Principal Leadership and the Implementation of a District Instructional Coaching Framework

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A Capstone

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Doctor of Education

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by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of instructional coaches as a tool to strengthen teacher practices and increase student achievement is expanding in school districts throughout the nation, and the work of school principals is critical to its successful implementation (Borman, Feger & Kawakami, 2006; Coggins, Stoddard & Cutler, 2003; Knight, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). My capstone project focused on the influence of principal sensemaking and leadership on the implementation of a district-defined instructional coaching model.

All of the schools taking part in the study had been allocated an instructional coach as part of a district-wide effort to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. The purpose of this study was to look closely at the district's decade's old instructional coaching framework and to investigate how that framework was interpreted and then implemented in a small geographic area of the school system. The problem of practice explored through my research was the perception of a lack of consistent implementation of the coaching model by school principals. My assumption was if the model was not implemented with fidelity, it had the potential to fall short of meeting the district's objectives of improved teacher practice and student achievement. Since the coaching model was one of the district's primary supports for struggling schools, it was important to determine whether it was the implementation of the framework by school principals or the framework itself that resulted in a perceived lack of success.

The literature examined and discussed for this project included the broader topic of professional development and the narrower topics of instructional coaching, principal facilitation of coaching practices, and principal policy enactment. It was important to examine the larger subject of professional development because of the function of instructional coaching as a means of job-embedded professional development. In addition, knowing the importance placed on the principal to use the coaching model in the school setting, and that the origin of the framework was part of district policy, it was important to include these areas of research, as well. The conceptual framework for the study was derived from the theory of sensemaking, Bolman and Deal's organizational frames and Spillane's leadership tasks.

The study took part in two phases from April 2016 - June 2016. Phase one involved electronic surveys that were made available to principals, coaches, and teachers in eight schools in the sub-district chosen for the study. The results of the surveys were analyzed and three school sites were selected for further research. In phase two, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals, instructional coaches, and three teachers at each of the case study schools. This phase of the research targeted the alignment of enacted practices to the espoused model, principal actions in implementing the model and stakeholder sensemaking around coaching practices.

Findings from the study highlighted the importance of the role of the principal in shaping coaching practices in schools. The key decisions made by the principals in the study were shaped by their own backgrounds and beliefs. These decisions prioritized the

coaches' time, determined the instructional content of the coaching model, allocated time for coaching practices, and shaped their relationship with the instructional coach.

My research indicated that despite there being a "district coaching framework," coaching practices were varied across school settings. Commonalities included individual and group coaching practices, but differences included the time devoted to each and the level of transparency and the confidentiality upheld between coaches and administrators.

As a result of these discrepancies in implementation and the level of principal sensemaking that influenced implementation, the following recommendations were made. 1) Principals should be given the option to shape the coaching framework as needed in each of their schools. 2) The district should have a flexible time allocation for coaching practices in the coaching model. 3) The district should support principals in creating a communication plan to effectively share coaching objectives and outcomes with staff members. 4) The district should support principals with the implementation of successful coaching models by providing on-site school support and opportunities to gather to discuss the coaching program. 5) The district should work with principals to develop a tool that will help evaluate the coaching programs in their schools. 6) The district should embark on a regular cycle of program evaluation for the instructional coaching program.

Keywords: instructional coaching, sensemaking, professional development, leadership

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APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE

This capstone, "Principal Leadership and the Implementation of a District Instructional Coaching Framework," has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Capstone Chairperson (David Eddy Spicer, Ed.D.)

Capstone Committee Member (Dennise Berry, Ed.D.)

Capstone Committee Member (Sara Dexter, Ed.D.)

March 31, 2017
Date of Defense

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my amazing family who has been instrumental in helping me embrace and complete this personal endeavor.

To my daughters, Nora, Anna, and Bevin, who were patient and supportive as I spent many hours pursuing this goal.

To my parents, Kevin and Ann Marie Boland, who helped out in more ways than space allows on this page.

And to my husband, Brett, who took on the roles of both mother and father to allow me the time on weekends and evenings to read, study and write.

I am forever grateful.

I further dedicate this to my colleagues in Fairfax County Public Schools who continue to change lives every day. They are my inspiration.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

As district leaders realize that traditional teacher professional development does not often influence teacher practices (Borko, 2004; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Guskey, 2002) they are entrusting principals to effectively use coaches as resources to improve instruction. Researchers have examined how the addition of an instructional coach can enable schools to provide individualized or team assistance that can ultimately make a difference in student learning (King, Neuman, Pelchat, Potochnik, Rao & Thompson, 2004; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Studies also indicate that principals' beliefs and actions around the roles and responsibilities of a coach are important to the successful implementation of a coaching program (Camburn, Kimball & Lowenhaupt et al., 2008; Mangin, 2007; Matsumura, Garnier & Resnick, 2010).

Could these coaches, who work primarily with the adult learners in a building, be the solution for improving student achievement as measured by standardized test scores? The actions of Surrey Forge Public Schools (SFPS),[1] a large, suburban school district with over 180,000 students, indicate the answer to this question is affirmative, although results have been mixed. The district currently deploys instructional coaches to all of its critically struggling schools as a strategy to close achievement gaps and raise test scores. This resource was provided to over 30 elementary schools in the 2015-16

[1] Pseudonyms have been used to protect confidentiality for personal and place names and for public documents used in my research.

school year, in addition to nine high schools and middle schools. Principals in these schools were charged with supporting coaching practices by providing information to the school's faculty about the role of the coach and by facilitating working conditions for the coach in the larger context of school improvement.

The inclusion of instructional coaches in these schools is a large monetary investment for the district. However, the value of this investment is called into question when examining student test scores and teacher sentiment about the role of the coach. District public documents indicate that some schools have demonstrated an increase in overall standardized test scores, and some have not, although all have had the resource of an instructional coach.[2] Also, online comments posted on an official district budget forum highlight instructional coaches as one of the positions in the district that is popular to suggest for elimination, intimating that not all see value in the role.[3]

This capstone project examined the Surrey Forge Public Schools (SFPS) Instructional Coaching Framework, and how the district's vision for coaching was interpreted and applied by school principals, coaches and ultimately classroom teachers. The role of the principal in this process was closely examined as a critical agent in the implementation process because it is the principal who must support and facilitate the coaching program in each individual school. Findings from this research provide insight into the future path of training, information sharing, and support that needs to be provided to schools to maximize intended results.

[2] Surrey Forge Public Schools, Office of Program Evaluation, Final Monitoring Report
[3] Surrey Forge Public Schools on-line budget forum

Preview of the Literature

Well-designed professional development is focused on instructional content, sustained over time, embedded in practice, and based on active learning that is collaborative and coherent (Garet et al., 2001). Instructional coaching, at least ideally, incorporates many of these aspects of robust professional development; however, the impact of an instructional coach is not automatic (Borman et al., 2006; Coggins, et al., 2003; Matsumara, Sartoris, Bickel & Garnier, 2009; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders & Supovitz, 2003). Research highlights several of the ways in which coaching is rooted in the larger context of the school environment with the principal as a key actor. The principal's leadership works to either support or constrain the work of the coach (Camburn et al., 2008; Taylor, 2008; Matsumura et al., 2009).

The literature review section of this capstone will first address the larger picture of the research on professional development before delving into the history and evolution of instructional coaching. It will end by looking at what the research says about the role of the principal, not only in supporting coaching practices, but in enacting district policy. The role of the principal in implementing an instructional coaching framework is at the core of my problem of practice.

Problem of Practice

Context. Principals in struggling schools in the Surrey Forge Public Schools (SFPS) system receive instructional coaches as part of their yearly staffing allocation. These schools are identified as needing extra support because they have significant underachievement and achievement gaps and are in danger of not meeting the state

department of education's requirements for accreditation. The instructional coach is tasked with working to close these gaps by increasing the effectiveness of teacher instructional strategies. This resource is a part of the SFPS Instructional Coaching program, which was established in 2005 to prepare and support teacher leaders in guiding their peers in strengthening instructional practices to improve student learning.[4] The program relies on principal leadership and a partnership with the coach for its successful implementation, since it is the principal who ultimately supports and supervises the coach's work.

The SFPS coaching framework is adapted from the work of Killion and Harrison (2006) and defines instructional coaches as teacher leaders who "guide their colleagues in data analysis, best instructional practices, and collaboration to improve student learning."[5] The district's vision for the program involves instructional coaches being part of a larger professional learning community where learning is embedded in the daily work of the school, student learning is at the center, best practices are consistently implemented, and data is routinely analyzed and used to form instructional decisions. The coaching program's purpose is to raise student achievement in reading and math, close achievement gaps, and develop collaborative school cultures. To fulfill this vision, coaches are assigned by the district to work within the schools to support a collaborative environment and catalyze student success. Coaches follow a specific action model developed and articulated by the district. (See *Figure 1*)

[4] Surrey Forge Public Schools, *Instructional Coaching Program Profile*
[5] Surrey Forge Public Schools, *Instructional Coaching Program Profile*

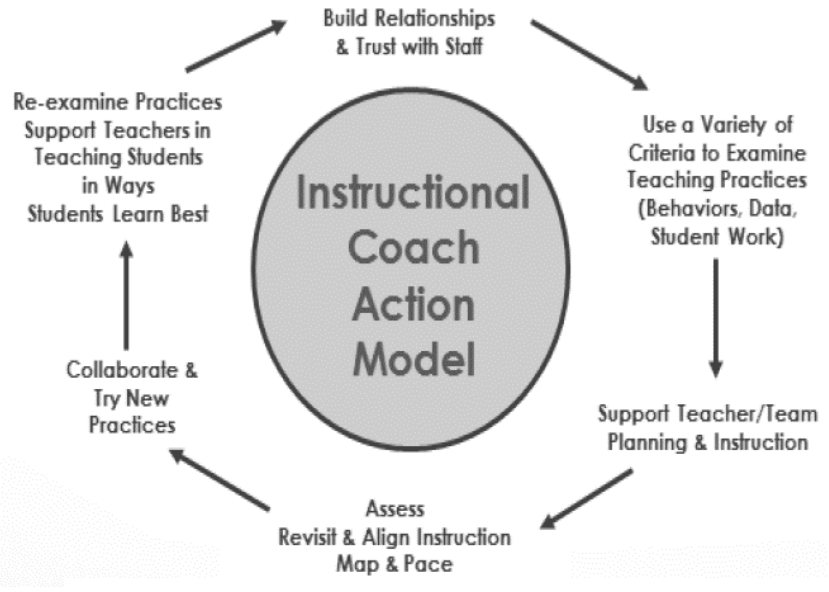


Figure 1. District Instructional Coach Action Model

The action model defines how coaches are to focus their work within a school. The coaches start by building relationships and trust with colleagues, then work to support the instructional program by examining student behavior and teacher practices to help teachers improve their craft. Instructional coaches work collaboratively in this continuous cycle of improvement with a focus on reading, math, and the closing of achievement gaps. Also, the SFPS model dictates that 60 percent of the coach's work each week is to be spent working with teams of teachers, 30 percent with individual teachers and 10 percent on their own professional learning. This coaching plan is designed to support the mission of the program which is to "build the adult learners' capacity to advance the achievement of all students and to close achievement gaps." [6]

The growth of the coaching program demonstrates that the district is strongly committed to this framework as a way to improve teacher practices and in turn student

[6] Surrey Forge Public Schools, *Instructional Coaching Program Profile*

achievement. The program initially began in 2005 with 24 school-based coaches and has grown steadily over the past ten years. In the 2015-16 school year, the program increased to almost 100 school-based coaches and six "district-based" coaches.

Problem. The most recent 2006 evaluation of SFPS's initiative to support struggling schools noted that some of the schools assigned an instructional coach did not show much improvement in overall academic performance. SFPS researchers concluded that the higher the fidelity of the IC model, the greater the improvement in academic outcomes. Another evaluation of the instructional coaching program noted the role of the principal as a key component to the success or failure of successful implementation. At high-implementing schools, principals facilitated the coaches' role as a catalyst for school change, while principals at low- and moderately-implementing schools found it difficult to focus on instructional improvement within their schools using the partnership of the coach. This evaluation also noted that there was a misconception that the coaching program was primarily about the role of the coach, rather than about the partnership between the coach and the principal.[7]

This varied understanding and interpretation, resulting in a lack of consistent implementation by school principals, is a serious concern for SFPS because of the potential impact on teacher practices and, in turn, student achievement. A principal's leadership in implementing the coaching framework not only impacts the fidelity of implementation, but can also impact teacher acceptance of the coaching model as a vehicle for school improvement. Since the coaching model is one of the district's

[7] Surrey Forge Public Schools, *Instructional Coaching Program, Final Evaluation, Executive Report*

primary supports for struggling schools, it was important to explore whether it was the implementation of the framework by school principals or the framework itself that resulted in this lack of success.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how SFPS's vision for instructional coaching was ultimately understood and applied by elementary school principals in a defined geographic area in the district. Patton (2002) notes that "a decision maker can use implementation information to make sure that a policy is being put into operation according to design – or to test the very feasibility of the policy" (p.161). My own interest in this topic has been shaped by my experience as a school principal working to successfully use a coaching framework to support students and teachers. I firmly believe in the positive influence coaching can have on instructional practices, and I also know that conversations with other principals do not always reveal a similar philosophy. An understanding of principal sensemaking around the coaching model can help identify whether the inconsistent implementation is a fundamental issue, whether the framework itself is flawed, or whether it is a combination of these factors that leads to the underwhelming results documented by the district. The data collected and analyzed through this capstone project will apprise district leaders of the current realities of the program's implementation and whether or not the district vision is indeed the schools' visions. The data may lead to suggestions for the future training for those involved in the implementation of the program. It may also be advantageous to the principals and teachers who have instructional coaches in their buildings to help them

better understand what might influence the coaching practices taking place in their schools.

Research Questions and Methodology

The primary question of my research examined how principals put into practice a district mandated coaching framework and how the principal's own sensemaking and leadership influenced those practices. My capstone sought to answer the following central question and sub-questions:

Central Question: How does a principal's sensemaking of the district coaching framework influence the coaching practices in the school and teacher sensemaking about coaching?

Sub Question 1: In SFPS schools that have an instructional coach, how do principals, teachers, and coaches make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?

a. How do the varied experiences and backgrounds of stakeholders influence, or not influence, how they make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?

b. In what ways, if any, are interpretations of the instructional coaching practices consistent and in what ways do interpretations differ?

Sub Question 2: What are the instructional coaching practices in elementary schools?

a. How do these practices align to the defined SFPS coaching framework?

Sub Question 3: How do elementary school principals organize school structures to support or constrain the intended implementation and objectives of the coaching framework?

This study focused on sub-district 3 in SFPS. Sub-district 3 is the area in the district that has the most struggling schools. Because of this critical need, there are close to 30 elementary instructional coaches that are employed in over 20 of the elementary schools in that area. This study initially focused on eight schools in the region that have a single, district-provided, instructional coach, and then more in-depth research was conducted at three of those schools.

Data was first collected through surveys made available on-line to coaches, principals, and teachers at each of the schools (see Appendix D). Similar questions were asked of each stakeholder group to discern the structures in place and whether or not the stakeholders held similar understandings of the practices of the coach and how those practices functioned in a school. Questions were also asked to determine how closely the practices of the coach were aligned to the defined SFPS framework.

From the results of that data, three critical cases were selected for semi-structured interviews of principals, coaches, and teachers (see Appendix G). These cases were chosen because studying these sites had the "greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton, 2002, p.236). The three cases chosen were selected based on contrasting initial survey data in order to examine schools where the coaching model seemed to be implemented differently. For example, I identified schools where the coach and principal answers were congruent, or different, where teachers indicated familiarity, or lack of familiarity, with coaching practices, and the one school where the principal had

been an instructional coach prior to being an administrator. Semi-structured interviews looked more deeply at the role of the principal in influencing coaching practices and how teachers, principals, and coaches made sense of the coaching practices in the larger context of job-embedded professional learning.

Preview of Conceptual Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study was derived from Karl Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking in organizations, Bolman and Deal's (2013) four-frame model of organizations, and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond's (2001) concept of distributed leadership, specifically leadership activity and tasks. Weick's (1995) sensemaking involves the reciprocal process of understanding, where organization members seek information and then make meaning of that information by relying on past experiences, their own identity, and interactions with others. Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest that organizational life can be viewed through four lenses that help bring clarity to how organizations operate. In this capstone project, these structural, human resources, political, and symbolic perspectives helped focus the complex web of sensemaking that was taking place among the stakeholders in each school. Finally, the work of Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) helps to explain the importance of the *how* of principal leadership and why the activities of the leader and his interaction with others in the organization can successfully or unsuccessfully impact the work of the instructional coach, and ultimately influence student achievement.

The conceptual framework illustrates that the development of coaches in the role of "leaders of teachers" in SFPS schools is shaped by the imposed district framework and how that framework is interpreted by principals and then implemented in individual

schools. Coaching practices were influenced by principal sensemaking along with principal decisions. The conceptual framework will be addressed fully in the methodology section of this capstone.

Significance of Study

This study was significant in that SFPS had not closely examined its coaching framework since district researchers collected data in the early 2000s, despite the fact that the program had nearly quadrupled in size. In the last examination, evaluators remarked that in schools where there was not strong adherence to the coaching program's framework, the full impact of the coach resource was not observed. Since that time, however, a formal evaluation of the program has not been conducted. The results of this study intended to provide the district with information that would be beneficial for the future of the coaching program and to offer valuable evidence to principals about how to support an instructional coach and what structures offer that support. It also aimed to inform other districts looking to implement a district-wide instructional coaching model. Finally, given the limited empirical evidence about instructional coaching programs, this study is significant in that it contributes to the growing research base on instructional coaching programs.

Limitations of Study

Limitations of the study include sample size, researcher bias, the narrow focus of a particular sub-district in Surrey Forge and factors beyond the scope of the study that may contribute to coach influence at a school. Sub-district 3 may also not be representative of all of the sub-districts in SFPS, and school principals might be hesitant

to share information with a fellow educator or may want to please the researcher instead of revealing true elements of the coaching program at their schools.

There are also limitations involved in using semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. Interview data can result in responses that are influenced by personal bias, anxiety, fear, and anger, or a lack of understanding or awareness (Patton, 2002). By using data from a number of sources, including interview data and survey data from various stakeholders, these limitations were mitigated.

Summary

This capstone project examined how elementary principals in sub-district 3 schools in Surrey Forge understand, interpret, and implement the district instructional coaching framework which is designed to increase student achievement. The research was targeted at how district structures are transferred to the school setting by principals, and how administrators and school staff members make sense of the coaching program. My premise in this capstone was that the varied experiences and backgrounds of the principals receiving a coach, along with how they frame organizational change while making sense of instructional coaching practices, determines how they implement the coaching framework. The actions of the principal, then, influence how teachers receive and accept instructional coaching and coaching practices ultimately influence the work in the school.

Organization of the Capstone

This section provided an introduction and overview of my capstone research. Section two of this capstone will share relevant literature on instructional coaching that will link district policy implementation to principal, teacher and coach sensemaking

about the roles and responsibilities of this provided resource. In subsequent sections of this capstone, the methodology, research design and conceptual framework will be discussed, and finally, the findings, discussion, recommendations and action communications will be shared.

SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The problem of practice addressed in this capstone focused on school principals and their level of understanding and consistent implementation of a district developed framework for instructional coaching. In examining a district's instructional coaching framework, and how that framework is understood and applied in the school setting through the work of the school's principal, it is important to analyze the literature surrounding instructional coaching, in addition to the broader literature addressing professional development, the connections between district policy and principal action, and the cognitive process of sensemaking.

To identify literature for this review, I searched electronic databases, specifically the EBSCO education databases that could be accessed through the University of Virginia library system, and Google Scholar. I used the search terms "instructional coaching," "teacher leadership," "professional development," "principal leadership," "district policy," and "sensemaking." From the initial search, I used the reference sections of the studies to identify more sources. I also used the "related articles" feature of Google Scholar in addition to the reference sections of doctoral dissertations on the subject of instructional coaching.

I continued this process until I believed I had exhausted the research most relevant to my topic. Since the interest in instructional coaching has grown in the last decade, most of the articles chosen during my initial search were published between 2000

and 2014; however, several seminal studies on professional development and instructional coaching were published earlier and included to provide important historical context.

The literature review will begin with a discussion of the broader topic of professional development and then will narrow to address instructional coaching in the general sense, along with studies that address more detailed aspects of coaching, including its impact on student achievement. Then the review will turn to the role of the principal and will look at how principals support instructional coaching, how they influence school structures and how they mediate district policy demands.

Professional Development

The attention being paid to teacher professional development has become more focused since the requirement set forth by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 that obligates states to ensure the availability of "high-quality" professional development for all teachers (NCLB, 2002). The act does not, however, address questions related to what constitutes high-quality professional development or how professional development should best be made available to teachers. This has been left up to the states themselves, and many have fallen short of meeting the learning needs of teachers. Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson and Orphanos (2009) write that the kind of “high-intensity, job-embedded collaborative learning that is most effective is not a common feature of professional development across most states, districts, and schools in the United States” (p. 4). This lack of a clear vision of what constitutes effective professional development continues to be the focus of study for educational researchers, and it is on this broader topic of professional development in which instructional coaching is situated.

Effective teacher professional development, defined by Odden (2011) as "[producing] change in teachers' classroom-based instructional practice, which can be linked to improvements in student learning" (p.97) is known to be an important element in increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps. A 2004 report released by The Teaching Commission (2004) recognizes the urgency for good professional development and states that professional development should be "aligned with state and district goals and standards for student learning, and should become an everyday part of the school schedule rather than be conducted as a set of ad hoc events" (p. 49).

Although there are few empirical studies that provide causal data linking professional development to student achievement, there is an existing research base that identifies key features of effective professional development. Leading researchers in the field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Elmore, 2002; Garet et al., 2001) cite common elements in well-designed professional learning frameworks that have the potential to support changes in teacher practice and impact student achievement. Common elements highlighted state that professional development should:

- be job-embedded,
- be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice,
- focus on student learning and address the teaching of specific curriculum content,
- build strong working relationships among teachers,
- align with school improvement priorities and goals, and
- include active learning and planned follow-up.

Yoon et.al. (2007) also make suggestions for professional development based on their examination of the commonalities among nine research studies examining

professional development that resulted in student gains. Based on their analysis, they report recommendations similar to those mentioned above; however, they add that professional development must be designed with attention to adult learning and change theory and teachers must also have the beliefs, motivation, and skills to apply what they are learning to their classrooms. Finally, well-designed professional development is focused on instructional content, sustained over time, embedded in practice, and based on active learning that is collaborative and coherent (Garet et al., 2001), and it is understood that participation in well-planned and effective professional development is critical for teacher development. As a result of the importance placed on professional development, especially the job-embedded structures that can promote teacher professional learning, there is a growing interest in the instructional coaching model as a successful professional development framework (King et al., 2004).

Instructional Coaching

It is out of this desire to increase the effectiveness of professional development and enhance teacher learning that coaching got its roots as a promising practice. One of the earliest mentions of "coaching" in terms of educational practices appears in the "peer coaching" work of Joyce and Showers in the early 1980s (Joyce & Showers, 1981). These researchers initially studied 17 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade language arts and social studies teachers who had been trained in three models of teaching (Bruner's Concept Attainment, Taba's Inductive Thinking, and Gordon's Synectics) to examine the role coaching played in helping them transfer the practices learned in traditional staff development to the classroom setting. After the initial training, half of the teachers were randomly assigned to received coaching for an additional six weeks, while the remaining

teachers were observed but did not receive the coaching. Through the use of the Teacher Innovator System (TIS) observation instrument and multiple regression data analysis, the study determined that coaching strongly influenced teacher transfer of training but that transfer did not have an impact on student outcomes as measured by performance on essay tests in the teachers' classes (Showers, 1982).

In the mid-1990s, Joyce and Showers expanded their hypotheses about coaching to look at whole school faculties and peer coaching teams and continued with their assertions that the way to help teachers learn was through a peer coaching model; now using small groups of teachers working collaboratively to share learning and provide each other with feedback (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Becker (2001) found that mathematics coaches had a positive impact on changing teachers' instructional practices. In a qualitative study of six elementary mathematics coaches and 12 teachers, with the addition of coaching, teachers learned to focus on big mathematical ideas, mathematical process standards and students' understanding of mathematics in their mathematics instruction.

A 2010 systematic review of 20 years of research, and 457 studies, from 1989-2009 revealed 13 studies that quantitatively measured changes in teachers' classroom practices after coaching intervention (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Most articles were excluded from the review because of a qualitative research design or because the measurement of the dependent variable was not a direct measure of change. After their meta-analysis, Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) concluded that the studies they reviewed provided "strong evidence for the effectiveness of coaching in promoting the fidelity of evidence-based practices" (p.292).

Most recently, Vanderburg and Stephens (2010), in a qualitative study of 35 teachers, identified four types of teacher change that were facilitated through working with a literacy coach. They found that teachers felt empowered to try new teaching practices, used more authentic assessments, expanded their use of educational theory and research, and more frequently prioritized student needs in determining their instruction.

Findings in the research over the past 30 years suggest why the practice of instructional coaching is enticing to today's school districts, and why districts are employing coaches to support schools and teacher teams to strengthen instructional practices.

Definition and roles. Despite the fact that instructional coaching is a growing practice, coaching does not have one commonly held definition which makes it challenging for schools to determine the most effective use of these resources (Taylor, 2008). King et al. (2004) explain coaching as activities related to developing the organizational capacity of whole schools and activities directly related to improving instruction. Knight (2007) calls instructional coaches "individuals who are full-time professional developers" (p.12) and Neufeld and Roper (2003) describe a set of activities undertaken by coaches that focus on helping teachers improve instruction in a content area, such as literacy or mathematics. Killion and Harrison (2006) describe nine different types of coaching that appear in the literature with some having distinct purposes and other descriptions overlapping.

In a 2006 review of instructional coaching literature, Borman et al. (2006) found that the following coach activities appear across the literature (see Table 1):

Table 1

Coach activities with individual teachers and groups of teachers (recommended)

Classroom-based activities with individual teachers	Classroom-focused activities with groups of educators
Demonstrating and modeling instructional practices and lessons	Conducting study groups
Observing instruction	Providing training and professional development workshops
Co-teaching	Organizing and brokering instructional Materials
Co-planning lessons and units	Administering assessments and monitoring Results
Providing feedback and consultation	
Promoting reflection	
Analyzing students' work and progress	

SFPS definition and roles. The SFPS instructional coaching framework is designed from the definition of instructional coaching offered by Killion and Harrison (2006), and it is this definition that was examined in this capstone. Killion, Harrison, Bryan and Clifton (2012) describe instructional coaches as teachers who have expertise in pedagogy and instructional strategies. They state the goal of instructional coaching is to "increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by supporting teachers in implementing proven practices, reflecting on their instructional decisions, and making needed adjustments" (Killion, Harrison, Bryan & Clifton, 2012, p.42). Instructional coaches accomplish this goal by demonstrating lessons, helping teachers plan for instruction and assessment, solving problems, and reflecting on their teaching. Instructional coaches are especially useful when "there is a gap between teachers' knowledge and their implementation of

instructional strategies, and student learning results could improve" (Killion et. al., 2012, p. 42).

