Spring 3-31-2020

How Experienced High School Teachers Perceive the Effects of an Instructional Coaching Program on Their Pedagogical Strategies

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Instructional Leadership

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2020

Abstract

A leading influence on teachers' pedagogical strategies is the ongoing professional support provided by an instructional coaching program. However, due to competing needs, not all teachers receive the same amount of instructional coaching attention. More is known about the influence that instructional coaching programs have on new teachers and less about the benefits received by experienced teachers. The purpose of this study was to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. Research questions also addressed how an instructional coaching program effected other areas of teacher performance and how teachers perceive the implementation of the program at their site. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used so that 10 participants could share their unique story with an instructional coaching program. Lewin's theory on change management, Knowles's ideas on adult learning, and Bandura's self-efficacy model helped guide this study. From classroom observations, questionnaires, and interview responses, four major themes emerged: alternative coaching supports, improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties. Results of this study revealed that all teachers positively perceive the concept of instructional coaching and most perceive that program implementation was working at their site, primarily for new teachers. However, results also showed that only a few experienced high school teachers perceive the coaching program to influence their pedagogical strategies. Findings from this study indicate that experienced teachers value coaching conversations to improve the quality of their pedagogical strategies.

Keywords: experienced teacher, instructional coaching, pedagogical strategies

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to experienced teachers of every grade level, who remain resolute in their efforts to make learning meaningful and relevant to all the diverse students in their classrooms, and who advance in their careers with an enthusiasm to keep growing and learning.

Acknowledgements

The goal of completing this dissertation work would not have been realized without the commitment of my advisor, Dr. Christopher Maddox. He provided the critical feedback I needed to get better at the research and writing process; he gave me praise so that I could still see my strengths during adverse times; and he regularly reassured me of his belief in me. A sincere thank you to my committee members, Dr. Karen Ellefsen and Dr. LaToya Thomas-Dixon. I also wish to acknowledge my family whose love, humor, and understanding helped keep the dream alive and the work more manageable. To my friends from years past and to those whose acquaintance I have only recently made, I thank you for the healthy distractions and for the interest you showed in my work. Finally, to the educational leader and instructional coach extraordinaire, Teresa R, whose unparalleled wisdom, love, and guidance helped me stay the course.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Quality instructional coaching programs function as a vital integrant of teacher and student learning. Substantial research demonstrates the effectiveness of instructional coaching on the pedagogical strategies used by teachers (Callahan, 2016; Dewitt, 2017; Hattie, 2009; Knight 2016). However, researchers have focused more on the benefits that coaching has on the instructional practices of teachers new to the profession and less on the effects that coaching has on experienced teachers (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). This is partly because of the prevalent assumption that experienced teachers have reached a heightened level of skill and expertise and therefore do not really need to be coached (Knight, 2015). Additionally, more instructional coaching attention falls on newer teachers simply because of the mentoring needs that teachers have early in their careers (DeWitt, 2017). However, the focus may be intensified due to the nationwide shortage of qualified teachers and the sense of urgency that principals must retain teachers (Sutcher, Carver-Thomas, & Darling-Hammond, 2018).

Instructional coaching is most effective when aligned with desired school and district organizational outcomes (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Knight, 2005). When the coach's roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined within a larger state or district accountability plan, then the value, function, and productivity of instructional coaching increases (DeWitt, 2017; Senge et al., 2012). The target student performance goals and outcomes of an accountability plan help district leaders and principals prioritize the work of instructional coaches (DeWitt, 2017). When there is a continued focus on student learning, instructional coaches can use student performance assessments and other progress monitoring data to guide professional development and one-one one coaching conversations with teachers. These opportunities are designed to grow and develop the pedagogical strategies of teachers in an effort to positively impact student learning (DeWitt,

2017; Fullan, 2011; Hattie, 2007; Senge et al., 2012). Exploring how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies provides insight into the effectiveness of the program and its impact on teaching and learning, which can then be used to ensure that site leaders and coaches are progressing toward targeted instructional goals.

Teachers who help students grow as learners engage in a continuous teaching and learning cycle of goal setting, planning, implementation, and reflection (Desimone & Pak, 2016; DeWitt, 2017; Knight 2017; Wang, 2017; Woulfin & Rigby; 2016). Even though teachers may have a clear understanding of the content they need to teach, they may not always know the best approach to use in order to teach the content effectively. While the stagnation and repetition of ineffective instructional strategies may not necessarily be harmful to students, these practices do little to move learning forward (Desimone & Pak, 2016; DeWitt, 2017; Hattie, 2009). When attention is placed on improving the pedagogical knowledge base of teachers and in developing their pedagogical reasoning and action, then there is noticeable improvement to teacher performance and student learning (Shulman, 1987).

Instructional coaches are individuals who address whole school, organizational improvement by targeting the quality of instruction being carried out by all teachers, regardless of the content matter (Knight, 2005). Larger districts or districts with more substantial funding also may hire content coaches. Content coaches such as literacy coaches, technology coaches, or math coaches, use many of the same coaching techniques as instructional coaches, but they primarily focus on the instructional strategies of teachers in a specific content area (Knight, 2005). Through ongoing teaching and learning inquiry cycles, instructional coaches support teachers in the improvement of their pedagogical strategies by acting as thinking partners, as

providers of effective monitoring and feedback, as cheerleaders, as observers, and as sources of valuable information (Knight, 2005, 2016). Creating a school culture where all teachers feel comfortable and willing to connect with their instructional coach requires an ongoing, system wide approach to leadership, a continued focus on student learning, and a commitment to support teachers in the development and growth of their instructional practices (DeWitt, 2017; Knight, 2005). In this hermeneutic phenomenological study, I will explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of instructional coaching on their pedagogical strategies.

Chapter 1 begins with an introduction to the background and development of instructional coaching in the United States. Also included in the chapter is an explanation of the purpose of the study, the problem statement, and the research questions, all of which provide direction for the process of inquiry and exploration. In addition, the conceptual framework is used to link the foundational theories of organizational change, adult learning, and self-efficacy with existing ideas around instructional coaching. Following, the significance of the study and the implications it has on future research are justified. In order to further educate the reader, a list of important terms used throughout the dissertation, as well as their definitions, is provided. Finally, I outline the existing assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study.

Background, Context, History and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Since the end of the 20th century, when instructional demands in education outpaced the delivery of quality instructional leadership from a single principal, educational leaders designed school accountability plans that included an instructional coach position (Knight, 2005). Instructional coaches emerged to carry out the instructional leadership practices that were being neglected and as a way to indirectly improve student academic performance through high quality teacher instruction. At the outset, the purpose of instructional coaching was for the coaches and

the teachers to form a meaningful partnership, leading to embedded professional development as well as ongoing customized refinement of sound pedagogical teaching strategies (Knight, 2005). Through a cycle of feedback, coaches supported teachers in making instructional decisions based on data, identifying learning targets, planning instructional strategies, and reflecting on ways to improve instruction (Knight, 2005).

The nationally recognized Reading First Program, enacted by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, initially brought literacy coaches into the educational spotlight (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). In order to receive funding from the Reading First program, state educational leaders proposed improvement plans that incorporated scientifically based research strategies aimed at improving literacy instruction in teachers and reading competency in students. Program designers emphasized the use of literacy coaches as an effective reading strategy option (Deussen et al., 2007). Literacy coaches were tasked with analyzing literacy data and making improvements to literacy instruction. The successful use of coaches in the Reading First program led school leaders, policy makers, and other stakeholders to recognize the value of coaches in improving literacy instruction as well as in retaining high quality teachers (Deussen et al.). As new initiatives and strategies aimed at improving reading took hold, so did an abundance of pre- and in-service trainings. Traditionally, these trainings came in the form of one day workshops, with a focus on a certain skill or strategy, or on content knowledge. Yet what Joyce and Showers (1982) had suggested decades earlier regarding professional development, was that the information in the trainings would not stick if there was no built- in time for reflection, practice, and application. Authors of the Reading First Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2008) pushed for literacy coaches to provide ongoing job embedded professional development with a focus on improved reading instruction (Deussen et al., 2007).

