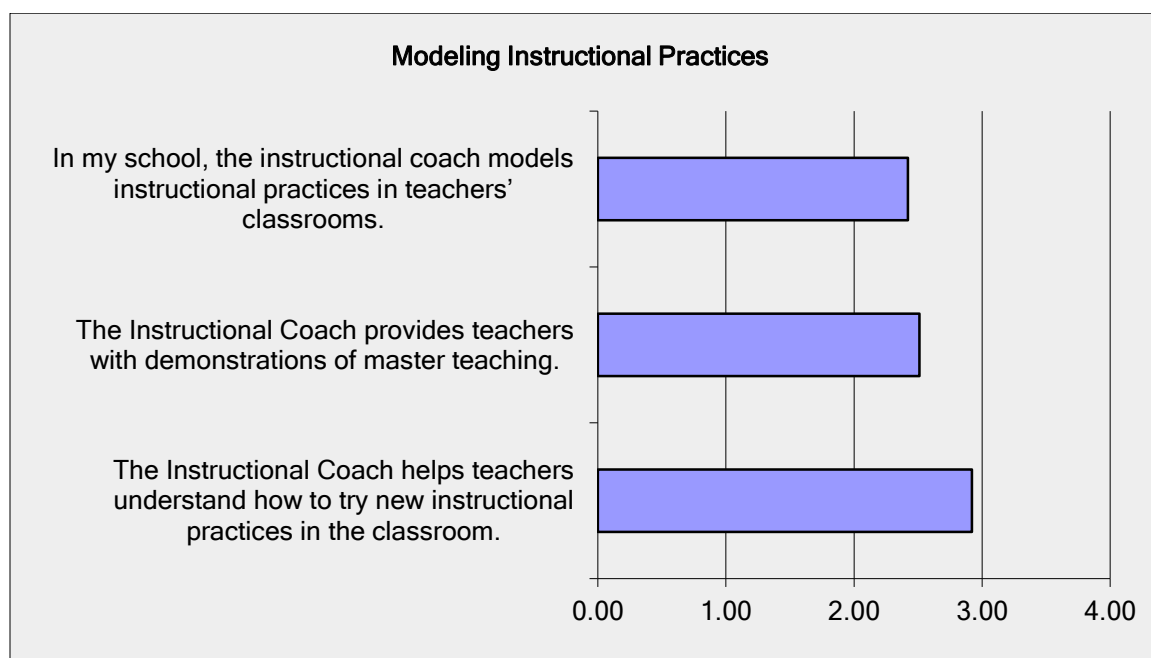


Figure 3. Mean Responses for Total Number of Participants for Best Practice 3.

The next best practice category on the survey was, “Observing and Providing Feedback.” This practice was represented with five survey item questions which had means ranging from 2.50 to 2.74. Perhaps this particular best practice offers the greatest opportunity for growth and improvement for instructional coaches. According to Knight (2005), instructional coaches often choose not to observe teachers and provide feedback because they do not want to be seen as an evaluator or as an administrator. Teachers may not welcome instructional coaches into their classrooms to observe because they feel that the coach will take negative information about the teacher back to the principal. Administrators and instructional coaches could receive some professional development about the way coaches can enter classrooms in a non-threatening way with the intention to praise the good teaching practices and to help with opportunities for growth. When

looking at the qualitative responses that represented this category of best practices, it was clear that teachers wanted the instructional coaches to come into the class to observe or to co-teach more often and to provide effective feedback. Instructional coaches could be given some professional development about ways to provide feedback to teachers that establishes an environment of respect and trust. Figure 4 is seen below.