Even within the instructional coaching model, coaches take on different roles and tasks depending on the needs of teachers and school teams. Killion and Harrison (2006) identify the following roles that coaches assume in the school setting to impact teacher learning and student achievement:

- Resource provider
- Data coach
- Instructional specialist
- Curriculum specialist
- Classroom supporter
- Learning facilitator
- Mentor
- School leader
- Catalyst for change
- Learner

Of course, it is difficult for coaches to perform all of these roles in one school, so it is the work of the district, the school principal, and the coach to narrow and define the coach's most critical work based on the desired school or district improvement outcomes.

Coaching and student achievement. One of the primary objectives for implementing a coaching model is likely to be to maximize teachers' instructional impact and increase student achievement due to the emphasis in current federal policy. That is

the overarching purpose of SFPS placing coaches in schools that are struggling most with achievement.

Although the research on instructional coaching is largely descriptive, involving case studies, observations, and interviews (Borman et al., 2006) there have been some studies that have clearly identified an impact on student achievement. Campbell and Malkus (2013) found that over time mathematics coaches placed in schools positively affected student achievement in mathematics in grades 3, 4, and 5, as measured by the state tests for those grade levels. These coaches engaged in considerable professional learning in content and pedagogy before being placed as coaches in the schools and the achievement impacts were not experienced until the coach had completed two years in the school setting.

The impact of coaching on reading achievement has also been studied. Using achievement data from nearly 1,000 Florida middle schools, Lockwood, McCombs, and Marsh (2010) found that receiving a state-funded literacy coach resulted in statistically significant improvements in average annual reading achievement gains for two of the four cohorts of schools analyzed. Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2010) also found that student literacy learning improved during a four-year implementation of the Literacy Collaborative coaching program across 17 schools in eight states.

There have been some studies, though, that show mixed or limited results with instructional coaching. One example is Mandeville and Rivers (1991) who looked critically at the implementation of a Madeline Hunter professional development program called “Program for Effective Teaching” (PET). They examined the impact the program had on teachers’ perception of the training, the quality of coaching they received after the

initial training, and the impact on student achievement as compared to students in classrooms where teachers did not receive the training. Overall, teachers in each cohort reported positive feelings about the PET program and reported positive results about the coaching they received, but no significant differences were found among those students of teachers who had participated in the training and two years of coaching and those who had teachers who had received less training or no training.

Based on the research discussed above, using instructional coaches as a complement to and support for professional development in content areas may, under certain conditions, contribute to improved teacher practices and student achievement in that content area, however; that is not a definite. Research suggests that there are conditions and characteristics that need to be present to support a coaching program.

Supports for instructional coaching. Researchers have identified supports for instructional coaching that are critical to having a successful program that maximizes the impact of the practice. Structural conditions, which include teachers volunteering for coaching, time, role clarity, coaching content and organizational context, all impact the effectiveness of a coach's work (Borman et al., 2006; King et al., 2004). Coaches must have well-defined roles and responsibilities that are clear to all stakeholders and must possess the skills and knowledge to be effective (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). In addition to coaches having knowledge and skills, school faculties need to *believe* the coach possesses the needed expertise and is a necessary addition to the school staff (Coggins et al., 2003; Taylor, 2008).

Time is highlighted in many studies as a critical component of a coaching program. Coaches must have the time they need to meet with teachers and teacher teams

to impact practices (Borman et al., 2006; Neufeld & Roper; Shidler, 2009; Steiner & Kowal, 2007; Taylor, 2008) and in many instances that time dictated within a coaching framework, is not the reality. Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, and Autio (2007) found that Reading First coaches who were asked to spend 60 to 80 percent of their time in the classroom with teachers or working with teachers directly on their instruction in reality only spent 28 percent of their time with teachers. The disparity between the time needed to impact teachers and the time allotted to coaching can have an impact on the final outcomes.

Lastly, there are school climate and culture characteristics that also contribute to the ongoing success of the work of a coach. A coach's influence in a school is very much contingent upon the faculty norms of trust, collective responsibility, academic rigor, reflection and innovation (Borman et al., 2006; Taylor, 2008). In a school "characterized by professional norms, teachers are predisposed to interpret coaches' actions as benevolent, competent, and directed at shared goals and continuous improvement" (Taylor, 2008, p.28).

Role of the Principal in Instructional Coaching

Teacher leadership roles cannot be placed into existing school structures without support from school principals (Mangin, 2005). Principals are in a place to provide the support coaches need to be successful, and this support is a foundational aspect of a coach's work (Killion et al., 2012). Neufeld and Roper (2003) found that weak principals were very detrimental to a school's coaching program and in schools where the principals were weak, coaches found they were unable to do their work, even if the teachers were asking for their support. Coaches feel most supported with accomplishing school and

district-wide objectives in schools where principals have high levels of knowledge about the role of the coach and high levels of interaction with the coach (Mangin, 2007).

The principal's influence over school processes that support teachers' professional learning, such as time allocation and scheduling (King et al., 2004; Poglinco et al., 2003; Walpole & McKenna, 2004) is a necessary component to the implementation of a successful coaching program. Principals need to protect coaches from managerial tasks that might impact their work (Killion et al., 2012). Marsh, McCombs, and Martorell (2010) in a study of Florida's statewide literacy coaching program found that coaches and teachers reported that administrative duties impacted the coach's availability to work with teachers. Coaches sometimes get drawn into other leadership positions and are tapped by principals for tasks outside of coaching (Camburn et al., 2008). It is the job of the principal to work to protect the coach's time.

In addition to logistical concerns, administrators need to set clear and consistent guidelines about the coach's responsibilities and the limits of those responsibilities (Steiner & Kowal, 2007). Teacher resistance to coaching is an identified barrier to a successful program. Matsumara et al. (2009) found that principal leadership was significantly associated with the frequency with which teachers conferred with and were observed by their coach. Principal behaviors associated with teachers' increased engagement with coaches included actively participating in the coaching program and publicly supporting the coach as a source of expertise to teachers (Mangin, 2007; Matsumara et al., 2009). Also, principal beliefs regarding a literacy coach's roles and responsibilities were associated with the frequency with which teachers willingly opened their classrooms to the coaches (Matsumara et al.,2009). A principal's words and actions

are important to reassure teachers that this framework is a necessary and long-term commitment to school improvement (Steiner & Kowal, 2007).

The principal also plays a role in successful implementation by establishing an active partnership with the coach and by being involved and engaged with the coaching program (Killion et. al., 2012). Principals with high levels of knowledge and interaction actively support teacher leaders by communicating with teachers about their own leadership. Mangin's (2007) exploratory study of data collected from interviews with 12 principals, 12 math teacher leaders, and six supervisors found a link between the principals' knowledge of the role of the teacher leaders, their interaction with the teacher leaders, and their overall support of teacher leadership. Ippolito (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study of coaches' roles and relationships in a mid-sized, urban, East Coast district and identified a continuum of principal behaviors from neglect to partnership to interference that affected the work of a coach within the school setting. To promote a positive partnership, coaches and principals need to learn side by side and actively take part in professional development (Killion et al., 2012) and by doing so they model the collaboration they want to see among the staff, and they foster a collaborative culture within the school. When the principal "models a professional, collaborative relationship with the coach for the staff, the principal is setting the tone for the culture of inquiry desired among staff members" (Killion et al., 2012, p. 109).

Principal Leadership and District Policy

Knowing the importance of the role of the school principal in the support and implementation of an instructional coaching framework, it is important to examine the research on the broader context the role a principal plays in district policy

implementation. At its core, instructional coaching is a school improvement practice. This capstone examined how a district coaching framework passed down to principals at struggling schools as one part of a solution to student underachievement is ultimately interpreted and implemented. The research tells us that the distance between district leaders and teachers on the front lines in the classroom is great (Johnson, Marietta, Higgins, Mapp, & Grossman, 2015) and the principal is often in the middle (Spillane, Diamond, Burch, Hallett, Jita & Zoltners, 2002). Although district administrators may desire a tight coupling and consistent implementation of a district developed framework across all schools, this does not often happen as a policy gets its own interpretation at the school level. School responses to district policies are a direct result of the school leader, and the context in which the leader's understanding is situated (Spillane et al., 2002). Inherently there is a tension that exists between school principals and district office leaders around the demands of school reform; however, principal leadership is paramount as principals are "vital agents in the district's effort to implement its strategy for instructional improvement" (Johnson et al., 2015, p.89).

Camburn et al.'s (2008) case study of a coaching program implemented in a large, decentralized urban district showed that although the program was well designed and encompassed aspects of the instructional coaching research and adult learning, the impact of the initiative fell short in many of the district schools. The researchers concluded through a mixed-methods evaluation of data collected from 58 elementary schools that some schools in the district were able to capitalize on the district resource of a literacy coach and were able to implement the coaching practices aligned to the district expectations, but schools that had "lower capacity" (p.142) were not able to take

advantage of the district provided resource and needed more support. The actions of the principals in these schools, in addition to the support of central office personnel, were key factors in whether or not a school was able to use the coaching support in such a manner to impact teacher practices.

School leaders "craft coherence" between district policy and school practice by "buffering or bridging" the district policy (Honig & Hatch, 2004). Honig and Hatch (2004) write about this practice of "crafting coherence" which involves schools setting school-wide goals and strategies that have particular features and school district central offices supporting these school-level processes. The Honig and Hatch conceptual framework is grounded in organizational and institutional theory and explains how districts and schools negotiate external policies with their own internal goals and strategies. Bridging involves accommodating policy demands through initiatives and structures directly aimed at meeting policy goals. Buffering challenges policy goals by focusing on the priorities of the individual school. Principals bridge and buffer (Honig & Hatch, 2004) while playing critical roles in district policy administration (Hope & Pigford, 2001).

Conclusion

The research highlights the important role principals play in district policy implementation and how critical their leadership is to the implementation of an instructional coaching model. Instructional coaching, as examined in the literature, is a school improvement practice intended to strengthen instructional practices and ultimately increase student achievement. Although the literature offers a variety of models, definitions, and practices, the framework studied in this capstone has been developed and articulated by SFPS. Through this framework, the district intends to support struggling

schools by helping teachers better reach the learning needs of students and increase student achievement. Previous SFPS program evaluations, though, have revealed that depending on the actions of the principal, this objective may or may not come to fruition depending on how that principal transfers the framework to his individual school.

The cognitive processes that are involved in district policy implementation have been described as "sensemaking" (Spillane et.al, 2002; Weick, 1995). As mentioned in the introduction, my premise in this capstone is that a principal's sensemaking is critical to the implementation of the SFPS coaching program. I proposed that the more experiences a principal has had with instructional coaching and the deeper the principal's knowledge of the coaching framework and program, the more successful and faithful the implementation of the coaching model will be. Ultimately, the actions of the principal (their leadership tasks) can determine the success of the program, and the varied experiences and perceptions of elementary principals influence actions that result in the varied implementation of the framework. My capstone project examined this premise.

The next section of my capstone will explore the methodology and conceptual framework that guided the study. Looking at the theory of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and how a school principal understands and interprets the defined coaching model, along with how that principal enacts leadership tasks (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001) can offer insight into the factors that may help or hinder the program implementation in a school. In addition, Bolman and Deal's (1991) organizational frames will help structure the complexity of the sensemaking taking place among the stakeholders in the organization. As mentioned previously, the work of these theorists will form the foundation for the conceptual framework of this study.

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

As mentioned previously, my capstone project examined how a district coaching program was interpreted and implemented in the school setting, and specifically examined the role the principal's sensemaking played in supporting or hindering the district's defined model. In this section of my capstone, first I describe the conceptual framework that shaped the study. Then, I go on to describe the research methods I used and why they were chosen. Also, I include a description of the participants, how the participants and sites were selected, and any research bias or ethical concerns. This section concludes with explanations of the data collection tools, how data was collected and analyzed, and any threats to data quality.

Conceptual Framework

As stated earlier, the conceptual framework of this study illustrates that the development of coaches in the role of "leaders of teachers" in SFPS is shaped by the design of the district framework and how that framework is interpreted and implemented in individual schools by the school principal. It is grounded in the theoretical and empirical research on organizational leadership and sensemaking and specifically draws upon Spillane et al.'s (2001) leadership tasks and activities of distributed leadership, Karl Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking in organizations, and Bolman and Deal's (1991) four-frame model of organizations and organizational processes.

The district impacts the coaching practices by providing the coaching action model, defining the coaches' time allocation and selecting and training the coaches; however, the implementation is not automatic or consistent in each school because principal sensemaking and leadership tasks are varied along with the needs of the schools. Coaching practices are influenced by the meaning principals, teachers, and coaches make of the role and significance of the coach. School leaders have backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences they bring to the understanding of the instructional coaching model and to their understanding of the organization as a whole. They work to make sense of their organization and its events and to act within that environment. Teachers' also make sense of coaching practices. This sensemaking is influenced by their own backgrounds, environments, and social interactions, and through sensemaking influenced by the school principal. Finally, coaches need to understand their defined role in the organization, and how their position fits into the larger plan for school improvement. They also do this through sensemaking and through their professional interactions with the principal and teachers. It is possible that as these factors come together to shape the coaching program in each individual school, the gap between the district's vision and the school's implementation widens.

Bolman and Deal's organizational frames are useful to use as lenses in interpreting the stakeholders' sensemaking that is happening within the organization. These theorists, who have examined organizational theory along with organizational change and leadership, have consolidated the research and created a framework encompassing four distinct perspectives on organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2013). They

identify these “perspectives” as structural, human resources, political and symbolic frames. These frames are important because they allow the complexity of sensemaking to be focused in the areas that are vital to understanding what might be happening in the organization with the implementation of the coaching model. At the start of this study, I assumed that two of these lenses, the structural and human resources frames, were going to be more pertinent to the introduction and implementation of the model; the political and symbolic frames less so.

The collective sensemaking of the stakeholders in the organization, and especially the perspectives, interpretation, and implementation of the coaching model by the school principal, results in conditions that support or impede the alignment of practices to the SFPS coaching program. This, in turn, can ultimately impact the achievement of the objectives of the action model, which is increased student achievement.

In addition to sensemaking, the *how* of principal leadership is also presumed to be important. Spillane et al. (2001) describe leadership tasks at the macro and micro level that are essential to understanding leadership practice. Micro-tasks are especially important because it is through “studying the execution of these tasks that we can begin to analyze the how as distinct from the what of school leadership” (p. 24).

On the next page is a visual representation of the conceptual framework through which the problem of practice was explored. (See *Figure 2*)

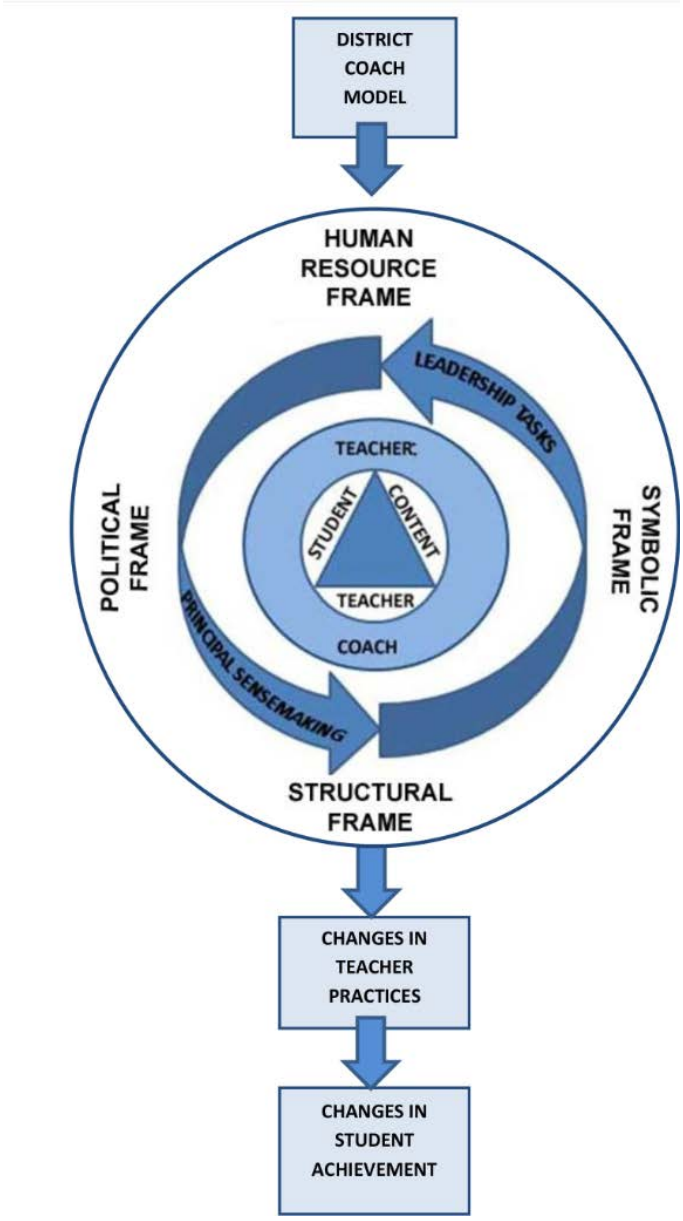


Figure 2. District coaching framework implementation and the relationship to changes in student achievement

Looking at this diagram holistically, it shows that a district coaching model is interpreted and implemented by the various stakeholders in the organization, in this case, principals, teachers, and coaches. This interaction impacts what is happening in the

classroom (the most inner circle of the diagram) by changing how the teacher relates to the content and the students in the class. Eventually, this relationship between the coach and the classroom teacher changes the teachers' instructional practices and habits in order to impact student achievement. The Bolman and Deal (2013) structural, human resources, symbolic and political lenses aid in understanding the underlying organization processes and structures that influence the implementation.

For my capstone project, I looked specifically at the second stage of the diagram - how principals, teachers, and coaches influence the district coaching process by making sense of the coaching model in the school and the leadership tasks that principals enact while implementing, or attempting to implement, the model. Looking specifically at the role of the principal, a principal's own experiences and knowledge regarding the coaching model is seen as critical to how successful the model will be in improving teacher practices and then student achievement. Since sensemaking is ongoing and social, a principal is continuously making sense of the how the coach is situated in the organization through examining his own beliefs and identity, and through interactions with other stakeholders in the building. Principals, through their own leadership tasks, provide, according to the research, the necessary conditions in the school setting, prioritize coaches' work and help staff members understand the role of the coach.

This next portion of this section will examine more in depth the theoretical components of the conceptual framework by delving deeper into the work of Weick (1995), Bolman and Deal (2013) and Spillane et al. (2001) who provide the underlying foundation for my framework.

Sensemaking. As mentioned previously, sensemaking is a term most associated with Karl Weick (1995) and refers to how people structure the unknown in order to act within it. He proposes that we are continually making sense of our environment and that sensemaking causes people to react differently to the same event. He also posits that there are interrelated properties that result in this sensemaking (Weick, 2005). Our identity, past experiences, social interactions, environment, and our drive to make situations plausible, influence how we see and interpret events (Mills, Thurlow & Mills, 2010; Weick, 2005). Sensemaking also includes the "process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p.57).

From a leadership perspective, sensemaking is important because it explains the processes by which a leader tries to understand an organization and its people and make sense of what is happening within that organization. From a school leadership perspective, it also proposes that principals and teachers strive to make sense of their environment, and of educational policies and practices, and then act accordingly within that environment.

Sensemaking was foundational to this capstone study because the instructional coaching framework is an educational policy. Educational researchers have examined the role of sensemaking in policy implementation. Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) investigated policy implementation using a sensemaking framework and found that "agents must first notice, then frame, interpret, and construct meaning for policy messages" (p.392). Coburn (2005) also explored the role of the school principal in terms of sensemaking and the policy implementation process. She argued that "principals

influence teachers' sensemaking about instructional policy both directly and indirectly" (p.499) and that principals are sensemakers themselves. Coburn (2005) wrote, "Principals draw on their own conceptions of what new policy ideas or approaches entail as they make decisions about what to bring in and emphasize, as they discuss approaches with teachers, and as they shape opportunities for learning" (p.501). School leaders mediate policy messages resulting in teachers in different schools receiving varied information about the "content, focus, and intensity" (p.499) of educational policies.

If a school leader lacks the background and experiences to make sense of policy, in this case the SFPS coaching framework, their interactions with teachers may prohibit those teachers from understanding ways in which to enact the policy. This is in contrast to leaders who have a firm understanding of a policy and can engage teachers in professional learning about the policy (Spillane et al., 2002). This suggests that principal sensemaking may be a key component in the successful implementation of a coaching framework, and may also provide insight into how that coaching framework can be implemented and interpreted differently in the receiving schools.

To conduct effective sensemaking, Ancona (2012) indicates that leaders must:

- explore the wider organizational system by listening to and questioning both internal and external stakeholders
- pursue opinions that differ from their own and keep an open mind
- test their assumptions to ensure they are headed in the right direction
- adopt multiple perspectives and make use of teams and committees
- iterate and act to update the plan or vision based on continued data collection

School leaders' sensemaking is situated in their personal experience, building history, and role as an intermediary between the district office and classroom (Spillane et al., 2002). If principals misunderstand the intent of the policy, then the possibility of a failure of implementation is high. This is not due to the principal rejecting the policy, but rather the lack of understanding in implementing the policy. Helping principals understand reform measures is key. Spillane et al. (2002) propose that some changes sought by policymakers "involve more complex cognitive transformations for implementing agents than others" (p.415) and they argue that there is a need to "structure learning opportunities so that stakeholders can construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own behavior" (p.418).

Coburn (2005) found that when school leaders had only a cursory understanding of policy ideas, they promoted approaches that went against what was understood by the policy, but when school leaders had understandings that were consistent with the policy, their interaction with teachers helped teachers understand and enact the practices appropriately.

Sensemaking is relevant when examining the implementation of instructional coaching models because research on instructional coaching reforms shows that principals differ in their understanding of coaching models and the role of coaches in the school. This impacts the effectiveness of the program (Camburn et al., 2008; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Mangin, 2007). Matsumara and Wang (2014), in an exploratory qualitative study of 12 literacy coaches in seven schools, found that principals' sensemaking of the instructional strategies put forth by a literacy coaching framework,

and high-stakes policies for accountability, had an impact on how literacy coaches worked with teachers and influenced their instructional practices.

The work around sensemaking is important in light of the problem addressed in this capstone, and principal sensemaking is paramount to understanding how the coaching model evolves from a district imposed policy to a school supported plan. Principals are also influenced by how they view their existing organization, organizational processes, events, and problems. Bolman and Deal's four-frame model offers a way to examine and interpret this sensemaking.

Bolman and Deal's Organizational Frames. Bolman and Deal's (1991) frames for examining organizations and organizational leadership are relevant when looking at the implementation of a district-designed instructional coaching program. School leaders' perceptions of their organizations' processes and structures can be described and interpreted using different lenses. Bolman and Deal (1991) have identified these as structural, human resources, political and symbolic frames through their work to synthesize and encapsulate themes that are present in organizational theory. These lenses can help explain the leader's perspective when taking action within the organization. The four-frame model connects to sensemaking in that in can be used to describe and interpret what is happening in the organization.

In their explanations of each frame, Bolman and Deal (1991) stress that the structural frame puts emphasis on an organization's efficiency and goals and that employees assume positions that are clearly defined with a succinct chain of command and rules and regulations that govern the organization. The human resources frame dictates that organizations meet employees' needs for relationships, belonging and worth.

The political frame highlights the conflict and competition within an organization, and the symbolic frame theorizes that organizations create symbols that provide a sense of meaning and identity.

An important assumption of the study is that Bolman and Deal's structural frame is particularly relevant when looking at sensemaking around the role of the organization during and after the introduction of instructional coaches. The introduction of instructional coaches into a school environment creates a change in the overall structure of the school. This can lead to distrust or confusion in an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p.381). Structural conditions, such as whether coach interaction is mandated or voluntary, time, clarity of the coach role, coaching content, and organizational context are all meaningful in determining the impact of the coaches' work (Borman et al., 2006).

In a section of their book *Reframing the Path to School Leadership*, Bolman and Deal (2010) address "leadership lessons" for the structural frame. They highlight the following:

- Align the structure with the work
- Clarify roles
- Design groups for success rather than failure
- Set or clarify goals
- Shape a structure that fits (p. 89-92)

Although all of these "lessons" are important, the "clarify role" component of the structural frame is particularly revealing in the case of instructional coaches because of the inherent ambiguity of coach role. When a new role is introduced into an existing school culture, faculty and staff may try to make sense of the function and purposes of

that role since the role is confusing or novel (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). The structural frame emphasizes the importance of formal roles defined by a title or a formal job description (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p.45). Essential strategies during this time of change involve communicating, realigning, and renegotiating patterns and politics (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p.390).

Looking at sensemaking about coaching through a human resources frame may reveal a feeling of incompetence or anxiety about the role this additional staff member plays in a school, especially since this teacher leader is tasked with helping other teachers improve instructional practices. In this study, the human resources frame is also assumed to be especially pertinent. The human resources frame includes the charge to "hire the right people" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p.141). School systems must ensure that the selection of coaches at the district and school levels is rigorous and fair and results in the hiring of coaches who will be credible to the teachers and principals with whom they work (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Other educators must see the creation of the coach role as a necessary addition to the school staff and must perceive the person who becomes the coach as having the appropriate background and skills to support school improvement (Coggins et al., 2003). Principals, as shown in the literature discussed previously, need to take an active role in supporting teachers and instructional coaches in understanding the district framework and the role of the coach in order to accomplish district and school objectives.

An assumption in this study was that the political and symbolic perspectives were less relevant in describing stakeholder sensemaking; however, they were included as a part of the conceptual framework in order to be attentive to alternative explanations. A

political frame focuses on the role of the teacher, principal, and instructional coach from the standpoint of power and conflict. Teaching has historically been an autonomous profession and one that favors the norms of seniority and egalitarianism (Weiner, 2011). Conversations between coaches and principals about teachers' work may cause tension in a building (Neufeld & Roper, 2008); however, in a school "characterized by professional norms teachers are predisposed to interpret coaches' actions as benevolent, competent and directed at shared goals and continuous improvement" (Taylor, 2008, p.28). It is important that the role of the coach is situated by the principal as part of a larger school-wide reform (Weiner, 2011) and that principals create "arenas" where opportunities are provided to "forge divisive issues into shared agreements" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p.385).