Educational leaders, both those experiencing the Reading First program directly and those monitoring the effects of the program from the periphery, touted the benefits of coaching. There was a collective realization that, without support school leaders could not make the necessary improvements to the pedagogical understanding and practices of teachers that were needed for academic student success (Deussen et al., 2007). Chronologically coinciding with the Reading First program, was the pivotal research of Jim Knight (2005) on the impact of instructional coaching. Knight presented qualitative and quantitative findings that revealed the ineffectiveness of traditional professional development on teacher instruction. Furthermore, through his studies, Knight (2005) highlighted the need for teachers to be empowered to make critical decisions on how to improve their practice while simultaneously decrease any impressions of being overwhelmed by everyday tasks related to the demands of the job. Knight (2005) positioned the role of instructional coach as one of the key components to organizational change and successful school reform. Knight's continued work with Kansas Coaching Project at the Center for Research on Learning through the University of Kansas elevated the culture of coaching to be more universally accepted and coaching programs to be more effectively implemented.

Evolving theories of educational leadership played an integral piece in the development and proliferation of the instructional coaching role. A few notable theories that influenced the history of instructional coaching are management theory, relationship theory and distributed leadership theory. The management theory of the 1980s was a top down leadership approach based on the notion that leaders maintained rather than changed the working structures of an organization (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Leaders using this transactional model, stressed a direct chain of command from leader to follower, as well as a clear system of rewards and

punishments in relation to the level that followers obeyed rules set by the leader (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Leaders using a management approach were less inclined to accept growth as a measurement of success, as is recognized by the coaching mindset (Knight, 2005).

In contrast, the relationship theory of the 1990s generated a wave of transformational leaders who valued the input of the group when making decisions, and who energized others through their passion and commitment to a more democratic leadership style (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). From this theory, educational leaders gained a deeper understanding of the importance of innovating and improving schools together as opposed to having one powerful leader making all the decisions. An extension of the transformational leadership theory is the concept of distributed leadership. The distributed leadership perspective centers on the work and management of all organizational team members rather than just on the formal leaders (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). The theory is grounded in the interactions of the leaders, the followers, and aspects of the situation that drive specific leadership practice and decision making. In many instances, instructional coaches carry out the work of a school leader, but do not have an official title that gives them credibility equal to that of a principal (Knight, 2005). The distributed leadership theory opened the door for co-leadership roles and coordinated distribution of leadership responsibilities, thereby solidifying instructional coaches as credible, non-evaluative leaders in the school community (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). While this leadership theory is still gaining momentum in the educational landscape, leaders who plan for goal attainment, change, and improvement using a distributed leadership model, align the work of the instructional coach more closely with the larger school vision (Fullan, 2011; Knight, 2005; Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Considering principals across the country are at different points in establishing concepts of a leadership model into practice, there is no one set of responsibilities that remains consistent as to the successful performance of all instructional coaches at varying sites. However, the effort of instructional coaches to improve pedagogical understanding and instructional techniques in teachers, regardless of the leadership model in place, remains at the forefront of conversations around coaching (DeWitt, 2017).

Organizational change, adult learning, and self-efficacy are foundational themes of instructional coaching (Fullan, 2011; Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2005). These themes are interconnected and are relevant to how instructional coaches affect instructional practices and pedagogical decision making in experienced high school teachers. The role of the instructional coach is part of a larger, more complex, leadership framework designed to implement sustainable organizational change and to redistribute instructional leadership responsibilities from the principal, to other middle leaders, such as coaches (Knight, 2005). Underlying organizational change in schools is the strive toward educational excellence (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Educational excellence is no longer equated with just high student test scores, but rather is considered an ongoing professional process of improvement based on collaboration and inquiry (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Senge et al., 2012). Educational leaders who rely on transformative and instructional leadership practices based on collaboration and inquiry, often include the role of instructional coach in the process (Fullan, 2011; Knight, 2005; Spillane, 2007). With support from the instructional coach, site principals can move the school organization closer to goal attainment, and ideally into visible educational excellence.

When the district vision, the school improvement goals, and the instructional coaching practices align with one another, then teachers are more apt to alter their behavior and work

toward collective improvement (Lewin, 1948). More specifically, instructional coaches use researched techniques based on adult learning, that allow teachers to reflect on their own practice and act on the changes they deem worthy and meaningful (Knowles, 1980). The coaching cycle also allows teachers to arrive at a mastery learning experience through deliberate informal learning opportunities. A combination of internal and external factors can put school leaders on track for seeking change, improvement, and growth in their organization as a means of attaining educational excellence. The alignment between the vision of a district, a structured site leadership plan, and a clear model for teacher improvement influences the degree of impact instructional coaches have on teachers (Knight, 2009).

After an outstanding period of standardization and top-down reform strategies, with insignificant returns, school leaders turned to new models of leadership for guidance (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Current leadership models, such as distributed leadership (Spillane, 2007) and transformational leadership (Burns, 2010) include system wide educational improvement leadership practices that are rooted in traditional theories of sustainable organizational change and teacher growth (Fullan, 2013; Knight, 2009; Senge et al., 2012). Lewin's (1951) change management model, Knowles's (1973) theory of andragogy, and Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy model all confront the interconnecting themes found in instructional coaching and guide this study on how instructional coaches effect the instructional practices and pedagogical decision making of experienced teachers.

Lewin (1948) argued that patterns leading to individual behavioral change can be applied to larger systems. Lewin believed that change occurs when the physical and psychological environment is structured or understood in a way that promotes and maintains change (Lewin, 1936). In his change management theory, Lewin (1948) described the process of collective

change in an organization as stages of *unfreeze*, *change*, and *refreeze*. The unfreeze stage is when preparation for the upcoming change takes place. During this stage, the leader direct organizational members to examine their core values and to recognize why some existing practices may no longer serve the goals and values of the organization. The change stage is when a transformation in collective behavior occurs; internal and external forces push organizational members to change their thinking and alter their behavior, thereby producing a different outcome to a change initiative (Lewin, 1948). The final stage is when the change is sustained, new behavior becomes automatic, and learning happens. During the refreeze stage, members realize how and why their changed behavior leads to organizational goal attainment. Lewin (1948) attested that through this change process, leaders build organizational capacity and prepare members for future change initiatives.

According to Knowles's (1973) theory of andragogy, adults learn differently than children. When teachers of adults recognize and attend to adult learning needs, then job satisfaction and motivation tend to increase (Knowles, 1980). Furthermore, adult learners benefit from a built-in reflection component to learning so that they have time to process what they do and do not understand (Knowles, 1980). In addition, Knowles (1973) emphasized the importance of informal learning as a way for adults to attain a mastery experience and stated that informal learning experiences should be valued equally to formal learning experiences. When an adult feels success through a mastery experience, then there is desire to want to repeat the behavior, work at the same caliber or higher, and continue feeling success organization (Knowles, Swanson, & Holton, 2005). Meeting adult learning needs results in increased participation on organizational tasks, increased goal setting and achieving, and more positive outcomes for the culture of the organization (Knowles et al., 2005).

Knowles (1973) proposed five assumptions that are important to understanding the adult learning experience. Instructional coaching is founded on specific communication tenets (Knight, 2005, 2011) that correspond with the assumptions of adult learning popularized by Knowles (1973). The instructional coaching approach presents techniques that honor the independence, the prior knowledge, the developmental level, the reasons, and the self-motivation of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973). According to Knight (2005, 2011), when teacher and coach partner through a 6–12-week coaching cycle, then optimal adult learning experiences can occur, and classroom instructional practices can improve. Coaches who skillfully move the teacher through the coaching cycle are conscious of the importance of the informal learning opportunities at hand. As noted by Knowles (1973), informal learning, over time, can lead to a mastery experience and to the adoption of new behaviors, in this case new teaching habits directed at improved student learning.