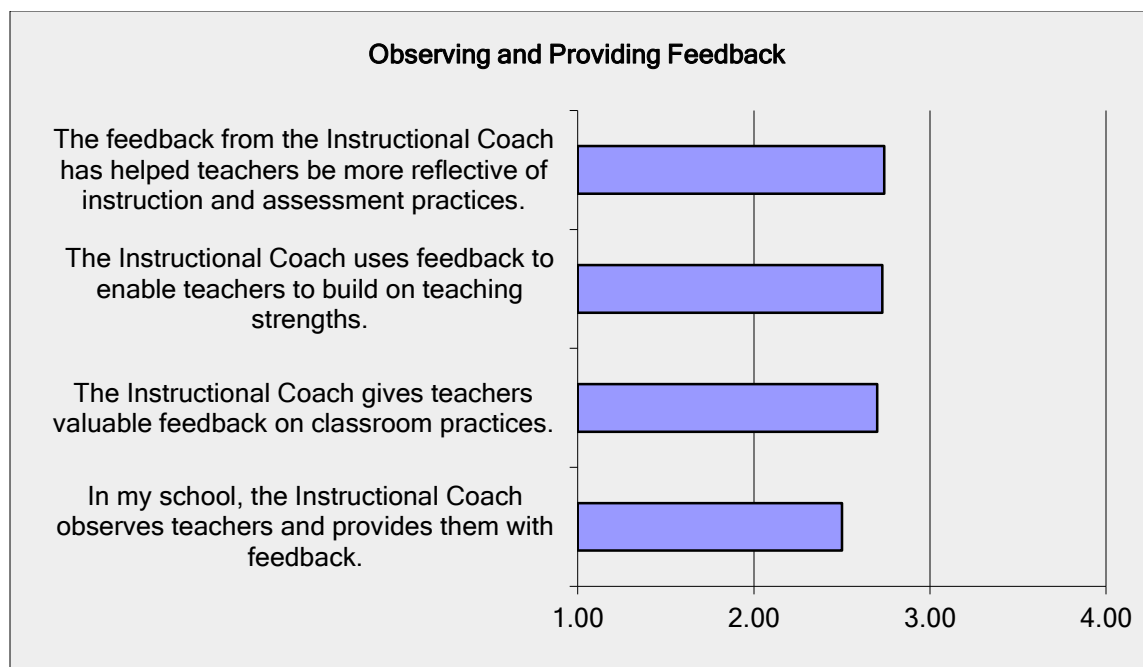


Figure 4. Mean Responses for Total Number of Participants for Best Practice Category 4.

Implications

Although there was a clear pattern of responses for all questions among the entire group of teachers as a whole, as demonstrated above, there was not a significant difference among subgroups for the most part. This finding is surprising to the researcher who believed there would be a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional coaching, particularly in the participants' years of experience.

An immediate and clear implication of this study is that teachers believed the

instructional coach is given too many responsibilities that interfere with the time he/she is able to participate in coaching activities such as co-teaching, providing resources, modeling, observing, and providing feedback. According to Wren and Vallejo (2009), instructional coaches and administrators must list and prioritize explicit roles in which the coach should be involved in order to take full advantage of the instructional coaching program. Expecting instructional coaches to perform the best practices identified by Knight (2007), Brady (2007), and Marzano (2007) as well as performing other duties is unrealistic. The roles of instructional coaches should include collaborating with teacher(s) to discuss district- and school-wide instructional concerns, planning with teachers to determine when and how instructional intervention might be implemented, demonstrating or modeling instructional practices for teachers in their classrooms, and observing teachers with the purpose of providing them with feedback.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this study added to the body of research and literature on instructional coaching, this report also provided some direction for further research in this area. In this study, qualitative research was done through a survey that asked four open-ended questions. Responses to these questions, for the most part, were very general and lacked the in-depth insight needed to understand participant feelings and beliefs. For example, when asked how an instructional coach could improve their practice when working with teachers, responses were shallow in nature: “more time,” “more resources,” “support teachers in the classroom.” While these responses can lead change in the right direction, more input is needed. One recommendation by the researcher is to hold focus group interviews in an effort to specify these requests by teachers. Interviewing teachers could allow for follow-up questions that could lead a researcher to discover what kinds of

resources are needed or exactly what support in classrooms is necessary.

Many participants opined that instructional coaches have too many responsibilities. What are these additional responsibilities? More research about the extra duties that are required of instructional coaches could help administrators determine factors that impede or interfere with the coaches' support for teachers. These data could reveal issues the coaches and administrators had not considered and could benefit scheduling for instructional coaches as they find more time to work with teachers.

Along this line, research is needed to determine the knowledge of administrators regarding a successful instructional coaching program. It is vital that principals and district leaders understand how to build successful coaching programs in their systems that are based upon research-based practices. In addition, the knowledge gained by these administrators could help to provide professional development for instructional coaching and more effective training programs. Coaches may not know what their roles and responsibilities should be nor what research says about best practices of instructional coaches.