A symbolic frame "focuses attention on culture, meaning, belief and faith" (Bolman & Deal, 2010, p.4). Symbols present in a school may be a mission statement, a ritual, a ceremony, a story or a hero. In a school, the symbolic frame provides a lens for examining how those in the building make meaning of the organization around them. Principals who examine their school through a symbolic lens may focus on the school's vision, mission and traditions, and may strive to create a culture where teachers feel that their work, and the work of the organization, have a greater meaning and importance. In terms of instructional coaching practices, the coach position itself could even become a symbol in the school. It's possible that the role of a coach could be a symbol for administrative bureaucracy or for instructional incompetence depending on the meaning faculty members make of coaching practices.

An example showing that all four frames could be used to analyze the discussion of instructional coaching was found on a SFPS sanctioned budget discussion board. The quotation below suggests that the teacher's sensemaking around the ambiguity of the new role (human resources frame), leads to her frustration about planning time (structural frame), and her feeling that the coach's work is unnecessary and burdensome (political and symbolic frames):

> We did better without them in our schools than with them. They are just another administrator creating work for teachers to justify their position. They take up valuable planning time that could be better used creating lessons and working with students (SPFS teacher).[8]

Using Bolman and Deal's frames as a tool for interpretation in this capstone project allowed me to analyze and describe the nature of the coaching framework and how the structural, human resource, political and symbolic perspectives highlighted the principal's sensemaking and actions in implementing the coaching program. The organizational lenses aided in understanding the underlying organizational processes and structures that influenced principal sensemaking and the successful implementation of the coaching framework, or its impediment.

Leadership Tasks. In addition to the sensemaking of the principal, leadership tasks were also a unit of examination in this capstone as a critical aspect of instructional coach implementation. Leadership tasks are pieces of the larger conceptual framework of distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2001). Distributed leadership, as conceptualized by Spillane, is a "perspective on leadership that argues that school leadership practice is

[8] Surrey Forge Public Schools on-line budget forum comment

distributed in the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation" (Spillane, 2004, p.2). Leadership tasks include managerial, instructional and political activities that are undertaken by a leader and can occur at the macro or micro level (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Leadership practice involves how principals "define, present and carry out [these] tasks" (Spillane et. al., 2004, p. 13). A distributed perspective looks at how leadership activity results from the interdependence of various school leaders enacting leadership tasks. While my conceptual framework looks specifically at the tasks of the school principal, the interactions of the principal, teachers, and coaches is an important piece of the conceptual framework.

Having explained my conceptual framework, I will now proceed with a discussion of research design and methods.

Research Design

This research was conducted using a mixed methods design. Creswell and Garrett (2008) note that "addressing [educational research] problems requires amassing … all types of evidence gained through measurement of precise questions, as well as more general assessment through open-ended questions" (p. 321). When researchers combine both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the strengths of both methodologies are combined, and the research problem can be better understood (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (2008) identified five purposes for mixed methods research; triangulation, complementarity, development, initiative and expansion. In the case of this capstone "development" (Greene et al., 2008) is my purpose for using a mixed methods design. In a mixed methods design for development purposes, results are used from one method to inform the other method. This involves the sequential use of

qualitative and quantitative methods (Greene et al., 2008). In the case of this capstone, a quantitative survey was used to identify a sample of participants for more in-depth qualitative interviews.

Research Questions

As discussed in the introduction, this capstone examined the implementation of a district-designed instructional coaching program to answer a primary question concerning how a principal interprets and implements a district framework, and how principal and teacher sensemaking impacts the success or failure of the coaching model. I collected data and explored the following questions:

Central Question: How does a principal's sensemaking of the district coaching framework influence the coaching practices in the school and teacher sensemaking about coaching?

Sub Question 1: In SFPS schools that have an instructional coach, how do principals, teachers, and coaches make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?

a. How do the varied experiences and backgrounds of stakeholders influence, or not influence, how they make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?

b. In what ways, if any, are interpretations of the instructional coaching practices consistent and in what ways do interpretations differ?

Sub Question 2: What are the instructional coaching practices in elementary schools?

a. How do these practices align to the defined SFPS coaching framework?

Sub Question 3: How do elementary school principals organize school structures to support or constrain the intended implementation and objectives of the coaching framework?

The central question examines specifically how the leader's sensemaking of the framework influences the work of the coach and the teachers' understanding of that work. To answer that question, my first sub-question investigated how the coaching framework is understood by different stakeholders in the school and to what extent these understandings are similar or dissimilar. It also explored the extent to which experiences and knowledge of coaching models influence their sensemaking. These findings resulted in an understanding of the overall implementation of the program. While the first question examined the overall understanding of the program, the second question looked more closely at the coach's practices in the school, what the reality of the position is, and then how that reality compares to the actual framework set forth by the district. Data collected around this question uncovered how closely the framework is aligned to actual school practices. The final question looked at how the leader organized the framework in the school and how that organization supports or constrains the work of the coach.

Site Selection and Participants

This study took place in a large suburban school district on the east coast of the United States. One area of the district, sub-district 3, was identified for the research. Sub-district 3 is the geographic area in the district that contains the schools with the

highest level of poverty. As a result of this, this area also has the highest number of schools that employ district-provided instructional coaches.

In narrowing the scope of my study, I eliminated a number of schools from the 29 schools in sub-district 3 that employ coaches. I first eliminated all the schools that have multiple "instructional coaches" in the same building. I decided not to conduct research in those schools due to the variability that might exist with having multiple coaches in one school. I also excluded all middle schools and high schools, wanting to focus solely on the elementary coaching model. Finally, I did not include any school that uses their Title I funds, or own appropriated budget, to create a coaching position at the school. This decision is based upon my assumption that schools that "purchase" their own coaches do not feel an obligation to abide by the district imposed coaching model.

After narrowing down the selection, 12 schools in sub-district 3 that had an instructional coach in the school for the 2015-16 school were selected for phase one of my study. Those principals received an initial electronic correspondence asking them to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Of those 12 selected, ultimately eight gave consent to participate in phase one of the study by responding affirmatively to my electronic request. Four principals chose not to participate for various reasons. Two schools had instructional coaches that had left for health reasons during the school year and were unable to participate, and two school principals wanted to protect their staff members from the time needed to participate. All principals and instructional coaches at these eight schools participated in phase one, and a combined total of 102 teachers participated. Table 2 on the next page shows the number of participants in each category from each school surveyed in phase one. Three of the teacher respondents did not

indicate their work location. As mentioned in the introduction, all school names have been changed to pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Table 2

Phase 1 Survey Participants

School	Principal Response	Coach Response	# of Teacher Responses
Nan Mill ES	Yes	Yes	26
Tara ES	Yes	Yes	8
Stevebrook ES	Yes	Yes	6
Pickett ES	Yes	Yes	18
St. Charles ES	Yes	Yes	9
Gramlee ES	Yes	Yes	14
Twinbrook ES	Yes	Yes	15
Jomar ES	Yes	Yes	6
No School Indicated			3

For phase two of my study, three critical cases (Patton, 2002) were selected for in-depth exploration based upon the outcomes of the initial survey responses from the larger sample. I examined responses looking for schools that reported contrasting experiences with implementing the coaching framework and reported differences among school staff when analyzing the perceptions of the coaching practices and the importance given to those practices at the school. I also looked for schools whose principals reported experiences as coaches or background knowledge of coaching programs, and those where coaches and principals had convergent or divergent answers.

Data Sources

Data was gathered in two ways. The first source of data was an online structured survey of principals, instructional coaches, and teachers in the eight participating schools.

The surveys were confidential, yet not anonymous because I asked respondents to identify the school in which they worked. For coaches and principals, this meant that identifying their school locations also revealed their identity to me; however, I have kept their identities masked in this capstone paper and am committed to protecting the identity of the participants through the use of pseudonyms. The second data source was semi-structured interviews conducted at three of the schools based on the criteria stated above.

Survey design. Electronic surveys were an appropriate format for data collection in this capstone because there was an established e-mail list for everyone taking the survey and participants were very accustomed to getting and receiving e-mail communications, including surveys (Remler & Ryzin, 2010).

The survey (see Appendix D), using Qualtrics software, began with a short paragraph about the purpose of the survey and the informed consent agreement (see Appendix C). It then included sections of questions on the following topics, depending on the stakeholder who was completing the survey:

- The stakeholder's background and experience with coaching models
- The respondent's understanding about the coaching practices in the school
- The importance assigned to certain coaching practices
- The school's approaches to coaching practices
- The relationships between the coach and teachers
- The school's culture and coaching practices

Similar questions were asked of each stakeholder group to discern what structures were in place and whether or not they had similar understandings of the practices of the coach

and how those practices function in a school. Questions were also asked to determine how closely the work of the coach is aligned to the defined SFPS framework.

The questions for the survey were gathered from a variety of sources. Some of the questions I crafted included language used directly by SFPS to explain or define the coaching practices. Other questions were developed by examining survey questions that were used by SFPS in 2006 and 2007 for the purposes of program evaluation and by reading and reviewing empirical studies and dissertations that addressed instructional coaching programs, relationships, and roles. Still, others came from my own personal experiences with instructional coaches and the coaching framework and what I am most interested in studying.

Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G) were conducted with the principal, instructional coach and three teachers at each selected school (a subset of the survey sample). The qualitative interviews were topical or guided interviews. This method underscores that the "participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.144). All participants consented to audio recordings of the interviews. The recordings took place using an 8GB USB voice recorder, in addition to a recording application on an iPad. Teacher interviews averaged about 20 minutes, and the principal and coach interviews took between 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews were subsequently transcribed using an on-line transcription service.

The interviews had scripted questions in addition to follow-up probes. Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue that the follow-up questions are extremely important and

provide the "richness" of the qualitative interview (p.145). Interviews looked more deeply at the role of the principal in influencing coach practices and how teachers, principals, and coaches make sense of their role in the larger context of organizational learning.

Data Collection Process

Data was collected in two phases. Survey data was collected in late April/early May 2016 and follow-up interviews were conducted in June 2016.

Electronic survey timeline. Each elementary principal of the 12 selected schools in SFPS's sub-district 3 got an initial e-mail informing them about the survey and asking if he/she would be willing to participate in the study (see Appendix A). The supplemental protocol "Administration Permission Form: Conducting Research in an Educational Setting" was completed and submitted for each participating principal before data was collected. After receiving consent from the participating school principals via electronic correspondence, the links to the electronic surveys were distributed with information about the scope and purpose of the surveys (see Appendix B). The surveys were administered to all principals, instructional coaches, and teachers in each of the eight participating schools. Separate surveys were administered to each stakeholder group. The links were sent in early April 2016 to principals and coaches (individually). Principals were asked to distribute the teacher paragraph and survey link to the teachers in their buildings (see Appendix B). A reminder was sent a week later to the principals and coaches. The final principal and coach responses were received in late April. The teacher survey was kept open a bit longer because of the reliance upon the principals to distribute the survey. The electronic surveys ended up taking each

stakeholder group about five minutes or less to complete. The teacher survey was closed in the beginning of May 2016.

After the survey collection had closed, a thank you message and next-steps information were shared with principals.

Semi-structured interview timeline. As indicated previously, based on the results of the survey, three schools were selected for follow-up semi-structured interviews. One of the original schools selected for phase two could not participate because the instructional coach for that school was on maternity leave. Another school selection was made that was similar in phase one data to the school that could not participate.

Three teachers from each of the three schools took part in the interviews along with the instructional coach and the principal of each school. The teachers were selected at random from a list of seven teachers given to me by the principal. This helped maintain the teachers' confidentiality since the principal did not know who was ultimately selected. Electronic correspondences were sent to the principal, instructional coach and the three teachers that I selected in mid-May 2016 (see Appendix E). Additional consent was obtained for the phase two of the study (see Appendix F). At one school, one initial teacher participant had a family emergency and could not attend the interview. At that school, on the day of the interview, another subject at that grade level served as a substitution for the initial teacher selected.

Qualitative interviews were conducted on the school sites on June 8th, June 15th, June 16th and June 24th. All phase two data collection was completed by the morning of June 24th.

Data Analysis

Similar to the data collection, data analysis took place in two phases. For phase one, I used descriptive statistics to analyze survey data in order to determine schools that had contrasting or interesting responses. Trends in data within schools and across schools were analyzed between coaches, teachers, and principals. I looked to see if stakeholder groups responded similarly when asked about the practices of the coach and their general understanding of coaching practices in that particular school. The data analyzed was used to determine three schools that had contrasting and interesting survey results to then delve deeper in a qualitative way and uncover themes that may exist in those schools.

For the qualitative data collection, the data collection and analysis go hand in hand to create a clear explanation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For the qualitative part of my study, I used the following data analysis procedures based on the work of Marshall and Rossman (2011):

- organizing the data
- generating categories and themes
- coding the data
- offering interpretations through analytical memos
- searching for alternative understandings
- writing this dissertation to present the findings

After conducting the semi-structured interviews and transcribing the dialogue, I looked for general themes and categories to go forward and code in the transcriptions. My initial

coding list included such codes as “background and experiences,” “coaching teams” and “coaching individuals.” A full initial code list can be found in Appendix H.

Other themes emerged after the initial coding. These include different types of coaching models, school and principal visions for coaching, intervention, duties as assigned, and transparency. I continued to code interview transcriptions in light of emergent themes.

Research Ethics

The research I conducted in this study did abide by ethical principles. In doing so, I was sure to minimize any risk of harm, obtain consent from all participants, protect the anonymity of those involved, avoid any deceptive practices in my research methods, and include the right for participants to withdraw from the study at any time. During the semi-structured interviews in phase two of my data collection, I received consent to record the interviews. I also sent each transcription to the participant for information and verification purposes.

Researcher Bias

In any qualitative study, there is potential for researcher bias. Marshall and Rossman (2011) write that it is important for researchers to “come clean” (p.97) with any assumptions, prior observations or associations they may have that might influence their research. It is also important to expose any personal connections the researcher has to the subject matter and any history that may be seen as potentially harmful to the findings.

In the case of this capstone, as mentioned previously, I have been interested in the subject of coaching since 2002 when I became an instructional coach, and subsequently continued my interest as a school principal. I have noted the growth of the coaching program in the district in which this study takes place, and have heard stakeholders share

negative comments, publicly and in writing, about its potential in district schools. I have also read the public comments made on the SFPS discussion boards and the fact that it is often the first suggested budget cut of teachers. I personally remain convinced that instructional coaching is one of the best vehicles for job-embedded professional development and that the coaching model holds great promise for strengthening teacher practices and impacting student achievement. My assumption was that the implementation of the coaching model and the understanding and support needed from school leaders might be what causes the lack of success of the framework.

To control for researcher bias, I created a research design that reduces bias. Interview protocols were semi-structured and outlined a clear set of interview questions that helped eliminate leading questions and my prejudices as the researcher. I pursued objectivity and sought to reduce bias in my interviewing and in my data analysis. I also used critical friends and colleagues to take a look at my data analysis and interpretations in light of the findings.

Summary

This capstone project examined the role of the principal in understanding coaching practices and the mandates of the district framework. It also explored how teachers and coaches made sense of this new teacher leadership role and how a principal's actions or inaction influence the teachers' sensemaking. Surrey Forge Public Schools has over a ten-year commitment to an instructional coaching program founded on the work of Killion and Harrison (2006). Although the initiative has had mixed results when examining student achievement and teacher sentiment, the program continues as a key strategy to improve student achievement in severely struggling schools. Data collected and analyzed during the course of this project was intended to inform district

leadership, and school principals, in order to increase understanding of the role and practices of the coach and to increase the likelihood of consistent implementation of the district-defined framework. My findings, discussion, and recommendations will be presented in the next section.

SECTION FOUR: POSITION PAPER

This study investigated how Surrey Forge Public Schools' vision for instructional coaching was ultimately perceived, interpreted and applied by elementary school principals in a defined geographic area in the district. The assumption underlying my research was that an examination of principal actions and sensemaking around the coaching model could help identify whether consistent implementation was a fundamental issue in the district, and could subsequently be used to determine further actions that could be recommended to the district to strengthen the overall coaching program. Since the district's objective for having a coaching framework and program is increased student achievement and the closing of achievement gaps, it is important that the model espoused by the district can accomplish its intended goals. In this section of my capstone, I will present and analyze the data collected, discuss the findings in light of my assumptions and the literature, and recommend and justify future actions and implications.

Findings

Using two phases of data collection, described in the previous methodology section, I surveyed and then interviewed principals, instructional coaches and teachers in elementary schools in a defined area of the school district. My research questions examined the espoused versus enacted coaching framework, principals' tasks and actions in implementing the framework, and how stakeholders made sense of the coaching

program. In addressing these areas, I first wanted to find schools with different profiles that would provide different, or similar, perspectives for my research. In the survey portion of my research, data was analyzed, and schools were selected because of intricacies and interesting factors that were revealed in the schools' data, particularly around prior principal professional experience, congruence of stakeholder answers and teacher familiarity with coaching practices.

Means for the questions from the principal, coach and teacher surveys from phase one of my research are reported separately for comparison purposes in Appendices I, J and K. The results that were used to determine the three schools ultimately chosen for further examination will be discussed in the next part of this section.

Phase two of my research consisted of semi-structured interviews with principals, coaches, and teachers at the schools selected and explored my three research questions. My results reflecting the alignment to the coaching framework, principal decision-making around coaching, and stakeholder sensemaking regarding a coaching program will be discussed later in this section.

Selecting Schools for In-Depth Study: Survey Results

As mentioned previously, phase one of my capstone project involved the distribution and data analysis of individually administered electronic surveys to principals, instructional coaches, and teachers at eight schools in the district. The purpose of this data collection was to select schools that would present interesting cases to enlighten phase two of my research. In analyzing the phase one survey data, I looked at the data by stakeholder group within and across schools to identify contrasting and interesting data. I looked for schools where stakeholder groups were consistent in their

answers and schools where stakeholder groups were inconsistent in their answers. I was also interested in schools where the administrator had experience with being an instructional coach, since my assumption was that those experiences would influence implementation of the coaching framework, and also the level of familiarity teachers reported with instructional coaching. The principal's experience as an instructional coach, the cohesion, and lack of cohesion between coaches and principals, and the overall teacher familiarity with coaching were notable themes that emerged from the data and ultimately resulted in the selection of three schools for further study. Quantitative survey data used in informing the school selection will be referenced in this section and is reported in detail in Appendices L and M.

Principal Experience as Instructional Coach

Whether or not a principal had served in the role of an instructional coach was one of the first factors I explored when analyzing the phase one data. The principal of Jomar was the only principal out of the eight principals surveyed that indicated he had been an instructional coach in his educational career before becoming an administrator. I perceived his experience as important to my research and selected the school at which he was the leader to delve deeper into how the implementation of the coaching model might compare to other schools in the study.

Consistency Between Instructional Coach and Principal Responses

Another area of data I examined was the consistency between the instructional coaches' survey answers and the principals' survey answers. Tight consistency between coach and principal could be perceived as reflecting a common vision and more faithful execution of the coaching model. Inconsistency could reflect the opposite. Table 3 on the

next pages presents the consistency of the instructional coaches' and principals' responses at each of the schools surveyed.

Table 3

Coach and Principal Consistency by School in Survey Responses

Responses to the question: "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are important to the instructional coaching program at your school."								
	Pickett	Jomar	Tara	Steve-brook	Nan Mill	St. Charles	Gram-lee	Twin-Brook
The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.	—	+	—	+	—	—	—	+
The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+
District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.	+	—	—	—	—	—	—	+
The confidentiality that my coach must have with teachers and teacher teams.	+	—	—	+	—	—	—	—
My coach's time being free from work that falls outside of his/her responsibilities.	+	+	—	+	+	—	—	—
The school's master schedule to allow the coach time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	+	—	—	—	—	+	—	+
The contribution of my coach as a member of the administrative team.	+	—	—	—	—	+	—	—
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	+	—	—	—	—	+	—	+

+ = same answers, — = different answers

Table 3 (cont.)

Coach and Principal Consistency by School in Survey Responses

Responses to the question: "Thinking about your school's current approach to instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."								
	Pickett	Jomar	Tara	Steve-brook	Nan Mill	St. Charles	Gram-lee	Twin-brook
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	+	+	+	+	+	+	—	+
The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	+	+	—	+	+	+	—	+
The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.	+	+	—	+	+	+	+	+
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	+	+	+	—	—	+	—	—
Responses to the question: "Thinking about your school's culture and the practices of instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."								
	Pickett	Jomar	Tara	Steve-brook	Nan Mill	St. Charles	Gram-lee	Twin-brook
My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.	+	+	—	+	+	+	+	—
Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.	+	+	—	—	+	—	—	+
Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.	—	+	—	+	+	—	—	—
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	—
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.	+	—	—	+	+	—	—	—
The defined allocation of time is the reality of the coaching program at my school.	—	—	—	—	+	—	—	—

+ = same answers, — = different answers

In terms of consistency, the principal and instructional coach at Pickett Elementary had very similar answers on the electronic surveys. In fact, out of 19 questions, 14 (74%) showed the same level of importance or agreement by both the coach and principal (see detailed responses in Appendix L). Pickett Elementary was the only school surveyed that had that level of congruence between coach and principal.

The Pickett Elementary results contrast with the comparison of principal and coach answers at Gramlee Elementary. At this school, the survey items reflecting the same level of importance or agreement between coach and principal were three out of the 19 survey questions (16%). This school had the lowest congruence level in the study and also revealed two answers where the principal indicated a level of agreement and the coach disagreed with the statement presented (see detailed responses in Appendix M).

Teacher Familiarity with Coaching Practices

Teacher familiarity with coaching practices was the final aspect of data I examined in phase one that led to the selection of schools. The electronic survey specifically asked teachers to select their level of familiarity with coaching practices. This question was asked to delve into the level of understanding teachers might have with the coaching framework and to ascertain in phase two the possible influence of their principals on their sensemaking and overall implementation. Table 4 on the next page highlights the results by school for this question:

Table 4

Level of Teacher Familiarity with Coaching Practices

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not at All Familiar
Pickett	4 (22%)	11(61%)	3 (17%)
Jomar	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	0 (0%)
Tara	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)
Stevebrook	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)
Nan Mill	14 (58%)	10 (42%)	0 (0%)
St. Charles	6 (67%)	1(11%)	2 (22%)
Gramlee	4 (29%)	7 (50%)	3 (21%)
Twinbrook	5 (36%)	6 (43%)	3 (21%)

As the data reflects, Gramlee Elementary had a low percentage of teachers indicating a high level of familiarity and a higher level than other schools indicating no familiarity with coaching practices. Pickett Elementary had similar data, showing a lower level of teacher familiarity and a higher percentage of teachers indicating no familiarity.

After looking at the results collected from the principal, coach and teacher surveys, the congruence between coaches and principals at each school, and the familiarity of teachers with coaching practices, Jomar Elementary, Pickett Elementary and Gramlee Elementary Schools were selected for phase two interviews.

The next part of this section will look at the results from phase two of my study and will address each research question as examined in the individual schools selected.

Coaching Practices and Sensemaking

My primary research question examined the implementation of a district-designed instructional coaching program and how a principal interprets and implements the district

framework. In phase two of data collection, I collected data and explored the research questions that were presented previously in the introduction and methodology sections of this paper.

My analysis and discussion will begin by presenting my findings about the enacted coaching model as compared to the espoused district model (RQ 2). It will continue with an examination of principal actions and decisions around the coaching program (RQ 3) and will conclude with my findings concerning the central question of sensemaking (RQ 1). This change in the order of discussion was made after reflecting on my research questions in light of the qualitative data and determining that reporting the findings for program alignment and principal decision-making before the findings of stakeholder sensemaking was important to the overall understanding of the results of my study.

Instructional Coaching Practices and Alignment to the Coaching Framework

Research question two in my study examined the instructional coaching practices that were reported in each of the elementary schools selected for phase two of my research and compared those practices with the defined practices dictated by the SFPS coaching framework. This question looked closely at what coaches spent their time doing in each school and then how these job responsibilities compared to the actual framework set forth by the district. Data collected around this question uncovered how closely the framework was aligned to actual school practices. This research also underscored those practices performed by instructional coaches that fell outside the definition of instructional coaching.

SFPS asks coaches to devote time to individual coaching and group coaching. Individual coaching involves planning and modeling lessons, co-teaching, debriefing with teachers, providing resources, and mentoring new teachers. Group coaching practices include facilitating grade level meetings, using data to help teams plan for instruction and assessment, facilitating teacher visits to peers' classrooms, providing school-based professional development, reading and disseminating professional research, and establishing collaborative relationships. Reflected in the SFPS model is that many of these group practices take place within the structure of collaborative team meetings.

In addressing findings related to this research question, I will first present the individual and group coaching practices found at each elementary school, the practices that fell outside of the prescribed tasks, and then how the practices enacted aligned to the espoused practices of the SFPS coaching framework. I will end with a cross comparison of the three schools' practices.

Jomar Elementary

Focus on individual coaching practices. In analyzing the interviews of the principal, coach, and teachers at Jomar Elementary, I discovered that the instructional coaching practices at this school were primarily centered on working with individual teachers to improve student achievement and raise test scores. Low scores on state and district assessments appeared to be the catalyst for increased time with the coach. Also, teachers who were new to teaching were more likely to have individual coaching. Individual coaching consisted of planning and modeling lessons, helping with curriculum pacing, providing feedback and supporting teachers in instructional best practices. A comment by one of the teachers interviewed illustrates this prioritization of test scores,

and the individual coaching practices of modeling, co-teaching and providing resources. He explained:

> Now looking at the instructional coach helping me this year, I have seen modeling and coaching. She let me borrow a reading book because I was upset over scores off of the reading [test]. I was like, 'What else can I be doing? Why are my scores so low?' She gave me different resources that she had. I found that very helpful.

As a result of underachievement on a district administered common assessment, this teacher felt pressure to engage the instructional coach in search of resources to help him improve the achievement of the students in his room. In the interview, he went on to highlight planning with the coach, especially the help he received with scheduling instructional groups, as one of the areas that instructional coaching practices impacted his teaching. When asked how the coach spent her time with him he replied:

> Helping with the scheduling of when I'm pulling small groups, how I'm going to be introducing a unit. Just like the framework of what …guided math would look like, the framework of what guided reading would look like. Scheduling was really important in the beginning of the year because that was something that was completely new.

His remarks point to the importance of time spent with the coach in a planning capacity. By receiving the support he needed in organizing instructional groupings, the teacher interviewed felt his classroom instruction was more successful. His comment also underscores the importance of the support he received in implementing a new initiative or idea.

Another teacher interviewed remarked on the nature of the work of the instructional coach with two of her grade level teammates and mentioned planning and modeling. She remarked:

> With Sarah, it was definitely planning. With Paul, she was in the classroom with him trying to teach those strategies. That was at the very beginning, and then I think she just let them go off on their own.