Knight (2005, 2016) explained the coaching cycle in a series of steps: the teacher commits to a change or improvement they would like to see in student learning; the teacher plans with intentionality around a strategy or lesson that supports the improvement; the teacher measures and studies the change in growth or knowledge of student performance, and finally the teacher readjusts the instruction based on student need. The coach refrains from supplying the teacher with information on how to do each step, but rather helps the teacher arrive at an understanding of what they need to do, in order to be successful at each step. When working through a coaching cycle, teachers are informally learning how to work through challenges and refine their practice.

In his self-efficacy theory, Bandura (1977, 1995) addressed improvement and behavioral change through the filter of personal belief. Bandura (1977) anchored his conclusions on change

and personal improvement in social-cognitive theory; he claimed that only a small portion of an individual's successful task performances are the result of observational learning and modeling. Comparatively, Bandura (1995) acknowledged that the majority of successful task completion is attributed to a person's strong conviction and personal belief in themselves and in their ability to accomplish a task or solve a problem. For this reason, a person's level of self-efficacy is directly related to their motivation level and their ability to attain goals. Comparably to Knowles (1980), Bandura (1995) believed that the more a person experiences what accomplishment feels like, the more likely they are to change their behavior in an effort to repeat the feeling of satisfaction associated with the success of performing the task. In his work, Bandura (1995) perceived efficacy to be a main contributor to motivation and goal attainment of an individual, and ultimately to be one of the main factors necessary for learning.

Knight (2005, 2016) asserted that when coaches maintain strong levels of personal efficacy, then they can also demonstrate collective efficacy. As explained by Hattie (2009), collective efficacy is one's belief in others to perform tasks to the best of their ability. Collective efficacy is an essential instructional coach attribute (Knight, 2005). In a teacher-coach partnership, the more an instructional coach believes in the teacher, the greater chance of an increased level of self-efficacy on the teacher's part and the more likely they are to want to play an active role in helping the school leaders reach improvement goals. Schools benefit from increased levels of personal and collective efficacy. Individuals and organizations with strong efficacy look at failure as an opportunity for growth and act when improvement is needed (Hattie, 2009). In addition, individuals and organizations with high efficacy can replicate their mastery experiences so that they are ready to take on future challenges, and not continue to revisit the same challenges over again.

Statement of the Problem

The phenomenon of successfully and effectively providing experienced high school teachers with adequate pedagogical support is of interest to curriculum directors, school principals, and teachers. Due to the increased demands and pressures placed on teachers as well as changes in leadership structures over the past decade, more sites call on instructional coaches to service teachers and to help distribute instructional leadership responsibilities (Kraft & Balzar, 2018). Yet the expectations placed on instructional coaches vary, depending on the needs of the school site and the principal's leadership style. Due to a lack of consistency in prioritizing coaching responsibilities and implementing a coherent leadership model inclusive of instructional coaching, coaches are prevented from being able to provide teachers with the support they need (Kraft & Balzar, 2018; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Without proper supports, teachers may negatively perceive the impact of their teaching and feel unable to keep up with the growing demands of the job. The effects of a breakdown in coaching priorities is even more noticeable at schools where teacher turnover is high and there is a large concentration of new teachers (Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Instructional coaches are often pulled to service the needs of new teachers while simultaneously they are expected to support and advance the work of experienced teachers. This dissertation centers on the problem that experienced high school teachers are not provided with the instructional coaching support they need because there are too many expectations placed on instructional coaches making it difficult for them to effectively support all teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on

their pedagogical strategies. Past research has widely focused on how leadership models support the instructional abilities and identities of new teachers, specifically those transitioning from a teacher credentialing program or those within their first 5 years in the classroom (Sebastian, Huang, & Allensworth, 2017; Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). Authors Sebastian, Huang, and Allensworth (2017) also pointed out that more experienced teachers may be overlooked by instructional coaches because of their seniority status or because of assumptions that experienced teachers already possess the skills and knowledge needed for effective instruction. This oversight may cause experienced teachers to interact less with coaches and receive fewer benefits that instructional coaching can provide. Considering coaches give more of their attention to new teachers, little is known about how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional program on the development of their pedagogical strategies. Experienced high school teachers from an area in the Pacific Northwest were observed and interviewed as a way to explore their perceptions of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies?
2. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance?
3. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

The rationale for this research study was to find out how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. Husserl, (1977) believed that in order to understand any phenomena, it is paramount to study the complex world views held by those experiencing the phenomena. By employing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Husserl, 1977), I allowed teachers an opportunity to share their beliefs, feelings, and experiences, and to reflect upon changes to their instructional practices, as a result of instructional coaching. As the sole researcher, I explored factors related to the topic of instructional coaching support as perceived first-hand from the teacher participants and as they aligned to the essential research questions presented.

Significant to a hermeneutic phenomenological research design is the relevance between the conceptual framework, existing literature, and the concrete events that teacher participants of the study experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Understanding how the abstract concepts of organizational change theory (Lewin, 1948), adult learning theory (Knowles, 1973), and the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) are interpreted by instructional coaches and furthermore, how the coaches' beliefs and behaviors, based on these theories, are perceived by teacher participants, is essential to understanding the intentionality and relevance of this research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through interpretive analysis of the research findings, I gained a better understanding of how experienced teachers within a given region and context, think about instructional coach supports as they relate to improving pedagogical strategies.

Practical implications of this study relate to assisting district leaders, principals, and instructional coaches to make informed decisions about the quality and effectiveness of instructional coaching programs. These efforts could come in the form of system wide

organizational changes, changes to new teacher mentoring practices, and even changes to supports for late career teachers. Since instructional coaching is still a relatively new phenomena in education, many school administrators still only know of coaching in a decontextualized manner and are unfamiliar with the perspectives of teachers, especially those of experienced teachers (Knight, 2018; Stephenson, Giles, & Bissaker, 2018). When examining specific pockets of teachers who are positively influenced by instructional coaching, the vast amounts of researchers emphasize the impact that coaching has on new teachers, or simply delineate elementary and secondary teachers (Knight, 2005; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Shifting focus so that instructional coaches make time for early, mid, and late career teachers can serve as a means to providing mentorship and avoiding teacher burnout (Hunzicker, 2017). Therefore, findings of this study are significant to the ways in which principals purposefully prioritize the roles and responsibilities of coaches so that instructional support is provided to all teachers, regardless of how many years of experience they have. Furthermore, new findings of the study can add to the body of literature on the topic of instructional coaching.

Definition of Terms

When reading about how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies, an explanation of certain terms may help the reader understand and interpret concepts related to aspects of organizational change, instructional coaching, and adult learning. The following technical terms and definitions are provided as a reference and are used throughout the dissertation:

Andragogy: This term is defined as the principles and methods used to teach adult learners (Knowles, 1973).

Beginning teacher / New teacher: This term is defined as a teacher with 1–5 years of experience (Masuda, Ebersole, & Barrett, 2013).

Distributed leadership: This term is defined as a theoretical leadership design based on communication and trust whereby those other than the principal perform decision making around a common goal (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Experienced teacher / Late career: This term is defined as a teacher with 10 years or more of credentialed classroom experience (Masuda, Ebersole, & Barrett, 2013).

Instructional coach: This term is defined as an educational professional who assists classroom teachers to better understand critical instructional pedagogy that is student centered and data driven (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2005).

Impact Cycle for Coaching: This term is defined as a three-part cycle where instructional coaches and individual teachers: work in partnership to identify an area of teaching or learning improvement; work in partnership to learn about new strategies, materials, and resources that could be useful; and work in partnership to monitor progress on and impact of the implemented teaching strategy (Knight, 2017).

Midcareer teacher: This term is defined as a teacher with 6–9 years of experience (Masuda, Ebersole, & Barrett, 2013).

Pedagogical strategies: This term is defined as innovative thinking and action around instructional techniques that promote access to information for all learners (Ozmantar & Akkoc, 2017).