The population sample for this study was limited to elementary teachers in a rural setting. Further research is needed to determine perceptions of teachers in middle and high schools and in suburban and urban districts. A demographically different population in secondary schools could provide a different insight on perceptions of instructional coaching.

Instructional coaching is showing promise as the most effective way to provide professional development, support, and follow-up of effective strategies that increase student learning (Barkley, 2005; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Killion & Roy, 2009). Increasing teacher skills through instructional coaching by modeling, practice, and

feedback can increase the effectiveness of teachers and improve student learning (Knight, 2007).

Coaching has proven to be one of the primary tools of staff development for teachers and administrators alike. Coaching provides a vehicle by which to achieve goals, improve strategies, and make a difference for students and colleagues. With coaching, teachers discover – usually for the first time—how to reflect on their teaching in ways that add value to their methods and an enhanced level of professionalism. (Barkley, 2005, p. 4)

An instructional coach's primary goal is to increase student achievement through the professional growth of teachers in his/her school. This study has shown that although there is very limited significant difference in the perceptions of teachers according to their years of experience or levels of education regarding instructional coaching, there are strengths as well as opportunities for growth that exist in instructional coaching programs. "By inspiring purpose, adopting instructional change, and sustaining energy for learning, coaching creates positive energy and professional renewal that revitalizes and benefits the school culture in a lasting way" (Trach, 2014, p. 16).

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Appendix A
Permission for Survey Use

**Whitten, Tina** <[REDACTED]>
to hgordon ▾

9/8/15 ☆ ↶ ▾

Gordon, Heather
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[Show details](#)


Dear Ms. Gordon,

My name is Tina Whitten and I am a teacher and instructional coach in Rockingham County, NC. I am also seeking an Ed.D. degree at Gardner-Webb University and am currently working on my dissertation about instructional coaching. I am writing to ask your permission to use the survey instrument you created in 2013 for your dissertation at The University of South Carolina. I am interested in studying teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching at elementary schools in our district according to the level of their experience and advanced degrees or certifications they may have. There are 15 elementary schools in my rural district and I would use your instrument to survey the certified teachers at those schools electronically (using Survey Monkey or Google Forms).

If you agree to allow me to use your survey I will, of course, cite you as the original author of this survey instrument. I will share my results with you if you would like and I will ask your approval of any modifications or changes I might choose to make to your original survey.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

[REDACTED]

**Gordon, Heather** <hgordon@greenville.k12.sc.us>
to me ▾

9/8/15 ☆ ↶ ▾

You are more than welcome to use my survey instrument. Best of luck as you continue your journey!

Heather

Heather Gordon, PhD

Appendix B

The Survey Instrument

Elementary Instructional Coach Survey



Demographics

1. Number of years in the teaching profession.
 0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years More than 20 years
2. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Multiple Choice)
 Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree
 Master's Degree +30
 Doctorate Degree

Perception Items

The following questions ask your perceptions of instructional coaching at your site. For each statement, select the category best representing your level of agreement. (Likert scale – Rarely, Sometimes, Usually, Almost Always)

Collaboration Around School and District Wide Concerns

3. The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for teaching.
4. The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.
5. In my school, there is collaboration between the instructional coach and teachers to address school-wide and district-wide concerns and practices.
6. How can the instructional coach at your school improve collaboration around school and district wide instructional concerns and initiatives? (This question is open-ended)

Collaboration Around Instructional Intervention

7. The Instructional Coach helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction.
8. The Instructional Coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.
9. The Instructional Coach provides teachers with a variety of resources for improving curriculum and instruction in my classroom.
10. The Instructional Coach assists teachers with the development of appropriate student learning assessments.
11. In my school, the Instructional Coach provides collaborative planning opportunities among teachers.
12. How can the Instructional Coach at your school improve collaboration around instructional intervention? (This question is open ended)

Modeling Instructional Practices

13. The Instructional Coach helps teachers understand how to try new instructional practices in the classroom.
14. The Instructional Coach provides teachers with demonstrations of master teaching.
15. In my school, the instructional coach models instructional practices in teachers' classrooms.
16. How can the Instructional Coach at your school improve in modeling instructional practices? (This question is open-ended)