This comment illustrates the awareness of a colleague with the type of coaching practices being employed with her grade level teammates. Again, it speaks to how support was given for practices that were new, or to new teachers. Once the teachers received that additional support, the support appears to be gradually reduced over time.

At Jomar Elementary, the individual coaching practices were targeted toward helping teachers improve and bringing up student test scores. Although new teachers were not in the sample of those interviewed for the study, those interviewed indicated that new teachers were given priority for individual instructional coaching.

Group coaching practices. At Jomar, principal, coach and teacher interviews indicated there was also time devoted to group coaching practices through supporting collaborative teams. The coaching practices included helping teams analyze student achievement data, providing resources, and supporting teams with planning and pacing instruction. Teams were prioritized based on the number of new teachers on a team and the level of perceived dysfunction or low performance of the team by the principal. The instructional coach noted this differentiation when she remarked,

> Fourth grade is …a team that's highly functioning. I would just attend their [collaborative learning teams] when needed, so I would say maybe once or twice a quarter, when they had questions. Third grade needed high support so as an instructional coach now I'm going to both [collaborative learning team meetings],

This comment reflects that the level of support and time devoted to a grade level team was an indication of whether that team was collectively achieving student results at a high level. In describing this support, the teachers interviewed that had been on teams receiving help talked about group facilitation and data analysis as being important parts of group coaching practices.

The principal also spoke of how the coach's practices were driven by the achieved results on grade level assessments. He explained this by saying,

> Let's say Margaret's assignment begins as sixth grade. We may look at our data, and we're saying, "Sixth grade is off the chain." We can pull those resources back there and I say, "Margaret, I need more help here in third. I need you to go in and tell Kelly that you're going to work with her on this. I observed this." We adjust it like that. We also ... her emphasis comes out of the data.

This reference again points to test scores and stresses how the principal prioritized the work of the coach to target teams and teachers instructing students who received low scores on district and state assessments. The coaching practices used were intended to increase student achievement to an acceptable level.

Apart from the work supporting teams, professional development appeared as another area of concentration for group coaching practices, especially regarding the school's initiative in problem-solving. The principal leveraged the work of the coach by having her directly support problem-solving, not only in a training and teaching capacity but in modeling and providing support to teachers after the professional development had taken place. The instructional coach described this focus by observing:

> [Problem Solving] was a new initiative at our school so last year, along with the previous instructional coach, in three afternoons we did a PD on problem solving so all the teachers in the upper grades got an overall picture of what it was, and then it was my job to go into their classrooms during their math block to help them with the PD that they received to answer any questions and to help them with their discourse.

Having the coach deliver and then follow up with professional development and individual coaching was another example of how the school used coaching practices and intertwined both group coaching and individual coaching to support student learning.

The principal also described this professional development and subsequent individual coaching practices by saying:

> What I do with the coaches is I stuff them in the classrooms. There, we shifted, and I took the instructional coaching, and I was like, "Everyday they do problem-solving, you're in there with the teacher." I took three coaches and put them side by side three days a week with the teachers. They began by one, just completely modeling. Completely modeling. Then, shift into this side by side, then shifting back to watch and give feedback.

In this remark, the principal communicated the gradual release of responsibility from modeling to providing feedback that took place between the coach and teacher after professional development had transpired. This was an important finding unique to Jomar and illustrates how the principal used individual coaching practices to strengthen teacher pedagogy, especially to support a school-wide initiative.

Duties as assigned. In addition to individual and group coaching practices, teachers at Jomar also commented on the amount of time the instructional coach seemed to be involved in activities beyond the realm of coaching or in time spent meeting with the administration. This participation in non-coaching tasks took the coach away from defined coaching responsibilities. The instructional coach also mentioned that she did a fair amount of direct intervention. Instructional coaching practices as indicated in the literature and the SFPS model do not include direct work with students. The coach gave an example of her student support by remarking, “With third grade, I pulled out tier three kids for thirty minutes each day. For fourth grade, I pushed in during their math block, and I also pulled kids before morning news.” This reflects the amount of time she was spending on a daily basis with students and shows that the coach did participate in actions that went beyond the coaching framework. These duties also varied depending on the time of year. Comments were made that the direct intervention increased around the 3rd quarter of the school to get ready for the state Standards of Learning tests. Teachers

remarked that coaching practices were less apparent during these times and more direct remediation and intervention with students took place.

Alignment to the SFPS model. The coaching practices described by those interviewed at Jomar fell within those labeled by the SFPS coaching framework in terms of coaching groups and individuals and were aligned to the framework, but not in terms of time allocation. The percentage of time each week devoted to either individual or group coaching practices strayed from the model. As admitted by the current instructional coach, this division of time was not allotted according to the framework. She described her time spent coaching as being eighty percent individual teacher coaching, ten percent working with grade level teams and ten percent working on her own learning or in meetings with her principal. This is in contrast to the SFPS model that has time divided by 60% work with teams, 30% work with individuals and 10% working on the coach's own professional learning.

As mentioned previously, the principal at the school prioritized the coaching work to concentrate on those teachers whose classes had poor test scores or who were new to the school. He embraced a gradual release of coaching responsibility and intertwined group coaching practices, especially professional development, with individual coaching to improve teacher pedagogy. This priority resulted in more time being spent at the individual coaching level. It is interesting to note that the principal at Jomar did not consider the SFPS framework when prioritizing the coaching practices at the school or the coach's time. When asked directly about the time allocation, and the lack of alignment with the prescribed SFPS model, the principal remarked about feeling "under the gun" regarding test scores and that this was a common concern in that geographic

region of the district. In his interview, he downplayed any pressure to hold true to the district coaching model by replying, "[Sub-district leaders] can try to apply whatever pressure they want, but I'm the guy that has to answer." He went on to clarify:

> The principals that I work with are [in] the Somerset Region. We are all under the gun. We don't have time. We have to get it done. We have to get it done now. When I sit down in a room with them, we're all like, "I don't care what [the sub-district leaders] say, because I have to get this done." I think if there's a principal that doesn't have that urgency of the scores, they might have a different perspective on it. I don't have time to sit and worry about what somebody else is telling me. I have to get it done.

This statement above reflects his resolve to improve test scores and the lack of time he felt he had to accomplish that goal. He felt the district model that focused more on time spent at the team level did not address this urgent need to improve the instruction of individual teachers at his school.

Summary

Jomar Elementary's coaching practices were heavily focused on coaching individual teachers whose standardized test scores or overall student achievement were deemed low and in need of improvement. Instructional coaching practices devoted to supporting professional development and follow-up with teachers through modeling and feedback was also an area that emerged as being a part of the coaching practices at Jomar. During the interviews held at the school, there was frequent mention of the urgency of their overall student performance and how the work of the coach was an avenue to improve this underachievement. This urgency and mindset at the school resulted in less time spent facilitating and coaching teams, despite that being the focus of the SFPS coaching framework.

Pickett Elementary

Focus on group coaching practices. In contrast to the focus on individual coaching at Jomar, the instructional coaching practices at Pickett Elementary were primarily focused on supporting collaborative teams as a result of a need identified by the principal. She explained this priority of supporting teams and a desire to move eventually to more individual coaching by stating:

> [The coach] needed to model facilitation. There's definitely some teams where we still need that model. It's probably too where I just ... They're not there. They're in very different places, but next year, I would really like her to go and have the opportunity to focus on the one on one. That came from our last PD we had.

This comment illustrates how the principal first identified the needs of collaborative teams and decided to focus the majority of the coaching practices on improving team facilitation. It also reflects a desire to move into a more individual coaching model once she feels the coach has built capacity at the team level.

The group coaching practices enacted at Pickett included meeting with teams on a scheduled basis, constructing agendas, and facilitating team discussions. As the principal explained:

> [Coaches] are in the grade level collaborative team meetings, and they're working with teams on unpacking the standards and creating the pre- and post-assessments and really looking at the PLC continuums to see where we're at because it's one thing to move along the continuum to get to, to get from like a one to a five, but once we get to that, sustaining is really hard, especially when we have new teachers coming on board.

In this excerpt, she described how the coaches are using group coaching practices in grade level teams, and also described how she assesses the work of the team using a Professional Learning Community rubric. She noted the difficulty she sees in sustaining a high level of team function, especially with new teachers being hired and commented on the work of the coaches in helping teams grow and sustain high levels of functioning.

The teachers interviewed reinforced this focus on group coaching practices as well. One of the teachers interviewed remarked on the benefits of having coach support at their grade level team meetings by sharing this example of a recent visit by the coach:

> [The coach] actually just ran our last [collaborative team meeting]. She made sure we stayed on the agenda, explained how we're going to look at creating our [school improvement] goals for next year. When it was more of the collaborative team as the three of us that were on first grade, we go off on tangents or we start talking about a lesson, and she made sure we came right back to keep us focused on the agenda and getting things planned out.

This statement shows that the coaching practices of facilitation and planning (goal setting) were viewed as supportive by the teacher interviewed regarding helping the team stay on task and increasing their productivity.

Less emphasis on individual coaching practices. There was a brief mention of individual coaching by both the principal, coach, and teachers, but it did not appear to be a large part of the focus of the coaching practices. Individual coaching mentioned included planning with the teacher and then modeling or co-teaching in the teacher's classroom. The coaching frequently focused on teachers new to the school or new to the profession and was primarily concentrated on mathematics instruction. One of the teachers commented on how the individual coaching sessions were scheduled by saying:

> She has in the past sent out emails. Let's say first quarter she's going to be with third grade and she'll go to one of the third grade teachers the first two weeks, the other third grade teacher the following weeks, so she sends us a schedule letting us know when she'll come in.

It's apparent from this explanation that since coaching time was primarily devoted to group coaching practices, individual coaching had to be carefully scheduled and parsed out in as equitable a manner as possible.

This same teacher also spoke about her experience with individual coaching practices and the subject of mathematics:

> Sharon came in; she watched me do a number talk. I then watched her do a number talk. We did number talks together. She supported me for the first nine weeks of school with number talks. We met during my planning time once a week where we would look at what was planned for first grade. We would then look at who was going to do which lesson so that we could talk to each other afterward.

This comment illustrates the modeling, planning, co-teaching and reflection that was a part of the individual coaching practices at the school.

Another teacher commented specifically on the practice of modeling and co-teaching and how it was beneficial to her instructional practices. The teacher remarked, "Just hearing the language that she uses and how she approaches the lesson. There [have] been times where we've also co-taught together, so we've taught a lesson together."

It was apparent during the interviews with teachers that many of them had experienced individual coaching practices and perceived them as supportive and beneficial to their overall instructional practices, although the coach's time was not directed to individual coaching.

Duties as assigned. Similarly to Jomar, the instructional coach at Pickett Elementary was involved in activities outside the realm of coaching. The school had had a change in assistant principals during the year, so the instructional coach had taken over the testing coordinator role and had to spend time planning for state test administration. She also provided direct student intervention. The principal commented on the time spent in intervention as a necessary part of her role. She remarked candidly about devoting time to intervention:

> She did do intervention, and that's a reality, and that may ... I think it's like 90%, 90/10 ... There's a percentage rank, but the reality is, in our school, we needed support with Title One or with the interventions and especially in math.

This shows that although direct intervention is not a part of the instructional coaching framework, the Pickett coach did support students directly because of a need at the school with their student population.

The instructional coach confirmed this time spent in intervention when she shared with me that she had determined 19% of her work week was devoted to direct student support.

Alignment to the SFPS Model. The coaching practices at Pickett Elementary were centered on supporting teams and individual teachers and were aligned to the coaching action model. As dictated by the model, the Pickett coach spent more time supporting teams through group coaching practices taking place at the collaborative team level, rather than through individual coaching. Even though the coaching practices were heavily concentrated at the team level, as is similar to the model, the time spent working with teams was still less than that prescribed. In her interview, the coach estimated her time spent with teams was about 40% of her week and her time spent using individual coaching practices was approximately 20% of her week.

As noted in a similar fashion in the discussion of Jomar Elementary, the identified needs of the school and the priorities of the principal shaped how closely the coaching framework was followed at Pickett Elementary. Direct student intervention, in addition to administrative needs with the absence of an assistant principal, resulted in the coach performing duties outside of what is dictated by the district coaching framework and dividing her time in a manner different than that prescribed.

Summary

At Pickett Elementary School, the need for coaching practices was determined by the principal to be at the team level. She identified grade level teams as needing help with planning for collaborative team meetings, constructing agendas, and keeping their meetings focused on the discussion of instructional practices that could move students forward academically. Even though the primary focus of the school's coaching was on grade level teams, the instructional coach was still able to carve out about 20% of her weekly time to supporting individual teachers. The principal did remark during the interview that she was hoping to move the coaching focus to individual coaching practices in subsequent years as teams became more skilled at facilitating their own collaborative meetings.

Gramlee Elementary

Coaching practices at Gramlee were focused on both collaborative team participation and individual coaching. The coach described her time as divided among two days devoted solely to group coaching practices, one day devoted to administrative meetings, and the rest of her time focused on individual coaching.

Individual coaching practices. In terms of individual coaching practices, the teachers interviewed described providing resources, planning, co-teaching, modeling and reflection as practices that were currently being used in the school. In their interviews, the teachers shared concrete examples of the experiences they had had with the instructional coach. One teacher described being able to teach the distributive property to fifth graders after she had experienced individual coaching practices devoted to her own professional learning in mathematics instruction. She stated:

> I know how to do it, but it's obviously different to teach it. I know that this year was the first year that I fully understood all of the properties. That's a piece of what she [the coach] does too. It's not like setting a goal for kids, but it's making sure I know what I'm doing, and then how are we going to then take that and help the kids know what they're doing

This comment from the teacher illustrates that the coach provided important content knowledge through individual coaching practices, so the teacher had the information she needed to instruct the students successfully.

Another teacher described the individual coaching she received as helping her look at standards, identifying the curriculum she needed to teach, and helping her find resources that she could use in her classroom. She described the individual coaching she received by saying:

> I had teachers come in and teach lessons with me, or work with small groups with me, showing me interventions that I might use with students, providing professional development, new resources they found and wanted to share with us.

This excerpt highlights the gamut of individual coaching practices a teacher might experience at the school – co-teaching, modeling and providing resources to the teacher.

The principal at Gramlee also mentioned individual coaching practices, specifically the planning and reflection the coach facilitated:

> The planning piece with Mollie has been huge. She has been very clear, "I will come in, but we have to plan together first." She will not work with a teacher unless they put the time on the calendar to plan the lesson. Then, they do it, and then we have to reflect on it. That's that piece, that behavior that has to happen with teachers.

This remark made by the principal illustrates the emphasis at the school placed on co-planning prior to a teacher working individually with the instructional coach. It also shows that reflection is another critical aspect of the individual coaching practices being employed by the instructional coach at Gramlee.

Group coaching practices. The instructional coach at Gramlee also spent two days out of her week sitting in on collaborative team meetings at the school. She did not act as a facilitator at these meetings, however, but was there as a content expert and as a member of the team. The principal describes this practice as "intentional" stating:

> In the [collaborative team] meetings, she was there for the most part as the content expert. We were very intentional that that's the role the person would play and either I would facilitate or Kerri, our Assistant Principal, would facilitate and really work to be in a neutral role. We were trying to be very intentional about "You are part of this team."

Even though facilitation is a group coaching practice identified in the district framework, the principal's comment above shows the reason behind having others facilitate the meetings, rather than the instructional coach.

The teachers interviewed also talked about the participation of the coach at the meetings and how she supported the professional development and professional learning of the team. This was especially true in the area of mathematics where the coach provided information on mathematical practices or found people in the district that could assist them with their learning. One teacher remarked:

> [The coaches] found other people in the county to come provide professional development too. I taught kindergarten before, and our team did some math professional development together with cognitively guided instruction which we started in our [collaborative team], and then moved on to greater, whole school. I've also, this year, have also taught professional development for my school with the coaches, and I'm going to do that again next year.

This shows that the group coaching practice of providing professional development to other teachers was a practice currently being used at the school both at the team level and the whole school level.

Other duties as assigned. Unlike the other two schools previously examined, at Gramlee there was little mention of coach duties that fell outside of the realm of authentic

coaching practices. The coach did provide direct intervention to students, but did this outside of the school day. She described her reasoning by saying:

> I have worked with direct kid work, but before school because there's no time during my school days to do that. These poor sixth graders never pass the math SOL in their life, and I felt this angst, so I met with four sixth graders and they all passed.

A teacher interviewed also described this concentration on adult learning, rather than direct intervention, by commenting, "I know at some other schools it looks more like they might pull kids for [Response to Intervention] and things like that, but here it's been primarily working with teachers to help improve your core instruction."

At this school, all stakeholders were able to provide evidence of both group and individual coaching practices, and their comments were devoid of examples of activities that fell beyond the framework of the coaching model. There was no commentary about administrative duties, or direct students support during the instructional day.

Alignment to the SFPS model. The coaching practices at Gramlee were closely aligned with the SFPS coaching framework in that there were elements of both individual coaching, focused on planning, modeling, and co-teaching, and team coaching focused on professional learning and resource providing. Where the practices at Gramlee strayed from the coaching model were that the coach was not involved in facilitating the team meetings, choosing instead to be an active colleague and participant in the meetings rather than a neutral party.

There was little mention in the interviews of the actual time devoted to individual coaching versus team coaching, so it is not easy to determine whether the coaching practices were allocated according to the time outlined in the coaching framework.

Also, as in other schools interviewed, the coach was involved in direct intervention with students, but unlike the previous schools, that intervention took place outside of school hours. She worked primarily with a small group of students who had performed poorly on one of the state tests. She worked with them before school in the hopes they would pass the Standards of Learning mathematics test at the end of the school year. Her in-school hours were devoted to building teacher capacity at the individual or team level.

Summary

The coaching practices at Gramlee were mixed between individual coaching practices and group practices. Very little of the coach's work fell outside these two areas. Also, Gramlee was the only school involved in the study where the coach was not involved in direct student intervention during the day. In terms of the coaching practices described by the coach herself, she confided that she was still growing in the role of the instructional coach. She was aware of the different roles a coach can play in the coaching framework, but admitted she was still developing her varied coaching practices. She proclaimed:

> I'm such a newbie, that it's really hard. I still feel confused by the roles in the sense ... What, they got eight roles or something? I can't even rattle them off. I'm constantly leaning more on the resource and the specialist and the data person. I think there's so many others that I am not an expert ... They're just getting better at helping us understand EDSL. Good God. I feel like I need a full on spreadsheet course that fills spreadsheets all year long on how to connect them, move them, I don't know, but I feel like the things that hold me back in that data category ... I'm not a tech expert.

It's interesting to note that she mentions she is growing in the data analysis role, and none of the teachers interviewed indicated that helping them examine data was a piece of the coaching practices they thought were prevalent in the school. Her quote also

highlights the complexity of coaching practices and how the district has articulated a variety of roles the instructional coach can have in a school.

Cross-School Comparison

All three schools involved in the study employed similar coaching practices, although the practices varied in intensity and time depending upon the priorities of the school principals, the identified needs of the school population and how the principal allocated the resources. In regards to individual coaching practices, all schools had some level of individual coaching and many times these practices were targeted at those new to the teaching profession, or those needing the most support. Individual coaching practices consistently involved planning, co-teaching or modeling, resource allocation, and reflection.

Group coaching practices were also seen at each of the three schools, but the time provided to individual grade level teams varied. In one school, coaching was focused on teams that were lower functioning, while at another school all teams received equal coaching. Group coaching practices were similar in that they all concentrated on professional growth, reflection, planning, and resource providing. In two of the schools the coach served as the facilitator of these team meetings, and at one school the coach was a part of the team, rather than the facilitator.

In terms of tasks and duties that arose outside of coaching, that fluctuated depending on the school. In two of the schools, the coach provided direct student intervention, while in the third this happened outside of the regular school day. In two of the schools, coaches performed administrative duties, such as test coordinator, while in the third school the coach was protected from these duties.

Although authentic coaching practices were mentioned at all schools in the interviews of all stakeholders, none of the schools was completely aligned with the SFPS coaching framework. This was especially apparent when looking at the time allocation devoted to group coaching practices, individual coaching practices, and the coaches' own professional learning. In schools that had computed the weekly percentages, the time allocations enacted were different than what was espoused by the action model. School principals, however, all voiced confidence in the way time was allotted.

School principals viewed the district provision of a coach to their school as a helpful resource and used the coach in ways they saw best meeting the needs of their schools. Whether this was as a content expert, a consultant to improve practices, or a facilitator to move adult learning forward, they all saw the coach and coaching practices as a valuable addition, and not one principal expressed concern that their enacted vision varied from the coaching model espoused in their individual schools. Table 5 on the next page shows a comparison of each of the schools in terms of coaching practices, other duties asked of coaches outside of the framework and alignment to the district coaching framework.

Table 5

School Comparison of Coaching Practices

		Jomar	Pickett	Gramlee
Individual Coaching Practices	Planning Lessons	+	+	+
	Modeling/Demonstrating Lessons	+	+	+
	Co-teaching	+	+	+
	Debriefing/Reflection	+	+	+
	Mentoring New Teachers	+	+	—
	Providing Resources	+	+	+
Group Coaching Practices	Using Data to Align Instruction	—	+	+
	Facilitating Peer Visits to Classrooms	—	—	—
	Organizing and Facilitating Grade Level Meetings	+	+	—
	Reading and Providing Research to Staff	+	+	+
	Establishing Common Vocabulary and Collaborative Relationships	+	+	+
Other Duties	Administrative Tasks (test coordination, etc.)	—	+	—
	Student Intervention During School Hrs.	+	+	—
Alignment	Individual Coaching	+	+	+
	Group Coaching	+	+	+
	Time Allocation	—	—	+

+ = discussed, — = not discussed

Principal Decisions and Support or Constraint of Coaching Framework

My third research question examined in what ways principals organized school structures, specifically time allocation, scheduling and role clarity, to support or constrain coaching practices. This question specifically dealt with the decision making of the

principal and how those decisions support or hinder the implementation of a coaching framework. After examining the interview data at the three schools involved in the research study, it was apparent that many decisions principals made were integral to the perceived success of the coaching framework, and that these decisions went beyond the narrow scope of putting structures and systems in place for coaching. Principals prioritized the coach's work, established partnerships with the coach, determined the content areas for the coach's support, and created school visions for which the support of coaching practices was required. This section of my capstone will explore the principals' decision making specific to coaching uncovered at each school in addition to their organization of school structures. It will also describe the perceived impact to the implementation and objectives of the coaching framework as expressed through the voices of the teachers interviewed at each school. Finally, it will end with a cross-school comparison of principal decision making and organization and how this supported or hindered the overall implementation of the SFPS coaching framework.

Jomar

Principal decision-making based on data. The principal interviewed at Jomar stands out in his passion for achieving high student achievement as measured by state and district summative assessments. Most of the decisions he made in implementing the coaching framework were a result of his desire to improve the teaching of those educators in the building whose students were underperforming according to common district assessments and state test scores. In his interview, he downplayed the impact of the coaching practice of promoting reflection and shared a vignette that underscored his

beliefs that teachers sometimes needed to be told what to do in order to improve. He stated:

> I remember, I went to a workshop with Rick DuFour one time, and he said, "You want to coach and you want to reflect, and you want to do this." Sometimes, you just have the teacher where you just make them do it, and they have to do it for a certain amount of time. Then, when they see the results, they convince themselves. That's what I think is happening. I'm not asking, I just say, "This is the way it is."

This reveals that the principal believes that some teachers do not have the ability to reflect on their practice and then improve their teaching. He feels that sometimes improvement happens more quickly when teachers are told what to do, use those practices over time, and become convinced of their effectiveness when they see results.

In his interview, he also revealed that many of the decisions he made at the school regarding coaching practices revolved around an examination of teachers' individual class data. He spoke of this importance he placed on individual teacher data and time spent in one-on-one conversations when he said:

> What I try to do at Jomar is one of the things I've done is I've borrowed from Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. He's written *Leverage Leadership*. He wrote *Driven by Data*. That one really influenced me a lot. The *Driven by Data*. One of the things he used to do is meet one on one with his teachers. We have these common planning days, these quarterly planning days. We still do discuss data in them, but what I was finding from both [collaborative learning teams] and data days is that you'd get on to one or two students, and you would discuss them, but really, there were really a lot of teachers sitting around the table. It wasn't as impactful for them. They would throw out ideas, and they would share, they would help, but you'd get to the end of an hour meeting and maybe you discussed three kids. We need to move more than three kids. It was of the essence, so when I read his book, I adopted this model where we meet one on one with our teachers.

Apparent in this remark is the priority the principal gives to time spent individually with teachers, talking about students, and looking at students' achievement results. His

comment reflects a sense of frustration with a group model of discussion because the format prohibits speaking about each child in every class and is sometimes irrelevant to all teachers in the group. It also demonstrates how his professional learning has led to him valuing this individual level of student data analysis. These beliefs encouraged him to use instructional coaching at his school to target the individual teacher level.

Making a conscious decision to focus on individual teacher data, and then using the coaching framework to support individual teachers in changing their instructional practices, directly influenced how the coaching model was implemented at the school. These decisions also resulted in third through sixth grade receiving more individual coaching because those are the grade levels at which students take state and common district assessments in reading and mathematics.

In addition to speaking about data, the principal also spoke about his focus on problem based learning (PBL) and the importance of spreading that practice throughout the school. He used the instructional coach to provide school-wide and team level professional development on the topic of PBL, then narrowed that support to the coach working with individual teachers to help them implement this initiative with fidelity. He saw this decision as ultimately bringing up test scores at his school and in helping students achieve at higher levels.

School structures and organization. At Jomar Elementary, the principal's influence over the prioritization of coaching time and the clarity of the responsibilities and practices of the coach impacted the implementation of the coaching framework.

Time and scheduling. The principal's comments around time were focused primarily on the prioritization of the coach's time, rather than his role in intentionally

scheduling time or protecting time to provide for coaching teachers and teams. The principal met weekly in an administrative meeting that included the instructional coach, and it was at these meetings that the team would identify coaching priorities. The principal spoke about how he prioritized the coaching practices at the school when he talked about these weekly meetings and coming to the table to discuss student data. He deemed these dialogues very important to the overall aim of the coaching program and his mission of improved student achievement. He stated:

> That's where we'll begin. We all have our grade level assignments with our data dialogues and then we come to the table. The coach is part of that. The coach is always a balance. The coach doesn't evaluate. The coach has to keep confidentiality. We talk about instruction, and each of us shares out about where we need to put resources, where we need to move resources, where we need to provide support. Then, out of that meeting will come maybe some shift.