Pedagogical content knowledge: This term is defined as a knowledge base framework that integrates what teachers know about teaching, what they know about the content, and the skills to teach clearly and effectively (Ozmantar & Akkoc, 2017).

Self-efficacy: This term is defined as a personal belief about one's ability to organize and complete a task (Bandura, 1977).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Underlying this study were the following assumptions. First, it was assumed that participants would provide honest responses to the background survey, the lesson strategy questionnaire, and to interview questions. In addition, there were philosophical assumptions related to the methodological research process. The methods in this research were inductive and emerging, as they depended on the researcher's experiences and responses while collecting data. It is assumed then, that my interactive role as the researcher influenced the direction of the study, making it less generalizable, but still applicable to similar phenomena. A final assumption was that the time allotted for the study would be enough for the three methods of data collection.

The hermeneutic phenomenological research design of this study posed certain limitations. Due to the interactive nature of qualitative research, my role as the researcher, and therefore my world views may have influenced the course of the research process and subtly skewed the survey or interview responses provided by participants (Creswell, 2013). While sample findings from qualitative research may be more comprehensive on one hand, they may also be less accurate than if they we analyzed quantitatively (Creswell, 2013).

This study was delimited to experienced high school teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience, and to those who also had access to an instructional coach. Another delimiting variable considered was the number of new teachers at the site from where the experienced teacher participants came, as this may have influenced the amount of time instructional coaches gave to teachers with more experience. New teachers are teachers within their first 5 years of teaching or those with no credential, but in an induction program. This study

represents perceptions articulated by teachers from four different high schools in one small region of the Pacific northwest. Instructional coaching practices in this district have existed for 9 years. The actual number of years teaching, gender, age, and marital status of teacher participants may have influenced how they perceive coaching as well as their interest in improving their pedagogical understanding.

Summary

This hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of instructional coaching on their pedagogical strategies. Previous researchers (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2015) highlighted the importance of instructional coaches on growing the pedagogical strategies of teachers. Yet while considerable research has been conducted on the benefits that instructional coaches have on teachers new to the profession (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, and Coccaro, 2017), limited literature exists depicting how experienced high school teachers are affected by the work of instructional coaches. The problem statement was identified as there being too many expectations placed on instructional coaches without systematic prioritization of responsibilities, thereby inhibiting quality instructional coaching support to both new and experienced teachers.

I established the foundational need for instructional coaches by providing background information on instructional coaching programs and introducing the conceptual framework, centered on the work of Kurt Lewin's (1951) change management theory, Malcom Knowles's (1950) adult learning theory, and Albert Bandura's (1973) self-efficacy theory. The research questions were also presented in Chapter 1 and focused on how teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies, the effects on their general performance as a teacher, and the implementation of the program at their site. Data collection

procedures were outlined with direct alignment to the research problem and questions. Then, I further conveyed the rationale of my study and the practical implications that it has on assisting district leaders, principals, and instructional coaches to make informed decisions about the quality and effectiveness of instructional coaching programs.

Following this introduction are chapters on the review of literature, the methodology, the data analysis and results, and the discussion and conclusion. In Chapter 2, I review literature that is relevant to organizational change in schools, to the instructional coaching model, and to the identity of experienced teachers. In Chapter 3, I describe the qualitative method used to explore teachers' perceptions of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies and in Chapter 4 I present an overview of the data analysis and results from teacher questionnaire responses, lesson plan documentation, and interview transcripts. Finally, in Chapter 5, I summarize the results, discuss the relevance of the results to information found in current literature, and make recommendations for actionable steps moving forward.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Effective instructional coaching programs have the potential to positively impact student learning by transforming the instructional practices of teachers (Knight, 2018). Literature pertaining to experienced high school teachers' perceptions of the effects of an instructional program on their pedagogical strategies will be reviewed in this chapter. Machi and McEvoy (2016) stated that the purpose of a literature review is to intentionally advance a position on a topic by using credible evidence found in existing research. Furthermore, Creswell (2013), Machi and McEvoy (2016), and Ravitch and Riggan (2017) each asserted that the literature review is a comprehensive process of documenting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions about what is currently known about a topic. During this process, I will investigate current research on instructional coaching programs, examine articles for relevance and reoccurring themes, and interpret the information in order to formulate reasons in support of the original research question (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). Through the literature review process, I also aim to gain foundational knowledge on topics related to instructional coaching, such as organizational change and adult learning that will assist me in understanding the perspectives of experienced teachers (Creswell, 2013).

Within Chapter 2 is a description of the strategies used to search and identify literature on the topic of instructional coaching. I continue by providing a conceptual framework for the study and describe how instructional coaching is grounded in the thinking of theorists on organizational change (Lewin, 1951), adult learning (Knowles, 1973), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Following the conceptual framework is the review of literature; in this section I present emerging themes on what is currently understood about instructional coaching based on

previous research (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). Finally, an analysis on the methodological issues is presented to summarize the research designs of past studies as well as research findings.

Literature Search Strategy

Machi and McEvoy (2016) asserted that prior to building a logical argument, it is imperative to examine, synthesize, and analyze evidence that supports the research thesis. The literature search is a way to collect and organize the relevant evidence. In researching literature related to instructional coaching, I concentrated on peer refereed, scholarly articles published since 2015. I retrieved primary source information from the ERIC, Taylor and Francis Online, SAGE Premier, and ProQuest databases, accessed through the Concordia University Library. To gain clearer insight into the complexities of instructional coaching, I conducted an initial key word search using the term *instructional coaching.* This resulted in 193 peer reviewed articles on the subject. After detailed analysis, 34 of these articles were relevant to the study topic and were included into an organizational literature matrix. In order to streamline the search even further, I used *instructional coaching* and *high school*, which yielded 62 results, the majority of which had appeared after the first search using only *instructional coaching.* The search was expanded to include *instructional coaching* or *academic coaching* in conjunction with the following key terms: *secondary school*, *teacher perceptions*, *coaching models*, *professional development*, *benefits*, and *impact*. From these searches, I gained over 40 more articles relevant to the study. By combining *instructional coaching* and *professional development*, 90 articles were found.

In Knight's (2005, 2016) extensive research on instructional coaching, he pointed to larger organizational structures that influence the effectiveness of coaching. For this reason, I extended the literature search to include *organizational leadership*, *organizational change*, *systems change*, *teacher leadership*, *distributed leadership*, and *transformational leadership.*

These searches resulted in 23 different articles. Hattie (2009) researched high impact instructional strategies on student learning which prompted further investigation into the terms: *instructional practices, pedagogy,* and *pedagogical content knowledge* which produced nine results. Parameters of the research include high school teachers with over 10 years of experience, which is why the terms *experienced teachers, late career teachers,* and *veteran teachers* were included into the search. This search provided another nine research articles. Additionally, I included the terms *adult learning* and *andragogy* into the literature search because of their relevance to prior research on effective coaching (Knight, 2015, 2006; Knowles, 2005). This resulted in only three different articles relevant to the topic. The reference lists from specific peer reviewed articles were cross-referenced and reoccurring authors and topics were identified and researched (Carrillo & Flores, 2018; Carter, Blackman, Hicks, Williams, & Hay, 2017; Desimone & Pak, 2017; Kraft & Balzar, 2018; Shernoff et al., 2017; Woulfin & Rigby 2017).

Conceptual Framework

According to Ravitch and Riggan (2017), conceptual frameworks provide focus during the research process by linking methodological and theoretical developments and by outlining the main precepts undergirding the research. This conceptual framework is bolstered by Kurt Lewin's (1951) change management theory, Malcom Knowles's (1950), adult learning theory, and Albert Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. These theorists' perspectives contribute to the broader understanding of how instructional coaching fits in to school wide improvement efforts. In addition, these theorists are linked to the approaches that instructional coaches take, that may affect the pedagogical strategies used by experienced teachers at the secondary level.