Observing and Providing Feedback

17. In my school, the Instructional Coach observes teachers and provides them with feedback.
18. The Instructional Coach gives teachers valuable feedback on classroom practices.
19. The Instructional Coach uses feedback to enable teachers to build on teaching strengths.
20. The feedback from the Instructional Coach has helped teachers be more reflective of their instruction and assessment practices.
21. How can the Instructional Coach at your school improve in observing and providing feedback? (This question is open-ended)

Appendix C

Request to District for Permission to Use Data from Survey

March 20, 2017

[REDACTED], Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Director of Testing and Accountability, [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to request permission to use the data from the Elementary Instructional Coach survey conducted by your district. I would like to use the data in my dissertation research. The dissertation title is: Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Factored by Experience and Levels of Education. I would be reporting general perceptions from all teachers using central tendency (percentages of responses most often given) and then comparing demographics by using a chi-square test for determining significant differences. I am interested in connecting instructional coaching to adult learning theory (andragogy). I will not be mentioning the name of the district in my paper and there will be no collection of names or other identifiers of participants or instructional coaches.

The following questions will guide this study:

Quantitative Portion

1. To what extent does a teacher's experience impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?
2. To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact his/her perception of instructional coaching?

Qualitative Portion

3. How can an instructional coach improve in best practices of coaching as she works with teachers at varying levels of experience and education?

Again, central tendency and chi-square tests will be run for the quantitative portions using the SPSS software and the qualitative questions will be coded using QDA Miner Lite software in an open coding system. I realize the survey has been proven to be valid and reliable with Cronbach alpha coefficients for the four Likert categories ranging between .85-.93 where an alpha of .70 or greater is acceptable. Table 1 indicates each research questions and how each question will be analyzed.

Table 1

Research Questions

Research Question	Mixed Methods	Data Collection	Data Analysis
To what extent does a teacher's experience impact her perception of instructional coaching?	Quantitative	<i>Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey</i> (Gordon, 2013)	Chi-square Test
To what extent does a teacher's level of education impact her perception of instructional coaching?	Quantitative	<i>Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey</i> (Gordon, 2013)	Chi-square Test
How should an instructional coach modify her professional development approach to impact the needs of diverse adult learners?	Qualitative –opened ended questions	Additional question to <i>Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey</i> (Gordon, 2013) approved by Gordon	Open Coding

I will be glad to share my results with you and your district, if you would like. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tina Whitten

Doctoral Candidate, Gardner-Webb University

Appendix D

Permission from District to Use Data Collected from Survey

Appendix E

Introduction to Survey Email to Participants

Email Introduction to Survey

Dear K-5 Classroom Teachers,

The link below will lead to a survey for which you are being asked to complete. The survey has been district-approved and should take 10-20 minutes of your time. The results will be used by Tina Whitten, doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University, in her research about perceptions of instructional coaching by K-5 teachers factored by their years of experience and levels of education. The district will use the data, as well, to determine strengths and opportunities for improvement of the instructional coaching program.

Please consider responding to survey questions by including your experiences with instructional coaching during this school year and in past years, as well. As you respond to the open-ended questions, please **do not include any identifying information** such as your name, your school name, the name of the IC with whom you work, etc. Any questions that include identifiers will be redacted. The survey link will be open for two weeks and the link can be used only once. Survey Monkey will collect responses anonymously, and confidentiality is guaranteed. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question.

By clicking on the link below and responding to the survey, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in this survey and that you agree to the terms as described.

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have any questions, please contact [REDACTED], Assistant Superintendent or [REDACTED], Director of Testing and Research

Appendix F

Percentage of Responses Based on Years of Experience

Percentage of Responses Based on Years of Experience

Item 3: The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for teaching.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	5.5%	33.3%	55.5%
6-10 years experience	3.7%	7.4%	18.5%	70.3%
11-15 years experience	3.7%	3.7%	25.9%	66.6%
16-20 years experience	18.2%	22.2%	14.8%	44.4%
20+ years experience	6.2%	12.5%	31.2%	50%

Item 4: The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	5.5%	38.9%	50%
6-10 years experience	7.4%	3.7%	11.1%	77.7%
11-15 years experience	7.4%	3.7%	44.4%	44.4%
16-20 years experience	22.2%	18.5%	14.8%	44.4%
20+ years experience	6.2%	12.5%	31.2%	50%