This quote shows how the coaching practices are prioritized in the school. It is through these weekly meetings where teachers and students were discussed that plans were made for future individual coaching sessions. At these meetings, the coaching vision might change as a result of a perceived need with another teacher or group of students.

The instructional coach supported the principal's comments about his organization of coaching time. She mentioned that the principal collaborated with her to determine what teachers would receive coaching and that this was based on assessments. She remarked:

> It's a collaborative effort with Doug when we discuss; I just discuss what I see in the classroom and who I think might need more support. He discusses who he thinks might need more support. We do look at assessments.

These remarks show that through conversation between the coach and the principal, teachers who needed support in their classrooms were identified and individual coaching practices were employed.

Interviews with the principal and others did not reveal that the principal intentionally attempted to protect the coach's time from administrative duties, such as testing, or student intervention. In fact, teachers mentioned a shift in coaching time once the pressure of state Standards of Learning (SOL) tests loomed. Once the SOL tests started, the principal shifted coaching practices to the coach strictly pulling student groups for intervention in order for students to be successful on the SOL tests. During the month of state testing, teacher coaching took a back seat to this direct student support.

Clarity of role and responsibilities. The interview with the Jomar principal was unique in that he indicated that clarity of the coach role and practices at Jomar was not a focus for him at the school. He stated directly that he did not mind if teachers saw the role of the coach and their coaching practices as being tied to the work of the administrative team. Jomar had a number of instructional coaches that had gone on to become administrators at the school or administrators in SFPS. This left teachers wondering if coaches were in some way pseudo-administrators. When asked about the blurring of the lines between administration and coaches and whether some teachers might view the coach as another of the school's administrators, the principal explained his thinking:

> I think that the staff probably does a lot, sees some of that. I know that people won't always agree with me. I don't mind them seeing it that way, because I want my coach to have leverage in the room now and I want them to run with it. Then, I leave it to the coaches themselves, and I've had outstanding coaches to build the trust with the teachers so they know that ... that is the way it is.

In this comment, the principal reveals that he does not feel the need to clarify misperceptions of the coach role. He believed he hired qualified coaches who built trust with staff members.

The instructional coach supported the principal's statement when she spoke about how she helped define the coaching practices through her actions, rather than through explanation by the principal. When asked directly about whether the principal explained the coaching practices or whether she was left to do that on her own, she replied:

> I don't believe that he spoke to the staff about my role. I do believe it was through actions. [The staff] did have limited support with the previous math resource so they already were set, you know, me pulling groups, but because we had so many new teachers, it just became part of what it is. They understood that I'm there as a coach, I'm there to help them, I'm there to help build their capacity, so it's kind of, for the new teachers it has been there since the beginning and it's something that's been along. For some of the veteran teachers, it is something new for them but they seem to welcome it and enjoy it, especially because PBL was something that they weren't familiar with.

Although the instructional coach seemed to think teachers understood the coaching objectives and the ultimate purpose of her work, the lack of transparency did have an impact on the trust teachers had in the coaching process, as described in the section below.

Perceived impact of principal decisions on implementation of coaching framework. As mentioned previously, the coaching practices at Jomar were primarily focused on individual coaching. This was the result of decisions made by the principal to focus on individual teacher performance rather than team performance or team collaboration. The principal also did not see the need to provide clarity to the staff about his expectations for coaching or the responsibilities of the coach. He saw this as a way to gain leverage for the coach and her ability to change individual teacher practices. He also did not work to protect coach time from other duties as assigned.

Although the principal had not intentionally clarified coaching practices to the staff, at the macro level, each teacher was able to explain what instructional coaching was and what practices should be present in a coaching model. There was, however, some

mistrust of the actual coaching process at Jomar which could ultimately influence its implementation and objectives. The effect of some of the principal's decisions regarding coaching can be heard in the perceptions and concerns of the teachers regarding the coaching program and practices. One teacher interviewed spoke honestly about the perceived lack of clarity around the practices of the coach versus administrative practices. She revealed:

> Speaking candidly, sometimes you, as a teacher versus administration, there can be sometimes a rift there. With an instructional coach, sometimes you're not sure, are you speaking with administration? Are you speaking to a peer? I think I've been very fortunate that I've never felt, for the most part, that I couldn't openly speak my opinion or my mind, but there's always in the background, in your head, "I need to phrase this appropriately."

This comment demonstrates how a teacher might perceive this ambiguity of the coach's role as a threat to her ability to speak openly with the instructional coach. It shows a feeling of vulnerability that a teacher might experience when sharing an opinion or to having an open dialogue with the coach.

Another teacher spoke of a "culture shift" with the change in coaches and principals at the school. He stated:

> Now I do see the instructional coach more as administration. In the past, I feel like it was more ... not like laid back -- like a helper. Yeah. I think the staff was a little bit more open with them. I know a teacher who just was a first-year teacher along with me who just wasn't happy here. The instructional coach helped her apply for other teaching jobs, and was there to really support her as a teacher, and not necessarily for this school, but just to be there as a support. She helped her make those decisions as a teacher. Now, I couldn't see that happening. I don't think a teacher would be comfortable enough to go to the instructional coach and ask for help in that way.

This comment once again illustrates that the connection of the coach to the administration could preclude a teacher from embracing the individual coaching practices of the instructional coach. Since the principal made a decision not to define the

administration/coaching boundaries, it seems as though his decisions impacted the successful implementation of the model.

Despite the teachers interviewed voicing concerns about the exact role and practices of the instructional coach, when asked directly, all teachers interviewed were able to identify some valuable instructional impact the coach had had either on their teaching or the teaching of a colleague, thus, direct work with the coach seemed to mitigate some concerns about the coach's relationship with the principal.

Pickett Elementary

Principal decision making based on school vision and confidentiality. The principal at Pickett described having an instructional coach as getting the "biggest bang for your buck" in terms of building teacher capacity and helping teachers grow. She went further when she commented:

> I kind of think of them as …the brains behind the school, like they are bringing all of this knowledge, and they have a lot of training. Then, as kind of dissecting, like I have my vision. How does this knowledge fit into the vision, and how do we match that to do what's best for the school.

This comment shows her philosophy about coaching practices and the school's vision and how she felt the coach could move that vision forward. Her vision at Pickett included a focus on improved mathematics instruction, and this influenced her decision to hire a coach with a background in mathematics. She explained her decision-making by commenting:

> Knowing that when I hired her as a coach, I also knew we still need math support in the school, and that was one way to get at the math piece because we had the two reading teachers at the time. She has a love of math. She's really been instrumental and working to provide that professional development for this staff in math. Then, she'll work with our intervention teachers who do that, so she has kind of a co-partner with that. She went out, and she did research, and she'll go out and visit schools and see what they're doing.

The principal felt she hired the right fit for the position and that this decision could be pivotal in improving teachers' practices in mathematics and providing school-wide professional development.

An additional decision this principal made in implementing the coaching framework was upholding confidentiality with the instructional coach. This is part of the norm of the coaching framework, and she shared how intentional she was in supporting this norm. In her interview, she shared that she believed in and sustained strict confidentiality. She trusted her coach to work with all teachers to provide support in mathematics, and commented that she might see the coach in a teacher's classroom, but never dictated whom the coach needed to support. She remarked:

> I think one of the critical pieces is that she is ... I know who she'll support because I'll see her in the room, but I don't necessarily know what she's supporting because of the confidentiality piece.

This principal highly regarded the coaching norm of confidentiality and maintained that norm when implementing the coaching program at her school. She also trusted the coach to support the school-wide vision of improved mathematics without being told whom to support with individual or group coaching practices. While this factor was not directly reflected in teacher commentary, the mistrust of the coaching process that teachers shared in the previous school study was not present in the interviews of Pickett teachers.

Throughout the principal's interview, she made comments that indicated her decisions around instructional coaching at the school, both individual coaching and group coaching with collaborative teams, was driven by the expressed needs of the staff, her philosophical beliefs and the collective vision of the school. Additional decisions she

made regarding organizing school structures in support of coaching practices are described below.

School structures and organization. At Pickett, the principal prioritized the coach's time by concentrating on collaborative team facilitation, protected her time by encouraging her to turn down tasks outside of her duties, and also carefully articulated coaching practices to staff members to clarify the purposes of coaching and her vision for its outcomes.

Time and scheduling. At Pickett Elementary the principal was intentional about helping the coach prioritize and schedule her time for coaching practices. The bulk of the time, 14 hours a week, was saved for collaborative team meetings. In these meetings, the coach facilitated discussion and dialogue about teaching and learning with members of the grade level team. The principal explained that time was devoted to this area because she saw it as a need for the school to strengthen collaboration and increase student achievement. The principal also discussed the time the coach spent coaching individual teachers, especially new teachers, and the time she had carved out of the coach's weekly schedule for administrative meetings. Similarly to the Jomar principal, she elaborated on the importance of the time spent in these weekly meetings to her vision for the school and the overall coaching program. She commented:

> [Sharon] coaches me. She definitely coaches me, and I always say she organizes my brain because I can think of last year. We're totally redoing the vision for what PD was going to look like, and there were charts all over the wall. I just like was talking, and she was able to organize it, which was so helpful. It's also just different being in that role when you're used to organizing somebody or you think you're organized. Yeah, I would definitely say she does that. She definitely coaches.

This comment shows how the instructional coach even coached the principal to help shape the school's vision and reflects the close relationship between the coach and the principal and the importance of time spent meeting.

The principal also encouraged the transparent reporting of the coach's time and sought to protect this time by proposing to the coach that she turn down activities and tasks that were outside of her coaching responsibilities. In explaining this focus on quality time the principal remarked:

> Throughout the year, there might be things that would come up, like "Can you do this? You said this. Can you do just a variety of things?" It was like, you need to say no because ... It was supporting her, and you need to say no. You can say no because you're being paid as the coach. You know, of course if emergencies arise, that's different.

Allowing and encouraging the coach to resist participating in activities outside of the coaching model was unique to Pickett and reflected in this quote above. Also unique to Pickett was the level of transparency of the coach in revealing to staff members how she spent her time. The principal described the coach's decision as follows:

> One thing she did this year is she posted on staff news how she spends her day because she was really cautious. She's like, you know, when I was a classroom teacher, I remember thinking, "Oh, what do resource folks do?" so she was very transparent with the staff, like, "I spend this many hours a week here, and this and this and this."

This quotation shows that although the principal didn't require the coach to explain her time to staff members, she reinforced this level of transparency. She also assisted the coach in confidently turning down requests that may have impacted that time.

At Pickett Elementary it appears that the scheduling of the coach's time and defining how that time was spent was an intentional effort of the principal and was supported by her partnership with the instructional coach.

Clarity of role and responsibilities. The Pickett principal was the only principal in the study interviewed who had worked to explain and define the coach's role and her practices to the larger staff. This happened at the beginning of the school year when she embedded her beginning of year PowerPoint presentation with slides about the coach and coaching framework and allowed the coach to introduce herself to the staff. One of the teachers interviewed remembered the principal's introduction and how the objectives and practices continued to be reinforced. She shared:

> It was defined for us the first year what their role would be and then it was defined when school started, when we had our professional developments. And then it was defined in our [collaborative teams] again. And then because of the way my brain works, I needed it clarified even more. If I had a question about a role or guideline or whatever, an idea that they had, I'd ask. That's always been easy to do here at Pickett.

This comment shows that the role of the coach and coaching practices were explained and repeatedly clarified in a variety of settings at Pickett. In addition to the teachers sharing how practices were explained, the coach also mentioned the principal's clarity in defining her practices, especially when the position was newer to the school.

Principal decisions and the impact on coaching practices and framework. The decisions made by the principal at Pickett to hire a coach with a background that supported a school need, to focus coaching practices on mathematics and team collaboration and to schedule and protect the coach's time, all lead to coaching practices that were described as successful and meeting the intended objectives of the coaching framework by the teachers interviewed. Not only did the principal espouse the practices that she expected from the coach, the coach actually enacted those practices. This cohesion between principal message and coach actions resulted in the staff's deep understanding and appreciation of coaching practices. All teachers interviewed remarked

about their understanding of instructional coaching practices and how the model was intended to support them with their instructional practices. One teacher interviewed described her understanding of coaching in this way:

> I understood that they would basically be answering any instructional teaching practices that we wanted to ... questions that we had coming into our classroom and guiding us or observing us and giving us feedback, you know, positive, negative, whatever. In a positive light. That was my thinking, and that is what our instructional coach basically has. They also guided us in lesson planning, how to present number talks or guided reading. That includes the whole school including myself.

This comment reflects an understanding of the group and individual coaching practices of planning, modeling, and reflection that had a perceived impact on teaching practices. Another explained the perceived objectives of instructional coaching in this fashion:

> My understanding of instructional coaching is that there is someone here at school who is able to support teachers. If we don't understand something new or how to deliver the instruction they come in and help either model, co-teach. Also, observe to help give feedback so that we are doing the best we can but also understanding the new research ways of how SFPS would like us to be delivering the instruction to the students. I look at it as someone who's there to first and foremost to make sure kids are learning but also there as a support to us when we're confused about, "Wait. How is that supposed to look?"

Similarly to the teacher comment discussed previously, this teacher interviewed also shared an understanding of the model that involved co-teaching, providing resources and information, and helping clarify instruction. Finally, a teacher remarked:

> My general understanding of what instructional coaching is, is a teacher who I would say is facilitating CT meetings, who is presenting to us new information in the county. Specifically like the math pacing guide, the reading pacing guide, and then coming into our classroom to model lessons, help out teachers.

This comment underscores the group practices of meeting facilitation and planning and then the individual coaching practices of modeling.

Through conversations with those teachers at Pickett, the perceived impact of coaching practices on the overall implementation of the coaching model and achieved

objectives was apparent. Teachers described their experiences with a level of clarity that reflected a solid implementation of the coaching framework.

Gramlee Elementary

Principal decision making based on professional learning. A key decision made by the Gramlee principal was that she chose to fill her instructional coach position with a teacher who had been a resource teacher at the school. She also chose to have the instructional coach focus on mathematics based on the coach's own skill set and the need of teachers at the school. The belief of Gramlee's principal was that instructional coaching "[empowered] teachers to do their best work" and her decisions around the coaching framework reflected this philosophy. At Gramlee, the principal scheduled the coach's time with teams to improve instructional practices and enhance student and adult learning, however, she did not clarify coaching practices or the instructional coach's role, especially regarding the coach's movement from resource teacher to coach.

School structures and organization. The organization of coach time and how coaching practices were organized were a direct result of the vision for learning at the school. As the principal remarked:

> We made a plan which is what's going to get us up there, it's our professional learning ... This is our vision. It's all about the portrait of a graduate. We've been very intentional about this for the last couple of years, not last year. For Gramlee, we recognized it was about reading, about being critical thinkers and problem solvers, and about being persistent. That's what all of our professional learning, and it's all about adaptive change because we have to change our practices.

This comment reflects the overall beliefs of the principal and the school around professional learning and their opinions about change over time. The work of the coach was organized to support this school-wide improvement effort.

Time and scheduling At Gramlee Elementary the principal set and organized the coach's schedule so that the coach was able to attend all collaborative team meetings as a participant, rather than a facilitator. This was an emphasis from the very beginning of the school year when the schedule was initially determined for the year. The principal described this as follows:

> I think there [are] thing[s] that we set at the beginning of the school year, like the CT schedule. The way we set up our schedule this year was teachers had one CT a week. It was three weeks math, three weeks language arts, so it was a balance. It might have been three weeks for grades one, three, and five, and then it flipped three weeks after that. She was a part of that.

Having the instructional coach present and available at every collaborative team meeting was important to the principal, as reflected in this quotation. Once that schedule was set in place, the principal then allowed the coach autonomy in individual coaching session. The principal explained:

> She set her schedule in terms of where she felt like things ... Based on CT meetings, where she saw needs, "Where I'm going to spend this amount of time in a classroom. I'm working with this new teacher." It was pretty fluid.

This mix of structuring the coach's time for collaboration, and then allowing the coach the autonomy to identify and select who needed additional coaching, resulted in a coaching model that was perceived to meet the needs of the principal and school vision for professional learning.

Clarity of role and responsibilities. The Gramlee principal did not spend time defining the coaching role or practices to staff. The instructional coach had held another role at the school before becoming the coach, and the principal felt as though the shift to a new role would be seamless and understood by all. When asked in the interview about the transition and whether she felt the need to clarify practices she replied, "Because she had already been here, no we didn't. The only time I explained it was when we were

doing the survey [for the Capstone project]." When the principal was asked whether or not she thought teachers might be confused about coaching practices with the coach in the new position she replied:

> No. Not that anyone has ever reported to me or I've picked up on. Nothing that she has said. I feel like it was a change for her and I've seen her engage with things like data and information that she is given when she comes to meetings. She has transitioned her role I think, stepped more into that, feeling more comfortable with data overall, how to use it, how to impact her practice. The relationships with teachers, the coaching piece, I think a lot of that stayed the same or it just got better.

This excerpt indicates that the aspect of the staff's familiarity with this colleague influenced the principal's decision to remain silent about her switch from resource teacher to instructional coach. It also shows some of the new responsibilities noted by the principal in the coach's new role, especially those about data and information gathering.

One structure mentioned at Gramlee that was not mentioned in the other two schools was the existence of a principal/coach coaching contract. The instructional coach at Gramlee was the only person interviewed who mentioned this agreement as an important tool used by the principal and the coach to help clarify the coaching practices that were supported and encouraged by SFPS and the time that would be devoted to them. She described this tool as follows:

> At the beginning, with being a new coach, we started with Bob as the coaching ... He's the head of that cohort. He came and he had …a meeting kind of describing how we were going to operate, which is very helpful. Right off the bat, it was, "Here's your roles. How do you see Mollie fitting into those roles? What's your main goal for her this year? How are you going to communicate often?" That's something that we still need to work more on, but right off the bat, that was very helpful because it's called the principal-coach agreement and that really sets the tone because if my goal on there doesn't match the principal's goal, then I need to go back ... Then I didn't understand what my goal for the year was. That really set the tone and then every meeting that I go to with the coaches is to somehow support me reaching my end goal.

This vignette about the principal/coach contract illustrates how this tool helped define the goals for coaching at the school and opened up the dialogue between the coach and the principal around communication, goal setting and principal vision.

Impact of decisions on coaching practices and framework. Although the principal did not feel the need to explain to staff the shift in position or the objectives of coaching practices, the instructional coach believed the role could have been made clearer by the principal. This lack of clarity about her shift of role was perceived as impacting the fidelity of the coaching model and was reflected in coach and teacher interviews. When asked about whether the coaching practices were intentionally explained to the staff she lamented, “That's a good question. No, that could be clearer.” Also, the teachers interviewed had varied perceptions of how the principal had defined and explained the coaching practices to staff. One person highlighted the confusion that new teachers might have regarding the purposes of coaching. She remarked:

> I know, especially with new teachers, they view the coaches as someone who's coming in to watch them, to judge them, to report back about something they're doing. I know especially this year, there were two new teachers on our team, and I had conversations with them early on, like, "Invite Mollie in. She's not coming here to say, 'Here's all the things you're doing wrong, ‘She's coming in to model with you to help you grow as a teacher.’ I remember specifically having those conversations. I feel like it is misunderstood. I feel like the coaches can be perceived as someone who is their boss, or someone who is coming in to judge them, rather than help them grow.

Similar to the first school highlighted in this section, a misperception about coaching impacted the implementation of the coaching framework and the willingness of new teachers to fully embrace the support.

The other two teachers interviewed had clearer understandings of coaching practices, but did not articulate that the principal had a role in producing this clarity. One said:

> You have to know that the idea is the coaches are here to make you a better teacher, primarily. That's the number one thing first. It's easier to work with you in as many different ways as that might look, whether it's just reviewing content with people. That's a big piece of it too.

The final teacher interviewed had this understanding of instructional coaching practices, "Instructional coaches, to me, are people in our building that help us with different needs the teachers have. I know as a new teacher they supported me more than, maybe, necessarily now."

These examples show that the objectives of the coaching model were not always apparent to the teachers in the building but experiences and work with the instructional coach seemed to clarify the objectives of the coaching model.

At Gramlee Elementary the overall desire to have students be creative problem solvers and critical thinkers, and then to move the adult practices in the building through instructional coaching, framed the decisions made by the principal around the coaching framework.

Cross-school Comparison

Overall findings regarding how principals organized schedules, time allocations and role clarity indicate that at each school they were handled differently to varied results. The priorities of the school principals heavily influenced all of the decisions made around the coaching program, some of which involved organization structures, and some which centered on other principal decisions, such as reasons for hiring a certain person. An interesting commonality among the schools is that all schools had an instructional coach devoted to mathematics instruction. All principals identified math improvement as a need, and it's also to be noted that the state provides a reading resource

person in all schools, but not a mathematics resource. That could be the reasoning behind a hiring coaches focused on mathematics instruction.

Also, in all three cases, principals prioritized the coach's time, either individually or through collaboration with the coach, to support their identified school targets. In some schools coaches focused on collaboration among teams, and in others, they concentrated primarily on individual coaching. Although none of the time allocations aligned perfectly with the espoused model, all principals thought their decisions regarding time for coaching were impacting their schools in a positive manner.

In terms of role clarity, this was an area where important differences were seen. In one school, the principal had made a conscious effort to talk about the role of the coach and coaching practices and her intentions for their impact. In this school, teachers not only had an understanding of what the coach was charged to do, but what instructional coaching meant in the larger realm of instructional improvement. In the other schools where the principals did not define the coaching practices, teachers interviewed seemed to understand what instructional coaching practices were meant to accomplish, although they did not always see that happening in their schools. Also, there was mention by more than one teacher of the perception that the coaching practices had some more threatening purpose, like reporting back to the administrator. In these schools where there was some distrust of the coaching process, the lack of clarity by the principal may have impeded the true impact of the coaching framework.

Table 6 is a visual representation of the similarities and differences found in each of the schools studied. Commonalities include the coaches' focus on mathematics, the intentional scheduling of their time and the fact that all of the coaches interviewed had

held positions in the schools prior to becoming the instructional coach. Interviews also revealed that all coaches had close and productive relationships with their school principals, although only one coach mentioned the district "principal/coach" contract that was structured to define that relationship. Differences noted below include the coaching focus at the school and whether or not the principal clarified the coaching position to staff members.

Table 6

Cross School Comparison of Key Principal Decisions

		Jomar	**Pickett**	**Gramlee**
School Structures and Organization	Intentional Scheduling of Time	+	+	+
	Clarifying Coaching Practices	—	+	—
	Principal/Coach Contract	—	—	+
	Principal/Coach Relationship	+	+	+
Other Principal Decisions	Focus on Mathematics	+	+	+
	Thoughtful Hiring	+	+	+
	Focus on Individual Coaching	+	—	—
	Focus on Group Coaching	—	+	+

+ = discussed, — = not discussed

Making Sense of Coaching Practices

My first research question posed, but the final one to be addressed in this section, examined how the various stakeholders in a school (principals, coaches, and teachers) made sense of coaching practices and especially how their backgrounds and experiences influence this sensemaking. This question also looked at how interpretations of coaching practices varied within and among the schools studied. In analyzing the data revealed in the interview comments related to this research question, I determined that this question

would be best answered in the final discussion of findings because it is in essence "sensemaking" that is the core of the study. The previous two research questions lead up to this final examination of principal sensemaking and influence.

This section of my capstone will delve into how the principals' backgrounds and experiences influenced their interpretation of the practices of instructional coaching, and also how the backgrounds and experiences of coaches and teachers also shaped how they made sense of coaching. It will end with cross-school comparisons of how these understandings were consistent, or varied, across stakeholders and schools.

Jomar

Principal's experience as an instructional coach. The principal at Jomar was the only principal interviewed who had served in the capacity of an instructional coach in his professional career. How his background and experiences shaped his understanding of coaching practices, and ultimately how he structured the coaching program at his school, were apparent early on in my interview. He spoke about his training as a state coach and how the state coaching model was heavily influenced by the need to get results quickly. In describing his training and the expected outcomes he stated:

> I was a coach, but I didn't get my training from [my current district]. I would go away to [other cities in the state] and I would get training from the [Department of Education] about what they wanted done. Then, I would come back here and do ... it was a small group of us, and we would do turnaround trainings with the principals that were in the same situation as us and the school leaders. We had to see to it. Basically, the premise was they had studied successful schools and had these benchmarks of these commonalities among research-based successful schools.

In this quote, he mentions that his training came from outside the district studied in this capstone and that the target of the coaching model was struggling schools with a concentration on research-based strategies.

Since his training as a coach was specific to the state's objectives of improved student achievement to satisfy No Child Left Behind requirements, there was pressure for quick results from teachers, and less emphasis on reflection. He shared this perception when he elaborated on what he defined as "results" coaching and how it influenced his coaching work:

> It was a different kind of model. I would call it maybe a results coaching model. When you think about familiarity and knowledge with the practice of instructional coaching, [this district] has a lot of ... they put a lot of emphasis on Cognitive Coaching, which can be good, but it can be a lengthy process. It takes a long time. You're getting the individual teacher to really reflect and almost therapeutically. This was more of a results coaching model where it was really data driven, and you do want people to do that, but if they don't come to it and come to it fast, sometimes you use a different kind of leverage to get those results. You had to give them the knowledge quick and then the expectation was that it was turned around fast, that it was done. Then, you had to monitor and make sure it was being done. It wasn't quite as reflective. I will say that. All of the schools that ... we were on a timeline. If we didn't make it, then you go to the next level of federal accountability if you don't make it. For me, it was really data driven. There was a lot of data. I carry that with me even today.

In this excerpt, the principal shares that coaching for results, rather than reflective "Cognitive Coaching," was the model he used when employed as a state instructional coach. It illustrates the importance this model placed on using data and providing teachers with the knowledge they needed, rather than having them reflect on their practice. He contrasts this model with the district model, which he sees value in, but perceives as taking more time. He sees worth in instructional coaching practices that are efficient and effective, especially when presented with the urgency of a quick turnaround of scores. He reveals that he is still influenced by this focus on data he experienced early in his career. This experience with coaching can be seen influencing the decisions he makes as a principal with a coaching program in his school. As mentioned in the

findings of the research question addressed previously in this section, the decision to concentrate coaching efforts primarily on individual teachers could be interpreted as a result of this principal's sensemaking about coaching. The model of coaching he experienced early on in his teaching career, remains influential in his role as principal.

Instructional coach's varied experiences in coaching practices. The instructional coach at Jomar had only served in an instructional coach capacity at that school; however, she had previously taught at a school that had an instructional coach who incorporated coaching practices. She shared in her interview that her previous experience with coaching differed from her current experience, and remarked, "At my other school I'd say most of the time was spent with teams. We never saw the coach co-teaching or modeling lessons so we usually just saw her at meetings, at [collaborative learning teams]." She saw her current school's model for coaching as a superior model than the one she experienced previously that was focused on team coaching. She indicated that in a more individual coaching model she was able to tailor her coaching for each teacher. She described this when she said:

> You're meeting [the teachers] where they're at and pushing them as you think is best for them and their kids. I think [collaborative learning teams], when you have a high-functioning team they're able to lead their own [collaborative learning team meeting] and they only need minor support, whether it's just, 'Use this resource,' or, 'This is how you teach it.'