Lewin's Change Management Model

Lewin (1948) believed in change management plans that focused on the whole system. As a leading social psychologist, he researched elements of change that pertained to individual behavior and then by linking certain conceptual constructs together, applied patterns to larger groups. Lewin's (1935) approach to implementing individual and collective change rested on his work with field theory, whereby both the physical and psychological environment of an individual are taken into consideration in order to better understand causal relations that lead to change. The entirety of an individual's psychological environment as their *life space* (Lewin, 1936)

In his work on field theory, Lewin (1948) took heed to the tensions, both the positive and negative forces, that exist in an individual's life space. Accordingly, Lewin (1948) explained how these tensions could act as either catalysts or hindrances when an individual was working toward, as well as achieving, a goal (Lewin, 1948). For this reason, he viewed tensions as either driving forces or restraining forces of achievement. Lewin (1936) believed that tensions were the precursor to the mental activity needed to go after a goal, and that once fulfilled, could help equalize an individual back to a more balanced state. It is at this point of equilibrium, stated Lewin (1936), that individuals are more inclined to receive change and move through the process of transformation.

According to Lewin (1948), life forces exist only in the present time and are therefore critical in analyzing and anticipating a person's behavior. The evaluation of a behavior should be based on the context and the situation of an individual's physical and psychological environment, not one in isolation of the other (Lewin, 1948). In addition to his thinking around individual achievement, Lewin (1948) also developed a mathematical formula to narrow down how far

away a person was from their desired goal based on the existing tensions (Lewin, 1948). Through extensive research, Lewin (1948) concluded that some tensions are necessary for goal attainment, but that others need to be relinquished prior to working toward a goal or completing a task.

As claimed by Lewin (1935), learning is a psychological process as well as a fundamental change process. The learner he concluded, is either developing new insights or changing old ones. Lewin (1935) also noted that learning denotes specific changes: changes in knowledge, changes in motivation, changes in group belongingness, and developmental change in the voluntary control of the body. Learning, according to Lewin (1935), is then the moment where simultaneous aspects of a situation insight a response or reaction, thereby changing the individual's physical and psychological environment. This causal relationship between behavior and learning is what distinguished Lewin's (1935) theory from other thinking at the time, that focused primarily on the cognitive nature of learning.

From his in work with field theory and social psychology, Lewin (1948) applied his understanding of individual behavior to areas of social justice and organizational change. Later in his life he developed the change management theory to address organizational change. In this theory, Lewin (1948) presented the change management model. In conveying his complex model, Lewin (1948) used the analogy of a block of ice to explain the process of change. He noted the three phases of the change process as*: unfreeze*, *change*, and *refreeze*.

In the first phase of the model, the unfreeze stage, organizations look closely at their core values to determine whether the group is functioning in accordance with these values. Lewin (1948) described this stage as the preparation for upcoming change. It is at this point in the process where members of the organization acknowledge what is and is not working, and more

importantly why it is not working. From this moment of collective understanding, the group determines what actions or behaviors they wish to change in order to arrive at the desired end goal. Lewin (1948) concluded that the behaviors preventing desired change may be restrained by certain tensions which need to be acknowledged and let go of in order for new behaviors, those that align with the values and goals of the organization, to emerge. Furthermore, Lewin (1948) acknowledged that the unfreezing stage could be a point of uncertainty for the group as previous ideas and past habits are challenged. However, he claimed this as a necessary dynamic state for future change to occur.

The second phase of the model is change. This change stage is described by Lewin (1948) as a point when people transition from old behaviors, that did not compliment the direction of the organization, to new behaviors that support the values and goals of the group. Essential to the success of the change stage is communication. Lewin (1948) asserted that people need to understand and share how the change can benefit them to increase their contributions to the collective system.

The third stage is referred to as the refreeze stage. This is the point when members of the organization are affirmed by their efforts and experience moments of situational harmony. As purported by Lewin (1948), staff members in this stage lock in their newly learned knowledge, skill, or behavior and can apply it with more automaticity. Organizational members develop new habits and behaviors that they ideally maintain even through challenging times in the future. Furthermore, Lewin (1936) added that individuals may be able to envision the ideal state of the organization during the refreeze stage and may begin to work toward other past or future goals, thereby enhancing the collective performance of the organization.

Even with all the best intentions of transforming organizations, school leaders often fail to meet the desired organizational outcomes and yield desired results (Fullan, 2008). Instead, leaders jump ahead with implementing changes, expecting behavioral transformations in staff, without taking the time to dig into the tensions as well as the core values of the organization first (Lewin, 1948). In this sense, leaders neglect the fundamentals of the *unfreeze* stage proposed by Lewin (1948) all the while expecting to yield the same promising results. According to Fullan (2008) and Zuiebeck (2012), this is because leaders do not always see the benefit of investing in that which reflects the culture and philosophy of the organization. Without proper attention to tensions and values, new programs or ideas get stacked up on top of old ones, without proper execution, until organizational members get stuck and little to no fundamental change occurs at all within the organization (Zuiebeck, 2012).

In response to state and federal reform mandates, school leaders turn to organizational changes that include attention on instructional practices in an attempt to increase student academic performance (Castillo, Wang, Daye, Shum, & March, 2018; Shernoff et al., 2017). As instructional and transformational leaders, school administrators often share pedagogical content knowledge expectations through professional development. According to Desimone and Pak (2017) and Kraft and Blazar (2018), educational leaders must organizationally restructure professional development workshops so that they lead to the desired change in teacher pedagogical practices.

Instead of traditional PD sessions where one person gifts an abundance of information to the entire group, leaders rely on instructional coaches to facilitate relevant and meaningful PD that is aligned to teacher needs and school goals. This embedded and possibly even differentiated PD leads to more significant results in improved pedagogical strategies because coaches are able

to establish meaningful relationships with teachers and they are able to follow up with the information presented during the professional development session (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Kraft & Blazar, 2018). This is largely due to the instructional coach's focus on and ability to acknowledge the values and beliefs of teachers prior to making changes in behavior. In his change management model, Lewin (1948) argued that identifying the values of the group is essential before determining what needs to be changed in the organization. Instructional coaches support teachers through transformative processes like the unfreeze, change, refreeze model proposed by Lewin (1948). In the following section of this conceptual framework, I discuss adult learning theory by Knowles (2005).

Knowles and his Theory of Andragogy

Like Lewin (1948), Knowles (1973, 2005) described learning as a process whereby an individual's behavior changes due to an experience. Knowles (1973) believed that learning is not only a process of changed behavior, but also a product of the learning experience, as well as a function of it. By delineating the differences between product, process, and function, Knowles (1973) emphasized how important each aspect is in the teaching of adult learners. Furthermore, Knowles (1973) explored the world of learning theory from an adult learner perspective and considered it to be a moral obligation for adult educators to take on new approaches as well as more authentic practices when interacting with adult learners.

Even though Knowles (1973) based his position on adult learning after the work of the American Educator, Eduard Lindeman (1944), Knowles himself proposed *andragogy*, any learning that occurs during the adult years, as a learning theory and as a way to describe his focus on adult centered learning. In addition, he emphasized the unique learning styles and strengths of the adult learner in order to demonstrate the difference between pedagogy and

andragogy. Knowles (1973) not only theorized how adults learn, but also professed strategic ways to support adults through their learning journey.

Knowles (1973) asserted five fundamental assumptions pivotal to a meaningful adult learning experience which contrasted significantly from pedagogy, in which the focus is child centered. Knowles outlined the following assumptions as a basis to his thinking on andragogy: (a) adult learners shift their self-concept from one of dependence as a child to one of independence and self-direction as an adult, (b) the adult learner has past experiences that provide knowledge and resources for future learning, (c) adults at different stages of development are ready to learn different information or skills, (d) adults enter learning for problem or performance centered reasons, (e) adults are internally motivated to learn to the extent to which the learning will benefit them or aid them in achieving a goal or task.