Item 5: In my school, there is collaboration between the instructional coach and teachers to address school and district-wide concerns and practices.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	11.1%	27.7%	55.5%
6-10 years experience	11.1%	0%	11.1%	77.7%
11-15 years experience	7.4%	3.7%	25.9%	62.9%
16-20 years experience	14.8%	25.9%	7.4%	51.8%
20+ years experience	6.2%	9.3%	37.5%	46.8%

Item 7: The Instructional Coach helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	11.1%	22.2%	6.1%
6-10 years experience	7.4%	11.1%	14.8%	18%
11-15 years experience	7.4%	22.2%	29.6%	40.7%
16-20 years experience	22.2%	29.6%	7.4%	40.7%
20+ years experience	9.3%	15.6%	28.1%	46.8%

Item 8: The Instructional Coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	11.1%	27.7%	55.5%
6-10 years experience	11.1%	14.8%	11.1%	62.9%
11-15 years experience	14.8%	3.7%	25.9%	62.9%
16-20 years experience	14.8%	22.2%	3.7%	37%
20+ years experience	6.2%	25%	31.2%	37.5%

Item 9: The Instructional Coach provides teachers with a variety of resources for improving curriculum and instruction in my classroom.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	16.6%	22.2%	55.5%
6-10 years experience	7.4%	11.1%	14.8%	66.6%
11-15 years experience	16.6%	7.4%	33.3%	48.1%
16-20 years experience	18.5%	22.2%	14.8%	44.4%
20+ years experience	12.5%	15.6%	25%	46.8%

10. The Instructional Coach assists teachers with the development of appropriate student learning assessments.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	27.7%	33.3%	33.3%
6-10 years experience	7.4%	18.5%	7.4%	66.6%
11-15 years experience	18.5%	14.8%	25.9%	40.7%
16-20 years experience	29.6%	25.9%	11.1%	29.6%
20+ years experience	12.5%	28.1%	28.1%	31.2%

11. In my school, the Instructional Coach provides collaborative planning opportunities among teachers.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	11.1%	5.5%	33.3%	50%
6-10 years experience	7.4%	11.1%	25.9%	55.5%
11-15 years experience	7.4%	14.8%	33.3%	44.4%
16-20 years experience	33.3%	11.1%	7.4%	48.1%
20+ years experience	12.5%	21.8%	28.1%	37.5%

13. The Instructional Coach helps teachers understand how to try new instructional practices in the classroom.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	22.2%	38.8%	33.3%
6-10 years experience	14.8%	0%	33.3%	51.8%
11-15 years experience	3.7%	29.6%	25.9%	40.7%
16-20 years experience	29.6%	25.9%	11.1%	33.3%
20+ years experience	25%	18.8%	34.4%	34.4%

14. The Instructional Coach provides teachers with demonstrations of master teaching.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	16.6%	16.6%	38.9%	27.7%
6-10 years experience	18.5%	22.2%	14.8%	44.4%
11-15 years experience	25.9%	29.6%	11.1%	33.3%
16-20 years experience	33.3%	29.6%	11.1%	25.9%
20+ years experience	28.1%	40.6%	9.3%	21.8%

15. In my school, the Instructional Coach models instructional practices in teachers' classrooms.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	16.6%	27.7%	33.3%	22.2%
6-10 years experience	14.8%	33.3%	7.4%	44.4%
11-15 years experience	25.9%	29.6%	11.1%	33.3%
16-20 years experience	40.7%	25.9%	11.1%	22.2%
20+ years experience	31.2%	43.7%	9.3%	15.6%

17. In my school, the Instructional Coach observes teachers and provides them with feedback.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	11.1%	22.2%	38.8%	27.7%
6-10 years experience	22.2%	25.9%	22.2%	29.6%
11-15 years experience	33.3%	14.8%	14.8%	37%
16-20 years experience	37%	18.5%	7.4%	37%
20+ years experience	28.1%	37.5%	15.6%	18.7%

18. The Instructional Coach gives teachers valuable feedback on classroom practices.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	5.5%	16.6%	44.4%	33.3%
6-10 years experience	14.8%	25.9%	22.2%	37%
11-15 years experience	14.8%	18.5%	29.6%	37%
16-20 years experience	40.7%	33.3%	7.4%	37%
20+ years experience	18.8%	31.2%	28.1%	18.8%

19. The Instructional Coach uses feedback to enable teachers to build on teaching strengths.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	11.1%	11.1%	38.8%	38.8%
6-10 years experience	14.8%	18.5%	25.9%	40.7%
11-15 years experience	18.5%	22.2%	25.9%	33.3%
16-20 years experience	33.3%	22.2%	7.4%	37%
20+ years experience	18.8%	28.1%	28.1%	25%

20. The feedback from the Instructional Coach has helped teachers be more reflective of their instruction and assessment practices.