This remark shows that she feels she is better able to support teachers in their growth by working with them individually and encouraging their learning. At the team level, she sees high functioning teams as not needing as much support. This quote reflects the differentiation of her coaching practices

The instructional coach's sense of coaching practices was not based on her previous experiences with coaching, but instead guided by her principal's own sensemaking. In her previous experience she felt as though there wasn't a principal vision for coaching, and because of that, the coach had to create her own vision. She remarked, "In my previous school our principal didn't have a vision, and so the coach made up her own, which didn't fit with what the staff needed." It's possible to infer from this comment that a coaching vision articulated by the principal that meets the needs of the school is important to her and her work as a coach.

During the interview, she spoke a number of times about her current principal's vision for coaching and how she saw it as her vision as well. When asked if the principal set the vision for coaching practices at the school, she responded affirmatively, but went on to add that there was also a shared vision. She remarked, "I think we have a shared vision too of what's been happening with our success with problem-solving that we want to imitate that for other content areas." She further discussed how she embraced individual one on one coaching and through the perceived successes, saw this model as one that could move their school forward. This feeling was evident when she expressed the coaching vision for the next school year that she shared with her principal and said, "We've seen such a success with just the coaching one on one model that I think we're both believers in that's what moves teachers the most, so next year getting more involved in literacy." This contrasted with her experiences at her previous school.

The coach's comments during her interview illustrate how the relationship between her and her principal, coupled with his strong vision for coaching practices, influenced the way she incorporated her own coaching practices at the school.

Teachers' sensemaking of coaching practices. None of the teachers interviewed at Jomar had experiences with coaching other than those at their current school. They made sense of the coaching practices through their experiences with the instructional coach, or through the conversations they had with fellow colleagues about their experiences with coaching. As mentioned previously, all teachers interviewed had a solid understanding of what coaching practices were in theory and how they should play out in the school setting. Their opinions about the value of coaching practices and the school's vision for coaching were shaped solely by their experiences with the coach and with their colleagues, rather than by their interactions with the principal and his sensemaking of coaching. One thing notable at Jomar was the perception that high or low test scores and whether or not coaching was provided, reflected on whether a teacher was labeled by others as "good" or "bad." Two of the three teachers interviewed shared this view that test scores defined good or bad teaching at the school. If coaching was focused on increasing student test scores, then the connotation of having an instructional coach in the classroom could be perceived as negative. One teacher remarked, "If you get good scores, then you're considered a good teacher. Never mind that maybe you don't teach all the core subjects because all you're doing is drill and kill." Another teacher remarked that the coach focused more on third grade teachers than other upper-grade teachers because the third grade students' scores were lower than the other grades. The perceptions of the teachers interviewed reflected an understanding that coaching was provided if student achievement was low in an individual classroom, and that this factor may reflect negatively on the skills of an individual teacher.

The coaching experiences of the principal as a results-oriented instructional coach shaped his interpretation of coaching's purpose and the actual coaching practices at Jomar. This resulted in a focus on using individual coaching to improve student test scores on state tests. The interactions of the coach with the principal shaped the coach's sense of the vision for her own coaching practices, and teachers made sense of coaching practices through their coach interactions and their interactions with colleagues.

Pickett Elementary

Principal's professional learning about coaching. The principal at Pickett was not an instructional coach, but chose to learn about coaching and its potential impact on teacher practices through her own professional learning as a teacher leader. She took part in professional development offered by the district, and it is these experiences that influenced her beliefs about coaching practices. In speaking of this time of her own learning and how it impacted her perception of coaching she remarked:

> I think my experience in knowing what the coach role was, I wanted to learn more about that as a teacher leader, so I opted to participate in the instructional coach cohort to have some of the information and some of the groundwork and then just being able to work with instructional coaches in the county prior to when I was an intern and then when I was an [assistant principal] at another school. Then when I came back [as a principal] I made an instructional decision to use Title One funding to have an instructional coach, so that was definitely a change for this school.

This comment shows that she attributes her curiosity for the coaching model and her learning experiences and interactions with coaches and colleagues as being instrumental in her decisions she has made as a principal. This quote reflects a desire to implement the district's coaching framework that she learned as a member of the instructional coaching cohort. She further articulated how she has come to this perception of coaching and

successful coaching practices through her own continued professional learning and professional relationships when she says:

> I had an understanding of what [coaching] was just through reading and exploring and gaining information and working with coaches kind of informally at other schools. I mean, we have some PD, but I can't say that the PD has necessarily, that I've received as the principal or as an administrator, has necessarily furthered my growth. It's helped, but I think I get a lot of information from [my current coach] or other coaches or things I've learned.

The fact that this principal's learning about the coaching model and coaching practices came from her time as a member of the district's coaching cohort, and her dialogue with current coaches, could account for why the coaching practices at her school closely follow the district model that supports individuals and teacher teams, with greater emphasis placed at the team level. During the interview, she also spoke about how recent conversations with others have her interested in "content coaching" which focuses more on academic content being an integral part of the coaching process, rather than the emphasis being placed heavily on collaborative professional learning cultures.

This principal has made sense of coaching practices and has shaped these practices at her school, through the work she has done learning about the district's instructional coaching model and through her conversations and work with the instructional coach at her school and other instructional coaches. By viewing instructional coaching through the lens of the district framework, the practices at her school closely mirror the practices stated in the district coaching model.

Instructional coach's experience in the classroom. The instructional coach at Pickett came to the position after having taught for 15 years in the classroom. These prior experiences as a classroom teacher affected how she made sense of coaching practices

and how she constructed meaning in her new role. Her time at the school as a classroom teacher and the nature and responsibilities of that position versus the responsibilities of an instructional coach presented some initial challenges to her coaching practices. She shared these difficulties by saying:

> I had a hard time shifting from being a person who was pulled in a million different directions to a job that I have much more time to focus on the job I'm actually supposed to do. I had to come to some reconciliation with, my job is different, and it's okay that my job is different.

This remark indicates a struggle in getting acclimated to a role that allows her to have increased time focusing on targeted tasks, rather than the variety of responsibilities of a classroom teacher. Her experiences during her previous position, and her interactions with other specialists during that time, also influenced her belief in the need for transparency as an instructional coach. She articulated this feeling by sharing:

> I wanted to be very clear with how I spend my time, so it had nothing to do with anything that was asked of me. No one has ever questioned what I do, or how I do it. I just did it for my own personal kind of sense of putting things out there, and what I felt like I wanted to do. That was totally on me.

As a result of negative prior experiences that she shared in her interview, she made an intentional effort to disclose to teachers exactly how she spent her time each week in the coaching role.

As mentioned in the previous school studied, the conversations and interactions the coach had with the principal also shaped the coaching practices at the school. The principal continues to be the one that provides the guidance for coaching, and it is through interactions with the coach that the coach comes to implement the practices. The instructional coach described these discussions with the principal and its impact on her coaching practices as follows:

> I kind of just lean on her a lot for where she wants me to go. As I said, we never had a coach here, so not only was I going from a classroom teacher to a coach. I was going into a role that nobody at this school had any idea what it was, and I had no idea what it was, and she didn't have a great idea about what it was. It was kind of new to everybody, so that's where we felt we sort of had the ... We could shape it to be what we wanted, and we certainly did.

The importance of this relationship with the principal and the principal's own vision for coaching can also be heard when the coach explained:

> I really lean on [the principal] to kind of guide me in what she wants me to do, and also how much autonomy she's giving me in what she wants me to do. We started team leaders just this past year. She kind of decided that she wanted to be in charge of that. I backed off. If next year, she decides, "I would like you to take the lead on that," I would do that.

These two comments about how the principal determined the level of autonomy of the coach, and how they worked together to determine the coaching practices that would be used, illustrates the level of influence the principal had in how the coach made sense of her work.

At Pickett, how the instructional coach constructed meaning about coaching practices was shaped by her experiences and prior knowledge in her 15 years as a classroom teacher, in addition to the ongoing relationship and conversations with the principal at the school.

Teachers' prior and current experiences. The teachers at Pickett constructed meaning about the instructional coaching practices at Pickett primarily through their interactions with the instructional coach and her facilitation of their team meetings and classroom visits. One notable exception was the experience of one of the teachers interviewed at Pickett who had experienced instructional coaching practices in a previous assignment. Her previous interactions with coaching practices had been very negative, and she shared how that shaped her initial fear of having the instructional coach work in

her classroom. She said, “I felt very anxious about [coaching] because in past schools the instructional coach was used as an informant to admin about who's a good teacher, who's not a good teacher. That concerned me.” She went on to describe how working directly with the instructional coach restored her faith in the coaching program. She noted, “Through Sharon's actions, my concern that there would be a challenge was changed. It changed my perspective of what instructional coach was.”

The positive interactions teachers had with the instructional coach at Pickett, the discussions the coach facilitated and the teachers’ respect for her experience and knowledge affected how the teachers interviewed made sense of the coaching practices at the school. There was a slight mention of the role of the principal in guiding the overall vision of coaching, but the majority of the comments focused on direct communications with the coach.

The principal at Pickett made sense of the district’s coaching program and its implementation in her school through her experiences participating in a district coaching cohort before becoming an administrator. This prior knowledge and her subsequent conversations and relationships with instructional coaches impacted her vision for coaching implementation at the school. The instructional coach also was guided and influenced by her relationship with the principal and the principal’s sensemaking of coaching, but the instructional coach also carried with her some negative connotations about resource teachers/specialists that she sought to debunk in her new role. Her many years of classroom teaching experience presented a challenge to her embracing the new role of instructional coach, and the actions she took in her new role were purposeful to counter her previous experiences. Through her intentional actions, the teachers

interviewed made sense of coaching practices, including the one teacher who brought a prior bad experience to her definition of instructional coaching. The positive interactions the coach had with these teachers, negated negative feelings toward coaching at Pickett.

Gramlee Elementary

Principal's experience in the district. The principal at Gramlee had been a part of the district for over ten years and had experienced the work of an instructional coach when she was an administrator at another school. Her time at that school and her workings with the coach provided her initial impression and understanding of the coaching framework. She described her initial belief of coaching supporting teacher practices by saying:

> I think I first learned about instructional coaching when I was an Assistant Principal at [my previous school]. I left the classroom in 2004 and I think it was after that in the mid to late 2000's that that it really became ... It was a position in [the district]. I think about our Superintendent, I think I remember that there was a push to have instructional coaches, have a longer contract. It was his idea of supporting teachers' practices.

This statement reflects her initial perception of coaching, and she went in her interview to express her current vision that coaches wear many different hats and that coaching practices involve a variety of tasks. She has come to a more refined understanding of instructional coaching in her role as principal and her conversations with colleagues. This additional understanding she described by remarking, "I know that the role has, just from talking to colleagues or just being in the county, that the role has happened or unfolded in other ways, about the data, with supporting CT meetings, so it's ... big picture." She goes on to provide her current definition of instructional coaching practices and the role of coaches as follows:

> I think where it is now, today, is about how to empower teachers to do their best work. My understanding of it is about how to help teachers to figure out where they are in their practice and then to provide whatever supports, structures, information, to help them become better at what they do, which is instructing children, which then impacts achievement. I would say to someone who doesn't know about instructional coaches, "It's a person who understands how to get people to change their behavior." I also see it as a person who can come help teams change their behavior. It can step up a little bit. That's my understanding of what they do.

Although her district experience and conversations with professional colleagues has solidified her district vision of coaching, as reflected in the quote above, her experiences at her own school have justified her practices that may sway from the defined framework. In her interview she described the autonomy she feels as a principal and attributes it to working with the strengths of an instructional coach especially around data and content:

> I feel I have autonomy to make it work for us. I need that autonomy because each instructional coach comes in with their own set of strengths. There's another piece that has been in Surrey Forge County, which is the instructional coach really using the data. Some people are just better. They come in with a strength in that area in terms of how to crunch it, how to present it to people, how to pick out, then take it, "Okay, here's what we need to do with the school," or "Here's what a team needs to do," or "Here's what a teacher needs to do." Some people come in with a strength in a content area. There's different roles, so I have that autonomy to make it work how it needs to work in [my current school].

This comment indicates that although the principal at Gramlee has a firm understanding of coaching practices and the implementation the district envisions, she also sees some autonomy and latitude in how she implements the coaching framework. This comes from her own beliefs about what her school needs and her own vision of coaching, and from conversations she holds with other district leaders.

New instructional coach and district training. The instructional coach at Gramlee has been a coach for two years having moved from the position of math resource teacher to instructional coach. Much of her understanding and sensemaking of

coaching practices was articulated as the knowledge and information she received from district training. She spoke about the importance of this coach training and the fact that she still saw herself as very new to the coach role and unsure about her ability to tackle some of the tasks and responsibilities dictated by the framework. This uncertainty was reflected when she remarked:

> I'm such a newbie, that it's really hard. I think by year three, I'd be able to speak more to [the district coaching framework], but year two we're going to go through again. I still feel confused by the roles in the sense ... What, they got eight roles or something? I can't even rattle them off.

Since she was the instructional coach interviewed who was newest to the role of coach, I could hear her desire to fulfill her coach duties perfectly in the way outlined by the training she was currently involved in with the district. She remarked, "I felt a different Surrey Forge responsibility this year than I've ever felt. I never felt that before. I just always felt allegiance to my teacher, students, and parents, and administrators. I just felt it to the building. This year, I definitely felt more to the district…." She realized that that perfecting her coaching practices to achieve results would take time, but still struggled with how her role played out at the school. When asked at the end of the interview if there was anything else she felt like sharing, this inner struggle with the uniqueness of the position was revealed when she said, "It's just such an odd role and the balance of .... You often feel alone."

Teachers and previous coaching experiences. Two of the three teachers interviewed at Gramlee had experience with coaches in a previous assignment and used that previous knowledge to make meaning of how the role transpired at their current school. One spoke of a previous instructional coach at another school in the district where the coaching felt mainly focused on meeting facilitations. She shared:

> It seemed like the coach was just called the coach. They operated CTs. They were still a leader, and they still helped with ... I remember when I was in first grade, the lady would help out with different language arts lessons. She was a resource and had content expertise, but it felt like her job was to, I don't want to say administrate meetings, but it felt like that.

This teacher's comment above reflects an uncertainty with coaching practices as experienced at a previous school and a perception that the coach solely facilitated meetings. Another teacher interviewed shared her experiences from a school in another state and another district school and how she arrived at her own definition of instruction coaching practices. She replied:

> When I taught in Florida, they were putting coaches into, and in fact, we didn't have resource specialists. We had a math coach and a literacy coach, and both of those roles, I was a classroom teacher, but the literacy coach was also a classroom teacher who had decided to go into this. They didn't have any special degree or certification, and we were very much ... It was to work hand in hand with another person in the classroom, and then I feel like that understanding was deepened at Conner's with the instructional coaches they had there. In my role as a literacy specialist, I feel like the professional development that I got in Surrey Forge was very much towards being a coach rather than an evaluative person that was going in and telling people how to do things. There was a lot of training in how you can go in and support teachers in a co-teaching, in a coaching model. I think also that definition of what a coach is, just kind of understanding that from participating in sports my whole life.

This teacher made sense of coaching from models she observed outside of the district, and inside of the district at another school. She was also the only teacher interviewed that mentioned her experiences being coached in sports as contributing to additional sensemaking of coaching practices.

At Gramlee there was less mention by the teachers of their interactions with the instructional coach leading to them constructing meaning about the practices of coaching. This could be a result of the instructional coach being new to the position, and having

served in a similar, yet not exactly the same, position of math resource teacher before assuming the new role.

The principal, coach, and teachers at Gramlee all had some previous district or out of state experience with coaching practices that shaped their understanding of the district framework and how that played out in the school. Since the instructional coach was a beginning coach, her voiced uncertainty about the position was evident in her interview, as well as her desire to shape the coach position as being outlined in the trainings she was receiving. The principal did not feel that pressure, speaking instead of the autonomy she felt to implement the coaching framework to best meet the needs of the school. Finally, the teachers also shared some prior experiences they had with coaching, both positive and negative, but seemed to appreciate and support the coaching program at the school.

Cross-School and Cross-Stakeholder Comparison

There were definite similarities, and some differences, in the sensemaking of the various stakeholders across the three schools.

Principals. One aspect that was readily apparent was how the principals' background and experiences, more so than the actual district framework, shaped how they focused their coaching programs. Three coaching models were mentioned throughout my interviews and principals shared that they felt they had autonomy or that they felt the need to structure the coaching practices around their identified school needs. The Jomar principal was shaped by his coaching experiences in a "results coaching" model, which in turn caused him to target his own school's coaching framework on individual coaching to improve student performance results. The Pickett principal shared her interested in "content coaching" and how her professional learning about that model

was beginning to influence the coaching model at the school. Although still a newer model of coaching at the school, instructional coaching practices were beginning to focus more on academic content and knowledge, rather than collaboration and reflection. And finally, the Gramlee principal mentioned and practiced "Cognitive Coaching," which is influential in the Surrey Forge model. She was looking to increase the coaching conversations happening at her school around student achievement and teacher capacity.

Coaches. In the interviews with the coaches at each school, their interpretations of coaching mostly reflected the sensemaking of their principals. This was consistent across schools, with the Gramlee coach's newness to coaching revealing more of a desire to uphold the district framework she was learning about in her new coaches' training. The coaches took much of their own vision for coaching from the vision of coaching of their principals through the strong relationships they had with their principals and through frequent meetings and conversations about their work.

Teachers. In each school, the teachers interviewed expressed an accurate interpretation of the structure and purpose of instructional coaching, even if the model at their schools looked different than their model in theory. This interpretation of coaching was a result of definitions shared by their coaches or principals, or their own professional learning about coaching. It is interesting to note that two of the teachers interviewed had experienced negative coaching practices at previous schools and shared those feelings in the interviews. These prior instances of coaching made the teachers more hesitant to participate in the coaching model at their current schools. Positive interactions with the coaches at their current schools mitigated these earlier negative perceptions of coaching practices.

Although the actual models for coaching practices varied among each of the schools, how coaches and teachers made sense of coaching was impacted in similar ways through their conversations and interactions with each other, and the coaches' interactions with their principals. Principals took from their own professional experiences and beliefs, from training in and outside of the district, and their conversations with coaches and colleagues to make meaning of the coaching framework. This sensemaking was personal to their own beliefs about what the school needed, rather than what was dictated by the district framework. Table 7 gives a graphic summary of within and cross-school findings related to sense making.

Table 7

Cross School Comparison of Stakeholder Sensemaking

		Jomar	**Pickett**	**Gramlee**
Principal	Prior Experience and Emphasis	• state trained instructional coach • "results" coaching • focus on data	• participant in district coaching cohort • "content coaching" • adherence to district framework • focus on teacher's instructional content	• veteran in district with experience working with coaches • "Cognitive Coaching" • focus on school-wide professional learning
	Influence on Coaching Practices	• coaching vision based on individual teacher results/student data • focus on individual coaching practices	• coaching based on improving teacher content knowledge • emphasis on group and individual coaching practices	• coaching based on school-wide professional learning • emphasis on group coaching practices
Coach	Prior Experience and Emphasis	• resource teacher at the school • previous work with coaches and principal without vision • shared principal/coach	• classroom teacher at the school • negative experiences with resource teachers • transparency of coaching practices and time	• resource teacher at the school • new coach • district training and learning varied coaching roles is important

		vision is integral to coaching	is integral to coaching	
	Influence on Coaching Practices	close relationship with principal and shared vision that guides coaching practices	autonomy for coaching practices with shared principal vision	autonomy for coaching practices with a desire to uphold district framework
Teacher	Prior Experience and Emphasis	• experiences with instructional coaching model at the school (numerous coaches) • belief that instructional coaching is a stepping stone to administrator	• experiences with instructional coaching at the school • one teacher had negative experiences with coaching at another location • instructional coach's transparency increased understanding of objectives	• some experiences with other coaching frameworks • little mention of interactions with current coach
	Influence on Coaching Practices	indications of mistrust with the model due to a feeling that confidentiality is not upheld	negative prior experiences lead to hesitancy with coaching practices	novelty of new coach lead to little mention of examples of coaching

Next, in this section of my capstone, I will discuss the results of my study and their connection to the instructional coaching literature, my conceptual framework and my assumptions previously stated and will make recommendations for future action. My capstone will end with the action communication section.

Discussion

This discussion will look at the findings previously reported in light of the instructional coaching literature, my conceptual framework and my original assumptions for this project. It will highlight the primary themes that emerged from my research by discussing how the coaching framework was enacted, the importance of the role of the principal in shaping coaching practices, how the principal's own sensemaking influenced

the coaching framework, and finally how that sensemaking influenced others at the school.

Espoused versus Enacted Coaching Framework

The examination of the alignment of the district framework to the reality of the coaching practices at each of the three schools was an important part of my data analysis. I made an assumption that the fidelity of implementation was important to the overall accomplishment of the objectives set forth by the district. If the framework was not implemented at each school as intended, I assumed it was possible that the objectives of increased student achievement and the closing of achievement gaps would not be met.

In all three schools investigated in this study, group coaching practices and individual coaching practices were enacted, but the priorities and time given to both differed from the espoused district model. Individual practices included planning, co-teaching, demonstrating lessons, mentoring and providing resources to teachers. Group practices included professional development, team facilitation, data analysis, planning and providing resources. These practices all fell under the district coaching framework, and in fact, only the practice of facilitating peer visits to other classrooms was not included at any of the schools studied.

Differences were seen, however, in how schools prioritized the coaching practices. In one school more priority was put on individual coaching, and in another more priority was put on group coaching. Even in the school that was most aligned to the framework, the allocation of time (60% teacher teams, 30% individual and 10% coach professional learning) was not a reality. In all cases studied, principals felt they had autonomy to shape the model to address the needs at their schools. The fact that not one

school prioritized the time allocation as dictated by the coaching model will be addressed in the recommendations part of this section.

Importance of the Principal

As reflected in the literature, principal support around coaching practices is paramount to a coaching program's successful implementation (Killion et al., 2012) and in schools where principals have a high level of knowledge about coaching, coaches feel supported and confident about accomplishing the coaching objectives (Mangin, 2007). The results of my study reflect that in each of the schools featured, the principal shaped and guided the coaching framework in a way that met the needs of the students, the teachers, the vision for the school and the philosophical beliefs of that principal. The coach/principal partnership, principal decisions made in regards to coaching practices, and how principals organized time, scheduling and role clarity were all influential in how the coaching framework was enacted in each school.

Principal/coach partnership. As stated previously in the literature review, principals play a role in successful coaching implementation by establishing an active partnership with the coach (Killion et. al., 2012). In every one of the schools studied, each principal had a positive partnership with the instructional coach that involved frequent communication, administrative meetings and a perceived shared understanding of coaching practices. This relationship between coach and principal influenced the enacted coaching practices at each school. As reflected in the dialogue of both the principals and coaches, the principal's vision for the coaching program influenced the coaching practices and attention the instructional coach gave to individual teachers or grade level teams. Coaches had a varied level of autonomy in terms of prioritizing their

time with teachers. In two schools, principals guided the coach in selecting teachers and teams with whom to work. In contrast, at the third school, the principal put confidentiality at the forefront and stated that she did not know with whom the coach was working and trusted her to make decisions based on the principal's vision and teachers' needs.

This perceived close partnership between the principal and the coach also served as a barrier to the implementation of coaching practices. In one of the schools, dialogue with teachers indicated a mistrust of the relationship of the coach to the administrative team. In another school, teachers interviewed shared an unease among new teachers to participate in coaching practices because they were afraid that missteps would be reported to their administrator. Thus, the relationship of the coach to the principal was a blessing and a curse. The partnership allowed the coach and principal to work together to enact coaching practices that supported teachers and students, but at times the relationship was also a barrier to teachers' acceptance of coaching and a detriment to accomplishing the objectives of the coaching framework.

Principal decision making. In addition to the importance of the relationship between the coach and the principal, decisions made by the principal, political, managerial and instructional, were important to the implementation of the coaching framework.

***Principal bridging or buffering of district policy*.** The schools selected in this study were all allocated an instructional coach by the district, and with that allocation were expected to uphold a district coaching model and framework. The literature surrounding the implementation of district policy speaks about the buffering and bridging

that goes into the implementation of those policies (Honig & Hatch, 2004). As stated previously, bridging involves accommodating policy demands through initiatives and structures directly aimed at meeting policy goals. Buffering challenges policy goals by focusing on the priorities of the individual school. In the case of this study, interviews revealed that principals participated more in buffering than bridging the district coaching framework. In fact, one principal even went as far as to say the district framework was not important to him because he was aware of the needs of his school and of how coaching practices could address those needs.

Principals did not venture completely away from all components of the district framework, but they did use the coach and promoted coaching practices for priorities that they identified based on their vision for their school and their perceptions of the needs of the students. A prime example of this is reflected in the dialogue at two schools when principals spoke about the role the coach had in direct student intervention with struggling students. This is not an aspect of the district framework, but the principals explained that intervention was a part of the "reality" of the coach's role.

All principals interviewed in the study shared that they felt pressure from the district to improve students tests scores, the reason they received a coach to begin with, but two principals spoke about how they tried to buffer the district's urgency from their teachers and focus more on student growth than the achievement on state tests. The other principal in the study used the district vision of increased test scores to leverage the work of the coach and to justify the coach working more with some teachers and teacher teams than others.

Human resource decisions. All three principals interviewed made the decision to select instructional coaches with backgrounds in mathematics. It could be inferred that this human resource decision was made because each elementary school was already allocated a reading specialist highly qualified in literacy instruction. Principals interviewed identified instructional improvement in mathematics as needed at their schools.

Another human resource decision made by each of the principals interviewed was to hire a person who was already familiar with the school. At one school, the instructional coach had been a classroom teacher for a number of years, and at the other two schools, the instructional coaches had previously held the roles of mathematics resource teachers. In these cases, when given the opportunity to hire an instructional coach, principals were looking within their faculties to find people familiar with the school and teachers to assume the new titles. Their selection of staff members who had already established relationships with teachers in the building could be reflective of the importance they placed on the teacher/coach relationships to the success of the coaching program.