In addition to these assumptions, Knowles (1980) harkened the efforts of educators to place more attention on their andragogical perspectives. He suggested specific steps for teachers of adults to follow to promote personal change and increase work performance. These steps included: (a) creating a cooperative learning climate, (b) planning goals mutually, (c) diagnosing learner needs and interests (d) helping learners to formulate learning objectives based on their needs and individual interest, (e) designing sequential activities to achieve these objectives, (f) carrying out the design to meet objectives with selected methods, materials, and resources, and (g) evaluating the quality of the learning experience for the learner that includes reassessing needs for continued learning (Knowles, 1980).

A critical aspect to Knowles's (1980) thinking on adult learning is the concept of informal learning opportunities. He justified informal learning as a necessary event in the learning process and did not consider it to be inferior to formal learning or as the precursor of

formal learning. Knowles (1980) believed that informal learning is valuable and that adults need designated situations to informally learn. He claimed that informal learning offers opportunities for more authentic behavior adjustment and can eventually lead to a mastery experience, an experience where the desired new behavior is repeated (Knowles, 1980). Through research, Knowles (1980) discovered that certain conditions are more conducive to adult learning than others. He stated that adult learning is more successful when organizational leaders design a plan with adult learning activities and principles of andragogy in mind. Knowles (1980) argued for educators of adults to re-think their approach to adult learning and to rely more on instructional practices grounded in andragogy rather than instructional practices that are child centered.

Instructional coaches work toward shifting teachers' thinking so that teachers begin to believe in something they did not know was possible before. Coaches mindfully work through the tensions that may prevent teachers from acknowledging that change is necessary (Lewin, 1948) because they are no longer getting the results they desire from their current behavior (Knowles, 2005). Instructional coaches help teachers unlearn old instructional habits that now longer serve the needs of the students, to make room for new learning and new pedagogical strategies. Unlike changes that are initiated top-down or changes that are forced upon teachers during a professional development training, instructional coaches utilize concepts of change and principles of andragogy to help teachers self-identify their own goals as well as the steps needed to reach that goal (Knight, 2005). Effective coaches apply knowledge of adult learning during interaction with teachers to elevate the status of the teacher. The teacher is then more receptive to feedback aimed at improving classroom instruction and is more responsive to the organizational needs of the school (Senge et al., 2012). According to Knowles's (1973), an integral component of adult learning is having opportunities to feel successful. These moments of success become

the fuel for future beliefs, perceptions, and ultimately changes in behavior that support the goals of the organization. In the section that follows, Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy model will be discussed.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Model

According to Bandura (1977, 1995), self-efficacy is a person's belief in a goal and simultaneously a belief in their ability to achieve that goal. Bandura (1977) concluded that the more a person views their actions as leading to positive results in their life, the more they experience a sense of control. Consequently, a person who feels a greater sense of control over their life will be more inclined to systematically influence future events in their life. In addition, Bandura (1977) stated that when people do not believe they can produce their desired outcomes through their own actions, then motivation and accomplishment decrease. Consequently, when strength in efficacy is low, then a person is less likely to persevere during challenges.

Bandura (1995) further stated that self-efficacy is fundamental to changes in human behavior. It is through self-efficacy, he claimed, that personal change happens, and true learning occurs. Moreover, Bandura (1977) postulated that the locus of control over behavioral change are the cognitive processes associated with effective performance. As noted by Bandura (1977) the effective performance experience shifts an individual's beliefs, prompting deeper levels of self-efficacy. Beliefs related to goal attainment and performance are strengthened through one of four ways: a mastery experience, social modeling, social persuasion, and the managing of one's physical and emotional state (Bandura, 1977).

When it comes to experiencing a transformation of behavior, Bandura (1995) asserted a mastery experience to be the most influential way to develop self-efficacy and to ultimately be prepared for the change. Acquiring effective tools to overcome obstacles is a process that entails

the development of cognitive, behavior, and self-regulatory habits (Bandura, 1977). The development of these habits is what allows for transformation and learning to occur. Bandura (1995) claimed that while some setbacks are purposeful in the learning process, too much failure can lead to frustration and weaken self-efficacy levels. Bandura (1977) concluded that the mastery experience is the successful attainment of these habits over a sustained period and through challenging times.

Modeling is when knowledge and skills are directly conveyed to the learner (Bandura, 1995). As described by Bandura (1977), modeling strengthens beliefs in efficacy when an individual has time to interpret and make sense of the new knowledge or skill. Consequently, this approach diminishes the fears one may have around certain activities; fears that may inhibit performance and therefore minimize any feelings of success that potentially could strengthen efficacy levels. Bandura (1977) surmised that efficacy increases when an individual aspires to attain the knowledge or skill being modeled. Strong models provide a level of success from which an individual can gauge their own ability, and in turn work toward improvement (Bandura, 1977).

Another viewpoint held by Bandura (1995) suggested that social persuasion can convince an individual that they have what it takes to succeed. Additionally, he noted that when an individual is verbally persuaded, they are more likely to focus their effort on achieving the desired outcome than focus on excuses and self-doubt. According to Bandura (1995), social persuasion builds faith in an individual's capabilities, which leads to a growth in self-efficacy. He also believed that verbal persuasion increases efficacy expectations because people respond more quickly, and can therefore alter their beliefs more quickly, when they are told what to expect in relation to the results of an accomplishment (Bandura, 1977).

Furthermore, Bandura (1995) claimed that self-efficacy is developed through the monitoring of one's physical and emotional state. He contested that people judge their capabilities based on their reactions, tensions, and moods. Therefore, he suggested, it is necessary to put forth conscious, controlled effort in judging capabilities so that misinterpretations do not outweigh the potential for growth and mastery (Bandura, 1977). In his research, he added the importance of refraining from using emotional reactions as a measure of success or failure, as these can lead to a decrease in self-efficacy. Rather, through the conscious monitoring of emotional and physical reactions, he proclaimed that self-efficacy can be enhanced (Bandura, 1977).

Efficacy, the judgement of an individual's capability, should not be confused with self-esteem, judgement of self-worth (Bandura, 1995). As asserted by Bandura (1995), understanding the distinction between efficacy and self-esteem is essential when personal and/or organizational growth is at stake. He also believed that an extension of self-efficacy is *collective efficacy*. He described collective efficacy as a unification of individual beliefs around working together for improvement and change (Bandura, 1977). Since efficacy beliefs affect the decisions people make at different points in their lives, collective efficacy beliefs affect the ways people come together to solve problems. He stated that it is through collective efficacy, that common problems will be solved, and that people's lives will change for the better (Bandura, 1977, 2003).

When teachers believe they have the skill, the content knowledge, and the ability to deliver quality lessons each day in the classroom, then they are demonstrating high levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Ideally, teachers transfer the positive effects of their own self-efficacy onto students through modeling, verbal persuasion, the monitoring of emotional and physical responses, and by creating authentic opportunities for students to engage in mastery learning

experiences (Bandura, 1995). Furthermore, teachers contribute to the collective efficacy of the school, by believing that all members of the school organization are showing up and doing their best to service students (Bandura, 1977; Hattie, 2009). Collective efficacy drives the momentum needed for organizational change and improvement (Hattie, 2009; Lewin, 1948).

Due to the barrage of expectations placed on teachers, levels of self-efficacy fluctuate based on experiences of accomplishment and failure (Bandura, 1977). Using an andragogical approach, instructional coaches nurture educational situations that may appear trying, by building up self-efficacy levels in teachers and in turn, the entire school organization (Bandura, 1977; Knowles, 1973; Lewin, 1948). Specifically, instructional coaches move teachers through a mastery experience process whereby the teacher improves upon pedagogical practices in order to achieve desired student or teacher centered outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Knight, 2015). Instructional coaches act as key connectors between an individual teacher's pedagogical beliefs and a school wide organizational improvement plan based on quality instruction and improved student learning.