Years of Experience	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
0-5 years experience	11.1%	11.1%	38.8%	38.8%
6-10 years experience	18.5%	14.8%	18.5%	48.1%
11-15 years experience	22.2%	14.8%	33.3%	29.6%
16-20 years experience	40.7%	11.1%	11.1%	37%
20+ years experience	15.6%	21.8%	34.3%	28.1%

Appendix G

Percentage of Responses Based on Levels of Education

Percentage of Responses Based on Level of Education

3. The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for teaching.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	5.1%	7.7%	23.3%	63.6%
Master's Degree	12.5%	16.6%	27%	43.7%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

4. The Instructional Coach helps teachers set high standards for student performance in their classrooms.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	9%	6.4%	23.3%	61%
Master's Degree	12.5%	16.6%	32.2%	24.6%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

5. In my school, there is collaboration between the instructional coach and teachers to address school-wide and district wide concerns and practices.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	6.4%	7.7%	20.7%	64.9%
Master's Degree	14.5%	14.5%	25%	45.8%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

7. The Instructional Coach helps teachers identify and solve problems related to classroom instruction.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	9%	12.9%	23.3%	54.5%
Master's Degree	14.5%	22.9%	18.7%	43.7%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

8. The Instructional Coach assists teachers with developing appropriate policies and procedures for their classrooms that promote learning for all students.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	12.9%	14.2%	24.6%	48%
Master's Degree	18.7%	31.2%	8.3%	41.6%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

9. The Instructional coach provides teachers with a variety of resources for improving curriculum and instruction in my classroom.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	10.3%	15.5%	20.7%	53.2%
Master's Degree	16.6%	16.6%	22.9%	43.7%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

10. The Instructional Coach assists teachers with the development of appropriate student learning assessments.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	10.3%	18%	27.2%	44.1%
Master's Degree	22.9%	35.4%	8.3%	33.3%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

11. In my school, the Instructional Coach provides collaborative planning opportunities among teachers.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	14.3%	11.6%	23.3%	50.6%
Master's Degree	16.6%	14.5%	31.2%	37.5%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

13. The Instructional Coach helps teachers understand how to try new instructional practices in the classroom.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	10.3%	15.5%	37.6%	36.3%
Master's Degree	20.8%	27%	10.4%	41.6%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

14. The Instructional Coach provides teachers with demonstrations of master teaching.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	20.7%	29.8%	19.4%	29.8%
Master's Degree	35.4%	31.2%	6.2%	27%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	20%	80%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

15. In my school, the Instructional Coach models instructional practices in teachers' classrooms.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	23.3%	35%	25.9%	15.5%
Master's Degree	33.3%	35.4%	4.1%	27%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	100%	0%

17. In my school, the Instructional Coach observes teachers and provides them with feedback.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	24.6%	19.4%	25.9%	29.8%
Master's Degree	35.4%	35.4%	4.1%	25%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

18. The Instructional Coach gives teachers valuable feedback on classroom practices.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	15.5%	16.8%	33.7%	33.7%
Master's Degree	29.1%	33.3%	14.5%	22.9%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

19. The Instructional Coach uses feedback to enable teachers to build on teaching strengths.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	18.1%	15.5%	31.1%	35%
Master's Degree	27%	35.4%	12.5%	25%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%

20. The feedback from the Instructional Coach has helped teachers be more reflective of their instruction and assessment practices.

Level of Education	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
Bachelor's Degree	16.8%	10.3%	35%	37.6%
Master's Degree	33.3%	33.3%	12.5%	29.1%
Master's Degree +30	0%	0%	40%	60%
Doctorate Degree	0%	0%	0%	100%