Structuring and scheduling of time. The structuring and scheduling of the coaches' time were also a principal decision reflected in the dialogues of all the stakeholders. As noted in the literature, how principals influence school processes that support teachers' professional learning, such as time allocation and scheduling (King et al., 2004; Poglinco et al., 2003; Walpole & McKenna, 2004) is an important element to the successful implementation of a coaching framework and coaches must have the time they need to meet with teachers and teacher teams to impact practices (Borman et al.,

2006; Neufeld & Roper; Shidler, 2009; Steiner & Kowal, 2007; Taylor, 2008). In some schools interviewed, the principal structured the time spent with the coach by organizing the grade level team meeting time so that the coach could always be a part of the meetings. In other schools, less emphasis was placed on formal time with the coach, and the coaching practices were allocated as the needs arose. Protected time for coaching was only mentioned at one school where the principal supported and encouraged the coach to say no to tasks that went beyond the framework and her responsibilities.

The lack of time for coaching practices was also mentioned in interviews with coaches, teachers, and principals, along with the struggle to best utilize the limited time during the school day. In two schools, coaches spent some of their time in direct intervention with students and in one school teachers remarked how the coach's time with teachers shifted as state testing preparation took place. In this school, the coach's time was then allocated to helping students prepare for the test which was a priority of the principal.

Clarifying coaching practices and objectives. Clarifying coaching practices and objectives were also seen as a decision that was made, or dismissed, by the principals interviewed. The literature reveals that when principals publicly support the practices of the coach and actively participate in the work of the coach, teachers increase their engagement with coaching practices (Mangin, 2007; Matsumara et al., 2009). Only in one school in the study did the principal make an intentional effort to explain the coaching practices and the role of the coach to the faculty. In the other two cases, principals assumed that teachers knew the purposes and objectives of coaching, and in both of those cases, dialogue with teachers and coaches indicated a level of uncertainty or

confusion about the exact purposes of coaching. This lack of clarity resulted in teachers not being sure exactly how the coaching practices were supposed to ultimately impact their students' achievement in the classroom, and at times made them wary of engaging in coaching.

Principal Experience and Background

In addition to principal decision making, the professional experiences the principals had with coaching in and out of the district were found to be of consequence to the implementation of coaching practices. One assumption I made, and previously stated, was that principals who had more experience with coaching would implement a coaching framework with more fidelity than those principals with inexperience. My interviews revealed to a large extent that experiences with coaching did influence how principals enacted the coaching model, but this influence was heavily dependent on the model with which they had experience. The principal in the study who had held the role of an instructional coach was trained in a model different than that espoused by the district. The coaching practices at his school, which focused heavily on raising test scores and less on reflective practices, differed from those at the other two schools because his philosophy about coaching had been shaped by his previous professional experiences. One of the other principals interviewed chose to become a part of the district coaching cohort in order to learn more about the district model. She was heavily influenced by the district model, and the coaching practices in her school were aligned to that model. She also explained, though, that her own recent professional learning and conversations with colleagues had her interested in moving away from group coaching practices to more individual coaching practices. She was looking to move her school closer to an

individual coaching model during the next school year. Finally, the third principal interviewed had been in the district a number of years as the coaching program was being developed and experienced coaching as an administrator when there was an instructional coach at her school. The enacted model at her school was closely linked to that espoused by the district and included group coaching and individual coaching built on a philosophy of teacher reflection and dialogue.

An interesting note of discussion that was revealed during the interviews with principals was that, although the district does not identify the coaching model through the lens of a certain label, "results coaching", Cognitive Coaching, and "content coaching" were all models of coaching labeled and shared in the interviews with principals as being used in their schools.

Teacher and Coach Sensemaking

The final theme that emerged in my study was how principal sensemaking influenced, or didn't influence, the other stakeholders in the building. As mentioned previously in the literature review, school leaders' sensemaking is situated in their personal experience, building history, and role as an intermediary between the district office and classroom (Spillane et al., 2002). I spoke previously about how the backgrounds and professional experiences of the principals in the study shaped how they interpreted and ultimately implemented the coaching framework. Teachers and coaches who participated in the interviews, were influenced by their individual backgrounds and experiences, as well as their interactions with their principals and colleagues.

Coach sensemaking. The coaches in this study seemed to make sense of coaching practices through their on-going dialogues with their school principals. There was little

mention of the district training or dialogue with other coaches influencing the sensemaking of their roles as coaches. The principals' viewpoints and philosophy about coaching were also reflected in the dialogue of the coaches at those schools. In only one school did the coach mention a struggle between what the district framework was asking her to do, and what she felt she was actually doing at that school.

Teacher sensemaking. All but two of the teachers interviewed had little to no experience with coaching outside of their current working environment. Teachers formed their understanding of coaching and coaching objectives through their interactions with the instructional coaches at their schools, with their colleagues and sometimes through interactions with the school principal. The two teachers who had experienced coaching at other schools, or in other districts, reported negative feelings about that coaching that shaped their initial impressions of the coaching framework, but these were mitigated by positive experiences at their current schools.

In all instances, though, direct work with the instructional coaches was reported as being a positive experience. Even in cases where the teachers were not sure of the level of confidentiality between coach and administrator, teachers reported time with the coach as being helpful to their classroom instruction.

Summary

Findings from my research underscore the importance of the principal in shaping and implementing a coaching program. Principals were key decision makers in their buildings and enacted the espoused district coaching framework in ways that aligned with their experiences and school vision. Principals' backgrounds, beliefs, and professional experiences formed the basis for how they implemented the coaching model. In addition

to making sense of the coaching framework and prioritizing the coaches' time, principals also made key decisions in terms of who was hired into the coaching role, the instructional content targeted for coaching practices, the level of confidentiality upheld around coaching, and the transparency and clarity in which they explained, or didn't explain, the outcomes of instructional coaching to staff members.

My interviews with various stakeholders revealed coaching commonalities across all schools, but I also heard differences in how the coaching practices were performed. All schools used a combination of group and individual practices, but the priorities placed on those practices and the time allocations varied. Also, coaches spent time outside of traditional coaching practices in two schools where coaches were used to provide direct student intervention or perform administrative tasks.

My conceptual framework for this study suggested that the district guided school coaching practices by providing the coaching action model, defining the coaches' time allocation and selecting and training the coaches, and that what happened at each school was influenced by the actions and sensemaking of the principal. My findings suggest that much of my conceptual framework holds true, however, I did not anticipate the level of importance of the principal/coach relationship and the strong influence of the principal on the coach's sensemaking. This connection is not reflective in the illustration of my conceptual framework.

My conceptual framework also suggested that Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational frames would be useful lenses for interpreting the stakeholders' sensemaking that happened within each school, but I made the assumption that the human resource frame and structural frame would feature most prominently in explaining the

principals' perspectives when taking action within each organization. In reality, there was evidence of all four frames shaping how principals viewed their school environments and acted within them. As I had predicted, the human resource frame and structural frame were significant. These frames were important in providing lenses for explaining hiring decisions, resource allocation, school scheduling, role clarity and coaching practice prioritization. However, the political and symbolic frames were also apparent. Indications of the political frame could be seen in how principals made autonomous decisions and chose to place less emphasis on the district model in favor of shaping coaching practices to fit their perceived needs at their individual schools. The political frame could also be used to explain how principals used their power and authority to determine what teachers would experience coaching practices and the level of independence allocated to the instructional coaches. In terms of the symbolic frame, this lens was at the heart of the how stakeholders made sense of their school's coaching practices and how a principal's actions around school culture and vision shaped that sensemaking. Thus, all four of Bolman and Deal (2013) frames, not just the two mentioned in my assumption, could be used to give meaning to decisions made about coaching practices at each of the schools in the study.

Returning to one of my original questions that pondered whether the problem of practice was due to implementation failure, or program theory failure, my findings indicate that it could be a combination of both. There was definitely evidence at each of the schools that the coaching framework was not implemented with fidelity, yet there were valid reasons supplied by the principals for those changes in implementation.

My recommendations in the next section will target possible modifications to the district instructional coaching framework that build upon the expertise and sensemaking of the principal along with effective coaching models as presented in the coaching literature. The recommendations will also address some of the inconsistent elements of the coaching framework that could strengthen its success and may provide support for principals for successful implementation.

Recommendations

Recommendations presented here reflect ways the district can help principals implement an instructional coaching model in their schools. Only schools that have "failing" test scores currently receive the allocation of an instructional coach. District leaders have the opportunity to support principals and provide recommendations and tools that can strengthen the coaching programs in individual schools and potentially have a greater impact on student achievement. Below I will provide six recommendations for district leadership as a result of my findings and the literature on instructional coaching.

Recommendation One: Principals should be given the option to shape the coaching framework as needed in each of their schools.

The model being implemented in SFPS was created and evaluated by the district in the early 2000s. Since that time, the amount of information on instructional coaching has increased along with the formulation of a number of different coaching models. In the interviews I conducted with principals, I heard mention of some of these models which included "Results Coaching" and "Content Coaching" in addition to "Cognitive

Coaching" which is used by the district. A search of the term "coaching models" reveals additional models not mentioned by stakeholders.

Principals know and understand the needs of their teachers and students. The district can inform principals of the foundational core elements of instructional coaching and principals can use the resource of an instructional coach to meet their school needs. Principals with understanding and knowledge of instructional coaching can share their plans and theories of action with district leaders, as they shape the coaching programs at their schools. Principals who lack background knowledge in instructional coaching can rely more heavily on a district model. Principals shaping their own models will need to ensure that core coaching elements are present in their practices. Core elements needed in all coaching frameworks include:

- Time allocated to teachers and coaches to work collaboratively
- Protection of the coaches' time from administrative tasks
- The hiring of coaches with content and adult learning expertise
- Continued professional development for coaches at the school and district level
- Protection of the coach/teacher relationship by establishing a culture of trust and confidentiality around coaching.
- Strong principal/coach partnership

Giving principals examples of some different coaching models from which to draw upon, and allowing principals the autonomy to shape their own instructional coaching models, will allow principals the flexibility to use their coaches in ways that

best meet school needs. Recommendations on how to ensure a high-quality coaching program given this level of autonomy can be found in "Recommendation Four."

Recommendation Two: The district should have a flexible time allocation for coaching practices in the coaching model.

It was apparent after interviewing principals, teachers, and coaches in the study that the time allocation outlined in the district coaching model (60% coaching teams, 30% coaching individuals, and 10% spent on the coaches' development) is not reflective of the division of coaching practices in schools. In fact, the one instructional coach who carefully kept track of the percentage of time spent on various endeavors found that she spent 9% of her week planning, 5% in meetings, 19% in individual coaching activities, 37% in group coaching activities, 20% in direct student intervention, and 10% in other duties as assigned. The current time allocation in the model indicates the importance the district places on need to devote time to developing the adult learners in a school, however principals should be given the ability to structure that time based on school and teacher needs. Principals could engage in dialogue with district leaders about how they plan to structure the time devoted to coaching practices. Out of school necessity, this time could also include a small amount of time for direct student intervention; however, direct work with students should be kept to a minimum.

Recommendation Three: The district should support principals in creating a communication plan to share coaching objectives and outcomes with staff members effectively.

Jim Knight (n.d.), a leader in instructional coaching, writes, "No matter how much a coach knows, and no matter how effective a coach is, the principal's voice is

ultimately the one most important to teachers." In fact, the literature speaks to how important it is for a principal to articulate the coaching program objectives to staff members (Mangin, 2007; Matsumara et al., 2009; Steiner & Kowal, 2007). In my study, only one principal shared the objectives of coaching with her staff members and clarified how the practices would be implemented in the school.

This lack of communication could have a negative impact on the interpretation and implementation of the coaching model. The district should help principals in developing a communication plan they can use to explain the purposes of the coaching program, in addition to the roles of the principal, coaches, and teachers in its implementation. Making sure that teachers, coaches, and principals understand their roles, and the expectations tied to these roles, is important to establishing the trust and rapport needed for successful coaching.

Recommendation Four: The district should support principals with the implementation of successful coaching models by providing on-site school support and opportunities to gather to discuss the coaching program.

The principals interviewed in my study all had some familiarity with coaching practices before becoming principals at schools with instructional coaches. It is likely, though, that there are principals allocated an instructional coach who do not have foundational knowledge about coaching. An on-site model where a principal mentor, or district resource person, could provide consultation and coaching to the principal could ensure that core coaching practices are understood and being used in appropriate ways at schools with principals new to coaching practices.

Providing opportunities for principals to discuss their coaching programs at their schools is another aspect of supporting principals with implementation. A finding of my study is that principal backgrounds and professional experiences shape their implementation of the coaching framework. As stated earlier, sensemaking is ongoing and social and a principal continuously makes sense of how the coach is situated in the school by examining her own beliefs and identity, and through interactions with other stakeholders. Principals need to communicate with others and to discuss the skills needed to use the coaching model effectively. This professional time should be consistent and well-structured to provide time for principals to network with others who have instructional coaches to discuss implementation struggles and successes.

Recommendation Five: The district should work with principals to develop a tool that will help evaluate the coaching programs in their schools.

Principals need to have assessment measures to evaluate the successes and growth areas of their coaching programs so they can make modifications, if needed, that strengthen the coaching framework. This is especially important if principals are shaping the program to meet school and teacher needs. They need to have a way to evaluate the implementation of the model. District leaders can work in collaboration with school principals to develop a tool that serves this purpose and principals can participate in peer reviews of their coaching frameworks using the tool developed. This would provide principals with non-evaluative feedback about strengths and weaknesses of their coaching program and would provide opportunities for dialogue about solutions.

Recommendation Six: The district should embark on a regular cycle of program evaluation for the instructional coaching program.

Finally, in speaking with principals, there was little mention of accountability to the district besides achievement test scores, and the district's program evaluation website indicates that the coaching program has not undergone a thorough review in about ten years, even though it continues to expand. It is necessary to continue to evaluate the program on a regular basis because of the importance and urgency placed on instructional coaching to increase student achievement in struggling schools and the amount of district dollars being spent on staffing the program. The district should consider the use of Patton's (2008) utilization focused evaluation that involves the stakeholders in determining the criteria and approach of the evaluation.

Table 8 below presents the recommendations mentioned above, along with the findings from the study that lead to the recommendations and the research that supports them.

Table 8

Sources of Evidence for Recommendations

Recommendation	**Study Findings**	**Other Research**
Principals should be given the option to shape the coaching framework/model as needed in each of their schools.	Principals interviewed mentioned interest in varied models, including Cognitive Coaching, results coaching, and content coaching	Common Coaching Models, (McKenna & Wapole) • Peer Coaching • Cognitive Coaching • Subject-Specific Coaching • Program-Specific Coaching • Reform-Oriented Coaching
The district should have a flexible time allocation for coaching practices in the coaching model.	Not one of the three case study schools upheld the defined time allocation (60% coaching teams, 30% coaching individuals and 10% on the coach's learning)	While protecting coach's time from administrative duties is important (Killion et al., 2012), there is no research indicating the ideal amount of time that should be spent on group and individual coaching activities, and depending on the model, time allocations may differ.

The district should support principals in creating a communication plan to share coaching objectives and outcomes with staff members effectively.	Only one of the principals interviewed had introduced coaching practices, the objectives of coaching, and the role of the coach to staff members.	It is important for a principal to articulate the coaching program objectives to staff members (Mangin, 2007; Matsumara et al., 2009; Steiner & Kowal, 2007) Being clear about the coach's role is also important (Borman et al., 2006).
The district should support principals with the implementation of successful coaching models by providing on-site school support and opportunities to gather to discuss the coaching program.	This study reflected only minimal on-site support and it was mainly for the instructional coach. A brief mention was made of a coordinator supporting a coach/principal contract, but that was not mentioned at all schools.	The Wallace Foundation has been examining the important role of principal supervisors to help school districts improve support for principals' supervisors, allowing them to focus on helping principals improve instruction in schools (Saltzman, 2016).
The district should work with principals to develop a tool that will help evaluate the coaching programs in their schools	There is not currently a tool for principals to assess and evaluate the coaching model in their schools. There is only an evaluation tool for the performance of the instructional coach.	Evaluation of Coaching Models should measure: • Product – did you get the outcomes you hoped to find? • Process – how well did coaching serve each of the parties involved? • Inputs – what was invested in the program? • Data related to students • Data related to teacher outcomes (Hanover Research, 2015)
The district should embark on a regular cycle of program evaluation for the instructional coaching program.	The current model and program has not had a full program evaluation since 2006.	Patton's Utility Focused Evaluation is a possibility for a coaching program evaluation. Premises of Patton (2008): • Evaluation is part of initial program design, including conceptualizing the theory of change • Evaluator's role is to help users clarify their purpose, hoped-for results, and change model. • Evaluators can/should offer conceptual and methodological options. • Evaluators can help by questioning assumptions.

		• Evaluators can play a key role in facilitating evaluative thinking all along the way.

Possible Impediments to Recommendations

The previous six recommendations were derived from the concerns I heard among principals, coaches and teachers regarding the district coaching model, the inconsistency across schools I learned about while interviewing the various stakeholders, and the literature on instructional coaching. Next, I will discuss possible obstacles to being able to apply these recommendations as described.

Lack of consistent management. A critical impediment to being able to implement these recommendations is the inconsistent management of the coaching program over time. Since I started examining this problem of practice four years ago, the coaching program has had three different coordinators. This inconsistency in upper-level management makes it difficult to support principals, provide consistent and well-developed professional development and to examine and evaluate program effectiveness. Consistency over time in the personnel monitoring and supporting the implementation of the coaching model will be needed for these recommendations to be addressed.

Stigma around the allocation of the instructional coach. Although the additional resource of an instructional coach could be seen as a welcomed staff allocation, the reality is that schools receiving instructional coaches are under the microscope for improvement of state test scores and the closing of achievement gaps. This urgency for school improvement results in coaches being used quite often for direct student intervention, rather than for building teacher capacity. In my study, the schools

receiving coaches voiced that they had to do everything possible to increase their achievement to get removed from federal accountability standards. This factor could result in the lack of principal buy-in for having a coach and working to implement a successful model. The importance of coaching practices as a form of job-embedded professional development might be met with resistance from stakeholders in each school.

Money and time. As with all things in education, program initiatives are constantly competing with other program initiatives for money and time. This continues to be an issue in SFPS, where the number of programs vying for district funds exceeds the amount of that funding. For these recommendations to be examined and addressed, additional time and staffing need to be devoted to the management of the instructional coaching program so that it can get the attention needed to ensure successful implementation across schools in the district.

Summary

This section of my capstone outlined in detail my findings from my research questions and provided recommendations to district leadership as a result of concerns about that coaching program that arose from the examination of those questions. The final section of my capstone will convey the action communication to district leadership about my six recommendations stated above.

SECTION FIVE: ACTION COMMUNICATIONS

In the previous section of my capstone, I documented my findings based on my research questions and presented recommendations as a result of these findings and the literature on instructional coaching. In this section, I will include my action communications that will be shared with the district in which I did my research. These communications will be presented to the executive director of the department that houses the instructional coaching program, along with the coordinator of the coaching program and the sponsor of my research, an assistant superintendent. Originally, I believed I would have recommendations for school leaders, but after conducting the research, I realize that my recommendations are more targeted toward district leadership. My findings reflect that the principals interviewed for my research had a solid understanding of instructional coaching, and knew the district model, yet still shaped the coaching framework at their schools. My recommendations addressed how the district could support principals in making sure coaching practices were effective, while still allowing them the autonomy to make decisions based on their visions for their schools.

The communications consist of a briefing memo for dissemination to district leadership, along with a PowerPoint presentation outlining my recommendations that have resulted from my research.

Briefing for District Leadership

BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COORDINATOR, and ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Subject: Instructional Coaching Program and Principal Implementation, Recommendations based on research conducted in spring of 2016

Issue: This research study investigated how Surrey Forge Public Schools' vision for instructional coaching was ultimately perceived, interpreted and applied by elementary school principals in a defined geographic area in the district. The assumption underlying my research was that an examination of principal actions and sensemaking around the coaching model could help identify whether consistent implementation was a fundamental issue in the district, and could subsequently be used to determine further actions that could be recommended to the district to strengthen the overall coaching program.

Background: This study focused on the geographic region in the district that had the most schools identified as needing support. Eight schools initially took part in on-line surveys in phase one of the study and then three schools were selected for further research. Interviews were conducted with the principals, instructional coaches, and three teachers at each of the schools. The interviews were then analyzed to examine the role of the principal in implementing and supporting the district coaching model.

Current Status: In all three schools investigated in this study, group coaching practices and individual coaching practices were enacted, but the priorities and time given to both differed from the espoused district model. Individual coaching practices included planning, co-teaching, demonstrating lessons, mentoring and providing resources to teachers. Group practices included professional development, team facilitation, data analysis, planning and providing resources. Coaches also performed administrative duties and provided direct student intervention outside of the coaching framework. How principals prioritized and supported the coaching practices was where the differences were seen among the schools, and the time allocation dictated in the model was not followed in any of the schools. The principals interviewed all expressed feelings of autonomy. They did not feel bound by the district coaching framework or accountable to the district for implementing the model with fidelity. They all perceived, however, that how they used coaching practices in their schools as ultimately being able to achieve the district desired outcomes of improving state test scores and closing achievement gaps.

Recommendations will target improvements to the instructional coaching framework, and to its implementation, in order to maximize how it is being utilized in schools with this resource allocation. It is important to note that this study was conducted in only a few schools in the district. Recommendation six, mentioned below, suggests a broader program evaluation be conducted.

Recommendation(s): The following recommendations are provided to support principals and schools with the implementation of an effective coaching framework.

- *Recommendation One:* Principals should be given the option to shape the coaching framework as needed in each of their schools.
- *Recommendation Two:* The district should have a flexible time allocation for coaching practices in the coaching model.
- *Recommendation Three:* The district should support principals in creating a communication plan to share coaching objectives and outcomes with staff members effectively.
- *Recommendation Four:* The district should support principals with the implementation of successful coaching models by providing on-site school support and opportunities to gather to discuss the coaching program.
- *Recommendation Five:* The district should work with principals to develop a tool that will help evaluate the coaching programs in their schools.
- *Recommendation Six:* The district should embark on a regular cycle of program evaluation for the instructional coaching framework.

Considerations for Recommendation: In addition to providing recommendations, I will also highlight factors to consider in order to implement these recommendations, along with possible barriers to accomplishing my suggestions.

- *Need for Consistent Management*: The instructional coaching program has seen a frequent change-over in coordinators over the past five years. In order to implement these recommendations, there is a need for consistent management of the coaching program over time.

- *Buy-In of Instructional Coach Program*: The district allocates an instructional coach to schools that are struggling with meeting federal accountability standards. Principals may, or may not be, on board with the philosophy of coaching and the belief that coaching practices can increase student achievement. This factor needs to be understood and managed in order to get the most impact from the coaching resource.

- *Money and Time:* In this district, a number of programs and initiative are vying for district funds and attention. In order for these recommendations to be examined and addressed, additional time and staffing need to be devoted to the management of the instructional coaching program so that it can get the consideration needed to ensure faithful implementation across schools in the district.

Summary: Recommendations regarding the instructional coach model, principal professional development, accountability and program evaluation should be considered in order to strengthen the instructional coaching framework in the district and to allow for more consistency across schools in implementing the model.

Slide Show Presentation

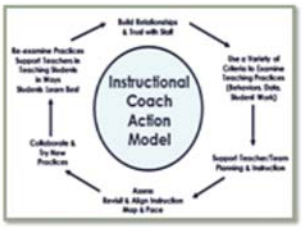
Principal Leadership and Implementation of a District Instructional Coaching Framework

PRESENTATION TO DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

MAY 2017

Problem of Practice

The district coaching action model is clearly articulated and defined by the district, but how it is enacted into each individual school may be different.



Assumptions

Examining principal actions and sensemaking around the coaching model could help...

- identify whether consistent implementation was a fundamental issue

or

- whether the model was flawed in some way

Purposes of Study

- To examine how the district vision for instructional coaching was ultimately understood and applied by elementary school principals in a defined geographic area in the district
- To lend suggestions to those involved in the implementation of the program
- To add to the instructional coaching research base

Overarching Research Question

How does a principal's sensemaking of the district coaching framework influence the coaching practices in the school and teacher sensemaking about coaching?

Research Questions

RQ 1

- In schools that have an instructional coach, how do principals, teachers and coaches make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?
- How do the varied experiences and backgrounds of stakeholders influence, or not influence, how they make sense of the practices of instructional coaching?
- In what ways, if any, are interpretations of the instructional coaching practices consistent and in what ways do interpretations differ?

Research Questions

RQ 2

- What are the instructional coaching practices in elementary schools?
- How do these practices align to the defined coaching framework?

Research Questions

RQ 3

How do elementary school principals organize school structures to support or constrain the intended implementation and objectives of the coaching framework?

Methodology

	Phase One	Phase Two
Location	Sub-district 3	Sub-district 3
Number of Schools	8	3
Data Collection	electronic surveys	semi-structured interviews
Participants	principal, coach, multiple teachers	principal, coach, 3 teachers at each school

Key Findings

Principals Matter in Shaping the Coaching Program

- Shaped and guided the coaching framework based on their backgrounds, beliefs and school vision
- Established strong relationships with the coach
- Made decisions about coaching priorities, time, scheduling and role clarity

Key Findings

Principals' Sensemaking Influenced Implementation

- Experiences with coaching impacted how principals enacted the coaching model
- The model with which they had experience was important
- Collegial and professional conversations influenced sensemaking

Key Findings

Coaching Model Implementation Varied by School

- Principals felt they had autonomy
- Schools differed in the work of the coach, the level of confidentiality of the coach, and the philosophy of the coaching model.
- Not one school felt as though the time allocation dictated by the district model was critical to uphold

Principals can Shape the Coaching Framework
The district should support principals with the implementation of successful coaching models by providing on-site school support and opportunities to gather to discuss the coaching program.
The district should allow principals flexibility in their allocation of coaching time, while still upholding the aim of strengthening adult learning and development.
The district should work with principals to develop a tool that will help evaluate the coaching programs in their schools.
The district should support principals in creating a communication plan to share coaching objectives and outcomes with staff members effectively.

District Actions
The district should embark on a regular cycle of program evaluation for the instructional coaching framework.

Considerations

Need for Consistent Management: There is a need for consistent management of the coaching program over time.

***Buy-In of Instructional Coach Program*:** The district allocates an instructional coach to schools that are struggling with meeting federal accountability standards. Principals may, or may not be, on board with the philosophy of coaching and the belief that coaching practices can increase student achievement. This factor needs to be understood and managed in order to get the most impact from the coaching resource.

Money and Time: In order for these recommendations to be examined and addressed, additional time and staffing needs to be devoted to the management of the instructional coaching program so that it can get the consideration needed to ensure faithful implementation across schools in the district.

Questions?

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Appendix A: Initial Electronic Correspondence for Consent from Principals

Dear *Principal Name*:

I am currently a graduate student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia working on my culminating Capstone project for my Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. In order to fulfill this final requirement, I am researching the SFPS Instructional Coaching Model and how coaching practices are understood and perceived by all stakeholders – principals, teachers, and coaches. I am also interested in how principals work to implement and support coaching practices in their schools.