Conceptual Framework Summary

The theoretical models of Lewin (1948, 1951), Knowles (1973), and Bandura (1995) provide the foundation for the conceptual framework. In his change management model, Lewin (1951) explained the significance of unlearning old bad habits that no longer serve the good of the organization in order to make room for more strategic moves that benefit the performance of the individual and the success of the group. Knowles (1973) believed that adults learn in a different way than children and thus need to be taught in a different way. According to Knowles (1973) changes in behavior, as well as performance results, change significantly when adult learning principles are applied which is why he argued for strategic plans that invite more adult

learning opportunities. Similarly, Bandura (1995), claimed that changes in behavior and increases in performance and productivity occur due to stronger levels of self-efficacy. For adult learners, self-efficacy levels strengthen when teaching techniques are in line with adult learner needs.

Lewin's (1948) thinking around organizational change is central to understanding current organizational change efforts in education. Upholding effective research based instructional practices aimed at increasing student performance may demand transformation of adult behavior. As a way to connect the purpose of the organizational change with the action steps needed to achieve the desired results, school leaders need to preserve the components of adult learning and efficacy (Lewin, 1948). Often, older school staff are locked into past practices that no longer serve the direction of the school and new staff have not necessarily acquired the knowledge or skill set needed to drive behavior that aligns with the school vision. This creates a disconnect between what some educational stakeholders view as targeted goals and what is happening in the classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Whether prompted by high accountability measures, initiated by reform, or emerging from site-based improvement needs, organizational change efforts are happening at rapid rates in schools across the country (Senge et al., 2012). The traditional design of the educational system no longer supports the growing demands placed on schools. Therefore, educational leaders turn to foundational organizational change and leadership models for guidance, such as the change management model (Lewin, 1951), the transformational leadership model (Bass & Avolio, 1998), or the distributed leadership model (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). These models enlist middle leadership positions such as instructional coaches to not only build leadership capacity from within the organization, but to also regularly carry out other instructional and

transformational leadership practices intended to support the quality of teaching and maximize student learning (Fullan, 2011). In a well-supported system, the instructional coaches work in tandem with school leaders to reframe and improve the pedagogical practices of teachers. Effective strategic leadership plans include uninterrupted coaching cycles and specific professional development designed to support the adult learner experience and build up self and collective efficacy (Fullan, 2008; Knight, 2016).

Review of the Literature and Methodological Issues

Authors of literature on instructional coaching addressed both the long- and short-term benefits that instructional coaching has on the pedagogical strategies used by teachers (Knight, 2005; Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). Commonly, researchers examined the role of the instructional coach from an intervention perspective, with the instructional coach helping to improve the quality of teacher instruction, thereby increasing student academic performance and allowing schools to adhere to state and federal reform mandates (Bierly, Doyle, & Smith, 2016; Hartman, 2017). Also presented was evidence of how the varying instructional coach roles and responsibilities affected the degree to which the coach is embraced by teachers (Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2005, 2011; Shernoff et al., 2017).

According to other selected literature on instructional coaching and organizational change (Alase, 2017; Fullan, 2008, 2011; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2016; Kraft & Blazar, 2018; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017), the work of the instructional coach is directly linked to organizational improvement plans designed and mapped out by school leaders. Knight (2018) believed that the designated roles and responsibilities of the instructional coach should align strategically with goals of the school plan. However, Woulfin and Rigby (2017) pointed out that even when site leaders attempted to intentionally prioritize instructional coach

responsibilities and implement leadership models that supported teacher/coach collaboration, coaches were not always able to focus on work aimed at improving pedagogical strategies of teachers. Knight (2016, 2018) and Kurz, Reddy, and Glover (2017) similarly attested that many school leadership models support the idea of instructional coaches, however not all leaders follow through with incorporating instructional coaches into daily operations of the school improvement plans. Due to the lack of potent leadership support, the instructional coach is unable to implement an effective system of routines and is also unable to build credibility. Furthermore, the importance of the instructional coach role becomes convoluted and teacher perceptions of coach effectiveness waiver (Knight, 2016, 2018).

Significant to the body of literature on school improvement agendas, researchers found that instructional coaches influenced the quality of academic instruction through facilitation of teacher professional development (Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2016, 2018; Reddy, Dudek, & Lekwa, 2017; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). According to Knight (2016), instructional improvement occurs with more frequency and consistency when a teacher and an instructional coach work together through a coaching cycle, a one-on-one time dedicated to the improvement of instructional practices. During this time, the coach moves the teacher through three phases: identifying a student-centered goal by observing the current reality of the classroom, learning new pedagogical strategies through observation of others and informal practice, and finally, improving the strategies through observation of results (Knight, 2018). Together the teacher and coach continually monitor student progress and either stay focused on the current goal or identify new target areas for student growth and improvement.

Knight (2018) further added that this collaborative should be a continued practice until the teacher is able to repeat phases of the instructional cycle independently so that the habits

developed during the coaching cycle become automatic in the teacher. In addition, Knight (2018) affirmed that teachers may need the support of an instructional coach at different points in their career depending on what content they plan on teaching and how they plan on teaching it. Researchers agreed that instructional coaches are a key element to improving teacher quality and meeting the instructional needs of students, but also that many organizational factors contribute to the amount of time and quality of work they are able to give to individual teachers (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2016, 2018; Reddy, Dudek, & Lekwa, 2017).

Organizational Change

Authors indicated that long term sustainable school change and improvement is derived from a systematic plan, with student performance acting as the main indicator of success (Alase, 2017; Fullan, 2008, 2011, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). As a researcher of system wide organizational change, Fullan (2008, 2011, 2016) believed that school improvement occurs when leaders adopt a theory of action to govern the improvement work, until further data redirects the need for alternative actions. Fullan (2016) clarified that a good theory of action includes ambitious goals, sharp focus, clarity and transparency of data, and a persistent sense of urgency. From a solid theory of action, school organizations can balance the required changes coming from the top-down as well as those changes that move from bottom-up.

In his research on transforming schools, Fullan (2016) espoused six underlying beliefs needed for an organization to experience a meaningful and lasting change process. They read as: (a) teachers are loved equally as students; (b) direction is pursued through purposeful peer interaction; (c) leaders invest in individual and collective efficacy development that leads to new competencies, new resources, and new motivation; (d) working and learning are synonymous whereby external learning beyond the classroom happens simultaneously with learning that

occurs in the classroom; (e) clear and continuous access to practice and to results leads to transparency; and (f) the system, or school organization, learns from itself through knowledge and commitment. The beliefs and behaviors required for the change process to unfold, comes from shared vision and shared ownership of the actions along the way (Fullan, 2016). Furthermore, Fullan (2016), recognized the need to build human capacity from within the organization in order to implement the action steps and carry out the organizational change plan to its fullest potential.

As with Fullan (2016), Lynch, Smith, Provost, and Madden (2016) also argued in favor of specifically designed school wide action steps in order to meet organizational goals. In their research, Lynch et al. (2016) studied the use of external criteria, such as data, as a means for making decisions around school improvement and change. The 5-year case study followed the implementation of a school wide organizational change model centered on data-based evidence. Findings from the study furnished insight into how to increase student academic performance through a collaborative change process (Lynch et al., 2016). Strong leadership coupled with quality teacher instruction proved essential in the organizational development of the school sites researched in this study. Both Fullan (2016) and Lynch et al. (2016) further agreed that principals and staff experience a more successful change process when a balance exists between instructional and transformational leadership practices.

While Fullan (2026) and Lynch, Smith, Provost, and Madden (2016) provided evidence in support of organizational change, other researchers (Alase, 2017; Cuban, 2013) concluded that organizational change and improvement goals are rarely met. Even though there have been some fundamental changes in school structures and culture over the years, Cuban (2013) believed that many instructional practices are still rooted in century old teacher-centered pedagogy which,

therefore limits the progress of the organization as a whole. In addition, Cuban (2013) stated that too often the theory or concept of organizational change does not match with how to practically implement the action steps; this in turn causes structures and members of the organization to become over-burdened and over-stressed by the change process. Similarly, Alase (2017) and Meyers and Hitt (2018) found that leaders try to speed up the change process in order to arrive more quickly at the desired end result, which the authors found, only inhibits the change process from penetrating deep into the organization. Agase (2017) and Cuban (2013) both attested that there is no one organizational change theory that offers a cure to the complex problems faced by educational institutions. However, Agase (2017), Fullan (2018) and Cuban (2013) did agree that focusing on the quality and experience of organizational members is critical in implementing sustainable and effective change.