Because you are currently a principal of an SFPS school that has an instructional coach, I am inviting you, your coach and your staff to participate in this research study by each completing electronic surveys and then possibly follow up interview questions if your school is selected for phase two of my project. My research is sponsored by your assistant superintendent and has been approved by the University of Virginia and Surrey Forge Public Schools.

I anticipate the electronic surveys will require between 10-15 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously. If you agree to participate, you may choose not to answer any given questions, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time.

If selected for phase two, the follow-up interviews will take place individually with you, your coach, and a selection of staff members. Each interview would take about 30-45 minutes and would be conducted at a mutually convenient time.

Please let me know if you are willing to participate by responding to this e-mail. At that point, I will send you further information and the links to the electronic surveys.

Thanks,

Maureen Boland

Appendix B: Follow-Up Correspondences to Participating Schools

E-mail to Principals:
Principal Name,

Thank you for choosing to participate in my doctoral research study. As I said in my initial e-mail, I am currently examining the SFPS Instructional Coaching Model and how coaching practices are understood and perceived by all stakeholders - principals, teachers, and coaches - in schools in sub-district 3 that have instructional coaches.

I ask that you complete the survey I've designed for principals by clicking on the electronic link below. I also ask that you copy the paragraph that section that starts "E-mail to teachers" and send that out to the classroom teachers at your school. I appreciate your help with that and thank you in advance for your support.

I anticipate the survey will require less than 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously. If you agree to participate, you may choose not to answer any given questions, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time. You will indicate your informed consent by clicking on the appropriate box at the start of the electronic survey.

[The distribution of the survey has been approved by the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences, One Morton Dr. Suite 500, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392, Charlottesville, VA, 22908-0392, (434) 924-5999, irbsbshelp@virginia.edu, IRB-SBS #2015-0494.]

Please complete the survey no later than May 15. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me or call703-923-2705.

https://virginiaeducation.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eeRP1jcPtqGKR3D

E-mail to Teachers (distributed by principals): My name is Maureen Boland, and I am a principal and also a graduate student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. For my culminating Capstone project, I am researching the SFPS Instructional Coaching Model and how coaching practices are understood and perceived by all stakeholders – principals, teachers, and coaches. Because you are currently a teacher in a school in sub-district 3 that has an instructional coach, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing an electronic survey and possibly a follow-up interview if you and your school are selected. Your principal has agreed to participate in the study and your Region Assistant Superintendent is sponsoring this project.

I anticipate the survey will require less than 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously. If you agree to participate, you may choose not to answer any given questions, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time. You will indicate your informed consent by clicking on the appropriate box at the start of the electronic survey.

[The distribution of the survey has been approved by the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences, One Morton Dr. Suite 500, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392, Charlottesville, VA, 22908-0392, (434) 924-5999, irbsbshelp@virginia.edu, IRB-SBS #2015-0494.]

If you choose to participate, please click on the survey link below and provide me with your feedback no later than (date). If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail or by calling 703-923-2705.

https://virginiaeducation.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9NoZUKCS2vWZqUl

Thank you,

Maureen Boland

E-mail to Instructional Coaches:
My name is Maureen Boland, and I am a principal and a graduate student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. For my culminating Capstone project, I am researching the SFPS Instructional Coaching Model and how coaching practices are understood and perceived by all stakeholders – principals, teachers, and coaches. Because you are currently an instructional coach in a school in sub-district 3, I am inviting you to

participate in this research study by completing an electronic survey. Your principal has agreed to participate in the study and your assistant superintendent is sponsoring this project.

I anticipate the survey will require less than minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously. If you agree to participate, you may choose not to answer any given questions, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time. You will indicate your informed consent by clicking on the appropriate box at the start of the electronic survey.

[The distribution of the survey has been approved by the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences, One Morton Dr. Suite 500, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392, Charlottesville, VA, 22908-0392, (434) 924-5999, irbsbshelp@virginia.edu, IRB-SBS #2015-0494]

If you choose to participate, please click on the survey link below and provide me with your feedback no later than May 15. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail or by calling 703-923-2705.

https://virginiaeducation.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cwCZXs7HAENuJcF

Thank you,

Maureen Boland

Appendix C: Informed Consent Agreement for On-line Survey

INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Please read this carefully before you decide to participate in this online survey.

This is a study on how Surrey Forge Public School's vision for instructional coaching is ultimately applied and understood in elementary schools in the district. As part of this study, I am conducting a confidential online survey about your school and the instructional coaching program. The survey is completely voluntary, and you may skip any questions you choose. The survey is expected to take between 10 and 15 minutes. There are no anticipated risks, and there are no direct benefits to you for your participation.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study, close your browser window. If you have any questions about the purposes of this study or if you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact Maureen Boland or faculty advisor, David Eddy Spicer, at dhe5f@eservices.virginia.ed. If you have any questions about your rights in this study, contact

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.,
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences One Morton Dr. Suite 500 University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392 Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb
IRB-SBS #2015-0494

I look forward to your perspectives and hope they will provide SFPS with a better understanding of the implementation of the coaching program. I value your insights and hope you will participate.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have ready the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

Agree **Disagree**

You may print out a copy of this page for your records.

Appendix D: Electronic Survey Questions

Principal Survey Questions:

Informed Consent Agreement

1. How many years have you been a principal?
    - This is my first year as a school principal
    - 1-5 years
    - 6-10 years
    - 11-15 years
    - Over 15 years

2. Prior to becoming an administrator, were you an instructional coach?
    - Yes
    - No

3. What are your years of experience with a coaching program at your school
    - This is my first year with a coaching program
    - 1-3 years
    - 3-5 years
    - 6-8 years
    - Over 8 years

4. Please indicate the name of your school
    - Nan Mill ES
    - Tara ES
    - Helenwood ES
    - Stevebrook ES
    - Athens ES
    - Pickett ES
    - St. Charles ES
    - Gramlee ES
    - Twinbrook ES
    - Lawn ES
    - Jomar ES
    - Nutwood ES

5. My coach supports the following content areas
    - Exclusively mathematics
    - Primarily mathematics, but some literacy
    - Exclusively literacy
    - Primarily literacy, but some mathematics
    - Roughly equally literacy and mathematics
    - Other

6. Thinking about the **practice of instructional coaching** at your school, please indicate the extent to which the following are ***important*** to the instructional coaching program. (Highly Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Not that Important, Not Important at All)
    - The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.
    - The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).
    - District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.
    - The confidentiality that my coach must have with teachers and teacher teams.
    - My coach's time being free from work that falls outside of his/her responsibilities.
    - The school's master schedule to allow the coach time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.
    - The contribution of my coach as a member of the administrative team.
    - Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.

7. Thinking about **your school's current approach** to instructional coaching. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
    - I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.
    - The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.
    - The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.
    - There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.
    - The approach of the instructional coach aligns with a shared understanding of coaching practices at my school.
    - The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.

8. Thinking about **your school's culture** and the practices of instructional coaching. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
    - My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.
    - Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.

- Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.
- Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.
- Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.
- Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.
- Teachers have positive feelings about the inclusion of instructional coaching practices to our school program.

Teacher Survey Questions

Informed Consent Agreement

1. How many years have you been a teacher?
    - This is my first year as a teacher
    - 1-5 years
    - 6-10 years
    - 11-15 years
    - Over 15 years

2. Please indicate the name of your school
    - Nan Mill ES
    - Tara ES
    - Helenwood ES
    - Stevebrook ES
    - Athens ES
    - Pickett ES
    - St. Charles ES
    - Gramlee ES
    - Twinbrook ES
    - Lawn ES
    - Jomar ES
    - Nutwood ES

3. Have you ever been an instructional coach?
    - Yes
    - No

4. How would you describe your familiarity with instructional coaching practices and purposes?
    - I am very familiar with what instructional coaching practices are and the purposes of the practices.
    - I am somewhat familiar with what instructional coaching practices are and the purposes of the practices.

- I am really not familiar with what instructional coaching practices are and the purposes of the practices.

5. How many years of experience do you have with an instructional coaching program at your current school or a previous teaching assignment?
    - This is my first year within a school with a coaching program
    - 1-3 years
    - 3-5 years
    - 6-8 years
    - Over 8 years

6. The coach at my school supports the following content areas
    - Exclusively mathematics
    - Primarily mathematics, but some literacy
    - Exclusively literacy
    - Primarily literacy, but some mathematics
    - Roughly equally literacy and mathematics
    - Other

7. Thinking about the practice of instructional coaching at your current school, please indicate the extent to which the following are ***important*** to the instructional coaching program. (Highly Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Not that Important, Not Important at All)
    - The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teacher teams).
    - Coach/Principal support in helping me understand the purpose of the instructional coaching program.
    - The confidentiality that must be maintained between the coach and teachers/teacher teams.
    - The coach having time freed from work that falls outside of the coaching responsibilities.
    - The school's master schedule designed to allow time for the coach to meet with teachers and teacher teams.
    - The contribution of the coach as a member of the administrative team.
    - Faculty/staff members' shared understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.

8. Thinking about your **school's current approach** to instructional coaching. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
    - There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.

- I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.
- The instructional coaching program can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.
- The instructional coaching program can improve student achievement at our school.
- The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.
- Teachers have positive feelings about the inclusion of instructional coaching practices to our school program.

Instructional Coach Survey Questions

Informed Consent Agreement

1. How many years have you been an instructional coach?
    - This is my first year as an instructional coach
    - 1-5 years
    - 6-10 years
    - 11-15 years
    - Over 15 years

2. Please indicate the name of your school
    - Nan Mill ES
    - Tara ES
    - Helenwood ES
    - Stevebrook ES
    - Athens ES
    - Pickett ES
    - St. Charles ES
    - Gramlee ES
    - Twinbrook ES
    - Lawn ES
    - Jomar ES
    - Nutwood ES

3. How many years have you been an instructional coach at your current school?
    - This is my first year as an instructional coach at my school
    - 1-5 years
    - 3-5 years
    - 6-8 years
    - Over 8 years

4. I support teachers in the following content areas
    - Exclusively mathematics
    - Primarily mathematics, but some literacy
    - Exclusively literacy
    - Primarily literacy, but some mathematics
    - Roughly equally literacy and mathematics
    - Other

5. Thinking about the **practice of instructional coaching at your current school**, please indicate the extent to which the following are ***important*** to the instructional coaching program. (Highly Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Not that Important, Not Important at All)
    - The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.
    - The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).
    - District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.
    - The confidentiality that must be maintained with teachers and teacher teams.
    - My time being free from work that falls outside of my coaching responsibilities.
    - The school's master schedule to allow the time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.
    - The support of my principal in implementing the coaching model.
    - The contribution of the coach as a member of the administrative team.
    - Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.

6. Thinking about your **school's current approach** to instructional coaching. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
    - I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.
    - The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.
    - The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.
    - There is a shared understanding at my school of instructional coaching practices.
    - The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on my own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.

7. Thinking about instructional coaching and the **teachers at your school**. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
    - Teachers are committed to continuous learning.
    - Teachers have a high degree of collegial trust.
    - Teachers understand the purposes of instructional coaching.
    - Teachers value how instructional coaching practices contribute to their professional learning.
    - Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.
    - Teachers believe instructional coaching improves their instructional practices.
    - Teachers believe instructional coaching will ultimately increase student achievement.
    - I have good rapport with the teachers at my school.
    - Teachers at my school trust me.

Appendix E: Correspondences for Phase Two Interviews

E-mail to Principals: Thank you so much for your school's participation in Phase 1 of my research. I have examined the survey data from you, your instructional coach, and the [school name staff], and wanted to let you know that based on the preliminary survey data, [school name] looks like an interesting school for me to study more closely. In this second phase of my research on coaching practices, I will be interviewing you, your coach, and 3 teachers for more detailed information. This second phase of my study should take about 30-45 minutes for each individual.

Here are the action items for you:

1. Print out, sign, and scan back or mail back the informed consent form attached.
2. Email me the names of 7 teachers that you think would be a good selection of teachers from your school. From these seven I will select 3 randomly so that their participation will be confidential and they do not need to worry that their answers may be known to you.
3. Check your calendar and let me know of dates that would work for a 30-45 minute interview with you. I know this is a busy time of year, so I want to work around your schedule. I hope to complete the principal interviews by July 1st.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions. I will also be emailing your instructional coach and will cc: you on the correspondence.

E-mail to Instructional Coaches: Thank you so much for your participation in Phase 1 of my research. I have examined the survey data from your school and wanted to let you know that based on the preliminary survey data, [school name] looks like an interesting school for me to study more closely. In this second phase of my research on coaching practices, I will be interviewing you, your principal, and 3 teachers at your school for more detailed information. This second phase of my study should take about 30-45 minutes of your time.

The only action items for you for this phase are to check your calendar and let me know of dates that would work for a 30-45 minute interview with you and to print out, sign and pony or scan back the attached consent form. I know this is a busy time of year, and I want to work around your schedule. I have sent a similar message to your principal, so if you'd like to coordinate times, that would be great, but it's not required. I'd like to finish up coach and teacher interviews by the last day of school, June 27th.

E-mail to Teachers: My name is Maureen Boland, and I am a principal and also a doctoral candidate in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. For my culminating Capstone project, I am researching the SFPS Instructional Coaching Model and how coaching practices are understood and perceived by all stakeholders – principals, teachers, and coaches. You may have already participated in Phase 1 of my research which involved a short survey. From those results, I examined preliminary data

and selected 3 schools to examine more closely. [School name] is one of those schools chosen and your principal has agreed for me to continue with my research.

In this second phase, I will individually be interviewing you and two other teachers, your principal, and the instructional coach at your school. Your principal, [principal name], gave me 7 teacher names and I selected 3 at random for this phase. In order to keep the identity of the teachers selected unknown, [principal name] will not know who I have selected. This second and final phase of my study is an interview that should take about 30-45 minutes of your time.

I am currently scheduled to be at your school on [date]. If this day works for you for an interview, please let me know. If that day and time don't work, please let me know of another time from now until June 27th. I know this is a busy time of year, and I want to work around your schedule.

Your only other action item is to sign the attached informed consent form. You may pony it to me, or scan and email back.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions. My direct line is 703-923-2705.

Appendix F: Informed Consent Protocol for Semi-structured Interviews

Project Title: **Principal Leadership and the Implementation of a District Instructional Coaching Framework**

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Maureen Boland, a student of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. The purpose of the study is to research the perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of Instructional Coaches from the viewpoints of all stakeholders – principals, teachers, and coaches. The results of this study will be included in my culminating Capstone paper for my doctoral degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this interview phase of the study. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time or for any reason. There is no penalty for withdrawing. I expect the interview to take about 30-45 minutes.

- You will not be compensated for this interview.

- Unless you give me permission to use your name, title, and/or quote you in any publications that may result from this research, the information you tell me will be confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in the research paper.

- I would like to record this interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record this interview without your permission. If you do grant permission for this conversation to be recorded, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.

This project will be completed by May 31, 2017. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure workspace until (1 year) after that date. The files will be destroyed after that date.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Maureen Boland, Principal

David Eddy Spicer, Associate Professor
University of Virginia, Curry School of Education
PO Box 400265, Charlottesville, VA 22904
dhe5f@virginia.edu

If you have questions about your rights in the study, contact:
Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr. Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website:
www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Agreement:
I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

IRB-SBS Office Use Only		
Protocol #	**2015-0494**	
Approved	from: **1/13/16**	to: **1/12/17**
SBS Staff		

Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Principal Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the second phase of my study which will look more deeply at the instructional coaching practices in your school. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

1. Thinking about your own experiences and beliefs, tell me about your familiarity and knowledge of the practice of instructional coaching.

2. What is your understanding of what guides the work of the coaches in SFPS? How would you explain to someone who didn't know about instructional coaches, what their practices are within a school setting?

3. How does your coach divide his/her time and how does he/she prioritize responsibilities?

4. Thinking back to the beginning of the year, or to when you first got an instructional coach, is there anything you did to introduce your coach to staff and explain his/her roles?

5. As the school leader, what actions do you have to take to successfully support an instructional coaching program?

6. How receptive have teachers been to the idea of an instructional coaching program? Have any concerns arisen among the teachers in your school? In your opinion, what are the barriers to the coaching model?

7. What strategies do you use during the school year to monitor the work done by your coach?

8. How do the skills and knowledge of the coach factor into the successful implementation of a coaching program?

9. What challenges, if any, has your school experienced in implementing the coaching program? Please consider challenges to your coach, your staff, or yourself in implementing the program as expected.

10. Please describe what you see as the primary impact the coaching framework has on the school.

Instructional Coach Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the second phase of my study which will look more deeply at the instructional coaching practices at your school. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

1. Let's start by having you tell me a little about the coaching practices you employ in this school and the interactions you've had with the teachers and administrators.

2. How do you balance your work during a "typical" work week? How much time do you spend working with teams? Working with individuals? Working on your own professional learning?

3. What major challenges have you encountered as an instructional coach and what strategies and resources (including people) have you used to resolve the issues?

4. What would need to happen (if anything) to maximize implementation of the coaching program/action model at your school?

5. What do you believe has been your greatest success as an instructional coach? How do you know?

6. What kinds of changes in school culture and staff collaboration, instructional practices, or student learning are associated with your work as a coach?

7. If you were in charge of the instructional coaching program, what changes would you make (if any) at the school level and/or district level?

Teacher Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the second phase of my study which will look more deeply at the instructional coaching practices at your school. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

1. Let’s start by having you tell me how you understand instructional coaching? What does the instructional coach do in your school?

2. What guides the work of the coaches in SFPS? How would you explain to someone who didn’t know about instructional coaches what the coaching practices are within a school setting?

3. What kinds of changes in school culture and staff collaboration, instructional practices, or student learning can you attribute to the collaboration with your instructional coach or his/her work in the school?

4. In your opinion, what are the strengths and challenges of having an instructional coaching program at your school?

5. If you were the principal of your school, how would you change (or not change) the instructional coaching program in your building?

Appendix H: Code List for Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Background and Experiences

Instructional Coaching Model

- *Coaching teams (build collaboration/support school capacity)*
  - *Data analysis*
  - *Peer observation*
  - *Facilitate team meetings*
  - *Professional dev.*
  -
- *Coaching individuals (build relationships/support teams)*
  - *Plan*
  - *Co-teach*
  - *Model*
  - *Mentor*
  - *Resource provider*
- *PD for coaches*

Trust/Relationships

Confidentiality

Instructional Practices

Data

Student Achievement/Accountability

Time Allocation for coaching model

Guidance for coaching practices

Understanding/defining coaching practices

Identity as a coach

Admin/coach relationship

Impact (data, instructional practices, collaboration)

Barriers/Challenges

Strengths

Principal Tasks

- Management
- Instructional
- Political

Appendix I: Mean Results of Levels of Importance of Factors to Coaching

*Principal Survey Responses to "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are **important** to the instructional coaching program at your school."*

Question	Highly Imp.	Imp./ Somewhat Important	Not that Imp./Not Important at All	Mean
The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.	5	2	1	4.0
The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).	6	2	0	4.5
District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.	1	4	3	2.5
The confidentiality that my coach must have with teachers and teacher teams.	2	6	0	3.5
My coach's time being free from work that falls outside of his/her responsibilities.	2	5	1	3.25
The school's master schedule to allow the coach time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	3	5	0	3.75
The contribution of my coach as a member of the administrative team.	4	2	2	3.5
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	3	5	0	3.75

Note. Highly important=5, Not important at All = 1

*Coach Survey Responses for the question - "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are **important** to the instructional coaching program at your school."*

Question	Highly Imp.	Imp.	Some what Imp.	Not that Imp.	Not Imp. at All	Mean
The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.	5	3	0	0	0	4.63
The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).	6	2	0	0	0	4.75
District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.	3	3	2	0	0	4.13
The confidentiality that must be maintained with teachers and teacher teams.	8	0	0	0	0	5
My time being free from work that falls outside of my coaching responsibilities	3	4	1	0	0	4.25
The school's master schedule to allow time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	6	1	0	1	0	4.5
The support of my principal in implementing the coaching model.	7	1	0	0	0	4.88
The contribution of the coach as a member of the administrative team.	1	5	1	0	0	4*
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	6	2	0	0	0	4.75

Note. Highly important=5, Not important at All = 1 n=8, * n=7

Teacher Survey: *Responses for the question – "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are **important** to the instructional coaching program at your school."*

Question	Highly Imp.	Important	Somewhat Important	Not that Important	Not Important at All	Mean
The defined SFPS practices of instructional coaching (supporting teachers and teams).	45	37	14	1	0	4.3*
Coach/principal support in helping me understand the purpose of the instructional coaching program.	23	41	27	5	2	3.8
The confidentiality that must be maintained between the instructional coach and teachers/teacher teams.	59	30	7	0	2	4.47
The school's master schedule to allow time for the instructional coach to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	61	27	6	2	2	4.46
The contribution of the instructional coach as a member of the administrative team.	29	40	25	3	1	3.95
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	35	49	10	2	1	4.19*

Note. Highly important=5, Not important at All = 1 n=98, * n=97

Appendix J: Means Results of Levels of Agreement with Aspects of Coaching

Principal Survey: *Responses for the question - "Thinking about **your school's current approach** to instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	7	1	0	0	3.88
The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	6	2	0	0	3.75
The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.	6	2	0	0	3.75
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	3	5	0	0	3.38
The approach of the instructional coach aligns with a shared understanding of coaching practices at my school.	5	3	0	0	3.63
The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.	4	4	0	0	3.5

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1, *n = 8*

Coach Survey: *Responses for the question - "Thinking about **your school's current approach** to instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	7	1	0	0	3.88
The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	6	2	0	0	3.75
The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.	7	1	0	0	3.88
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	0	7	1	0	2.88

The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on my own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.	3	1	4	0	2.88

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1, *n*=8

Teacher Survey: *Responses to teacher agreement about statements made regarding instructional coaching*

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	36	45	13	4	3.15
Instructional coaching practices can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	57	33	5	1	3.52
Instructional coaching practices can improve student achievement at our school.	53	35	9	1	3.43
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	14	61	20	2	2.9*
The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.	13	49	28	8	2.68
Teachers have positive feelings about the inclusion of instructional coaching practices to our school program.	25	48	21	3	2.98*

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1, n=98, * n=97

Appendix K: Mean Results for School Culture and Approaches to Coaching

Principal Survey: *Responses for the question - "Thinking about **your school's culture** and the practices of instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.	2	6	0	0	3.25
Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.	3	5	0	0	3.38
Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.	5	2	1	0	3.5
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	5	2	1	0	3.5
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.	4	3	1	0	3.38
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.	3	4	1	0	3.25
Teachers have positive feelings about the inclusion of instructional coaching practices to our school program.	5	3	0	0	3.63

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1

Teacher Survey: *Responses for the question - "Thinking about **your school's culture** and the practices of instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.	18	63	17	1	2.99
Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.	41	57	0	1	3.39
Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.	25	57	16	1	3.07
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	27	58	12	1	3.13*

Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.	21	58	17	1	3.02**
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.	21	57	19	1	3.00*

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1 n=99, *n=98, **n=97

Coach Agreement of Teachers' Perception of Coaching Practices

Coach Survey: *Responses for the question – "Thinking about instructional coaching and the **teachers at your school**, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Teachers are committed to continuous learning.	4	3	1	0	3.38
Teachers have a high degree of collegial trust.	1	6	1	0	3.0
Teachers understand the purposes of instructional coaching.	0	7	1	0	2.88
Teachers value how instructional coaching practices contribute to their professional learning.	1	7	0	0	3.13
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	4	4	0	0	3.5
Teachers believe instructional coaching improves their instructional practices.	2	6	0	0	3.25
Teachers believe instructional coaching will ultimately increase student achievement.	2	5	1	0	3.13
I have good rapport with the teachers at my school.	4	4	0	0	3.5
Teachers at my school trust me.	3	5	0	0	3.38

Note. Strongly agree=4, Strongly disagree = 1, *n*=8

Appendix L: Coach/Principal Data Comparison: Pickett ES

Pickett ES

*Responses to the question - "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are **important** to the instructional coaching program at your school."*

Question	Prin.	Coach
The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.	Highly Imp.	Imp.
The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp.
District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.	Imp.	Imp.
The confidentiality that my coach must have with teachers and teacher teams.	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp
My coach's time being free from work that falls outside of his/her responsibilities.	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp
The school's master schedule to allow the coach time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp.
The contribution of my coach as a member of the administrative team.	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp.
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp.

*Responses to the question - "Thinking about **your school's current approach** to instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Principal	Coach
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	Agree	Agree
The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.	Strongly Agree	Disagree

*Responses to the question - "Thinking about **your school's culture** and the practices of instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Principal	Coach
My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.	Agree	Agree

Appendix M: Coach/Principal Data Comparison: Gramlee ES

Gramlee Elementary

*Responses to the question - "Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following are **important** to the instructional coaching program at your school."*

Question	Prin.	Coach
The SFPS Instructional Coaching Program Action Model.	Not Imp. at All	Imp.
The practices of instructional coaching as defined by SFPS (supporting teachers and teams).	Highly Imp.	Highly Imp.
District support in helping me understand and implement the coaching framework.	Not Imp. at All	Somewhat Imp.
The confidentiality that my coach must have with teachers and teacher teams.	Imp.	Highly Imp
My coach's time being free from work that falls outside of his/her responsibilities.	Not Imp. at All	Somewhat Imp.
The school's master schedule to allow the coach time to meet with teachers and teacher teams.	Imp.	Highly Imp.
The contribution of my coach as a member of the administrative team.	Highly Imp.	Imp.
Faculty/staff members' understanding of the purpose of instructional coaching.	Imp.	Highly Imp.

*Responses to the question - "Thinking about **your school's current approach** to instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Principal	Coach
I feel instructional coaching is an integral part of our school's professional learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree
The instructional coaching framework can strengthen teachers' instructional practices.	Strongly Agree	Agree
The instructional coaching framework can improve student achievement at our school.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
There is a shared understanding of instructional coaching practices.	Strongly Agree	Disagree
The defined allocation of time (60% supporting teacher teams, 30% supporting individual teachers, and 10% on the coach's own professional	Agree	Disagree

development) is the reality of the coaching program at my school.

*Responses to the question - "Thinking about **your school's culture** and the practices of instructional coaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements."*

Question:	Principal	Coach
My school has a high level of trust among teacher colleagues.	Agree	Agree
Teachers at my school are committed to continuous learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers value the contribution of instructional coaching to their professional learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers value the expertise of an instructional coach.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach improves their instructional practices.	Strongly Agree	Agree
Teachers believe their work with an instructional coach will ultimately increase student achievement.	Strongly Agree	Agree