According to research, accountability remains at the forefront of educational change (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). In light of the current high stakes accountability era, school leaders respond to mandated reform policies by attempting to improve student test scores and by producing other school performance indicators that show progress (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Lynch et al., 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). All too frequently leaders turn to quick fix programs to solve complex instructional and organizational problems rather than invest in long term solutions (Fullan, 2018). According to Desimone and Pak (2017) and Fullan (2018), the short-term fixes do not always yield the desired outcomes, and teachers and leaders are left wondering why the program did not prove effective. Fullan (2018) noted that beliefs need to change before behaviors do; when quick solutions are forced upon teachers, there is little ownership and belief that the new program or organizational change will work thereby limiting the sustainability and effectiveness of the program change.

Equally relevant to the conversation on organizational change, was research that showed an increase in effort by school leaders to strengthen teacher pedagogical expertise but a decrease in teacher receptiveness to these efforts (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Darling-Hammond (2010), Klocko and Wells (2015), and Woulfin and Rigby (2017) discovered that in an attempt to push positive organizational change, some leaders end up placing unnecessary pressures on to teachers, thereby increasing frustration and often decreasing self-efficacy levels. In addition, Darling-Hammond (2010) and Woulfin and Rigby (2017) stated that many site and district leaders tried to push organizational changes through professional development workshops facilitated by individuals outside the organization. Yet, Darling-Hammond (2010) and Woulfin and Rigby (2017) concluded that these measures were ineffective and had little to no impact on the improvement of instruction nor on the improvement of student academic performance.

More effective, long-term organizational change comes from building leadership capacity from within the school (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Fullan, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). According to Johnson (2016), Lynch, Smith, Provost, and Madden, (2016) and Woulfin and Rigby (2107), many districts leverage middle leaders, such as teacher leaders and instructional coaches, as a response to instructional reform needs. This shift in organizational structure offers a bridge between the teachers and administrators, offering more cohesiveness when it comes time to implement the action steps of a change plan. Instructional coaches and teacher leaders can facilitate professional learning communities and deliver ongoing supports to teachers with periodic check-ins.

Coaching has a major role in how organizational changes become accepted and integrated into old systems. Fullan (2016) provided insight into how to gently levy educational change

without totally disrupting what is working well in the system. Coaches are pivotal in organizing and communicating the values and purpose behind a proposed organizational change. More importantly, Fullan (2016) described how there are certain educational players who help mesh individual teacher values with the collective values of the group, often relying on instructional coaches to fill this need. In addition, instructional coaches help anchor the hard work, as well as the uncertainty that comes with change, in the values of the organization. In doing so, they prevent letting distractions take away from the focus on growing and developing the organization (Fullan, 2016).

Pedagogical Expertise

The pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) framework presented by Schulman (1987) stated that teachers need to possess an extended skill set in order to effectively teach, one which goes beyond just an understanding of subject matter. Teachers who are confident in PCK demonstrate a well-balanced combination of conceptual and procedural information, so they know not only on what they are teaching (content knowledge), but also how they should be teaching it (pedagogical knowledge). Shulman's (1987) theoretical model underpins recent literature on the pedagogical expertise needed to teach diverse learners in the 21st century (Slough & Chamblee, 2017; Troyan, Cammarata, & Martel, 2017). Other scholars on teaching and learning concluded that a distinct teacher knowledge base is needed for quality instruction, one that consists of specific domain areas: curriculum knowledge, learner development understanding, pedagogical knowledge, and attention to goals (Ozmantar & Akkoc, 2017; Troyan et al., 2017). As pedagogy develops and changes based on the needs of the students, so do the practices used to support teachers learn and apply their pedagogical understanding (Jones, Dana, Laframenta, Adams, & Arnold, 2016).

Two separate studies revealed that, in addition to the typical features of pedagogical content knowledge, other dimensions of instructional practices exist, such as language and technology (Slough & Chamblee, 2017; Troyan et al., 2017). When studying students and technological pedagogical content knowledge Slough and Chamberlee (2017) revealed that more student learning occurs when it is collaborative, experiential, socially structured, and rich in images. They also asserted that technology enhances these learning experiences substantially, so much so that it is assumed that technology becomes naturally embedded into instructional practices. Slough and Chamberlee (2017) referred to the absorption of technology into pedagogy as "21st century pedagogical content knowledge". According to the research (Slough & Chamberlee, 2017), the limited separation between technology enhanced student learning and technology enhanced pedagogical content knowledge placed higher expectations on teachers, as they felt pressured to maintain in good standing with current technological trends in education.

Slough and Chamberlee (2017) also presented the difficulties schools have in providing adequate professional development on technological pedagogical content knowledge. This is primarily due to the fast rate at which technology changes and the limited funding that many districts experience, that prevents them from keeping up with the changes. Additionally, the prolific supposition that technology leads to better teaching and learning does not mean that districts necessarily provide professional development that meets the pedagogical needs of the teachers (Jones et al., 2016). Teachers are at different places on the continuum when it comes to quality understanding and implementation of technological pedagogical content knowledge, and therefore require different levels of support. Young (2016) found that teacher disposition toward technology was equally, if not more important to increased technological pedagogical content knowledge and receptivity than to technology-based professional development experiences.

Slough and Chamblee (2017) claimed that advances in technology have drastically changed how students learn and now there is almost an over-reliance on technology for instruction. This shift in learning alters the landscape of pedagogical content knowledge development for new and experienced teachers (Slough & Chamblee, 2017; Young, 2016; Jones et al., 2016). Adding to the body of knowledge on technological pedagogical content knowledge, Jones et al. (2016) claimed that strong coaching and mentoring programs are a critical component to supporting and growing the technological pedagogy knowledge of teachers.

Troyan et al. (2017) discovered that teachers of students whose native language is other than English, teachers in a bilingual program, and teachers of a foreign language require linguistic disciplinary knowledge that extends beyond the general pedagogical content knowledge foundation represented by teachers in a monolinguistic setting. In their study of high school language teachers, Troyan et al. (2017) found that the majority of teachers operated solely within the context of content-based instruction, revealing little understanding of pedagogical content knowledge. The authors confirmed that high school teachers focus more on content than on sound pedagogical strategies intended to increase student learning.

Teachers attain pedagogical expertise over time and through a multitude of experiences where content interacts with instruction (Slough & Chamberlee, 2017). In their research, Slough and Chamberlee (2017), explained that not all teachers begin their teaching careers ready to implement effective pedagogical strategies, which is why ongoing mentoring and support is essential. Researchers concluded that teachers of all experience levels need further training in pedagogical content knowledge development and that this can come from on-site coaching and/or professional development opportunities (Slough & Chamberlee, 2017; Troyan, Cammarata, & Martel 2017).

The Need for Instructional Coaching

The act of coaching is a universal practice used to enhance the professional performance of individuals (Kee, Dearing, Anderson, & Shuster, 2017). Experts on school reform claimed that school leaders constantly search for improved practices that lead to desired results. After years of implementing sure-fire programs and initiatives but with little results, educational stake holders and policy makers looked more closely at classroom instruction as a solution to failing test scores (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). The direct correlation between quality instruction and student learning has been well documented in research (Hattie, 2009; Lynch et al., 2016; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2006).

Beyond demonstrating the relationship between instruction and learning, researchers also identified specific instructional strategies that work better than others (Davis, McPartland, Pryseski, & Kim, 2018; Lynch et al., 2016; Pryseski & Kim, 2018; Hattie, 2009). Furthermore, literature on school reform and transformation has unveiled evidence of teachers overhauling antiquated, ineffective teaching habits and replacing them with higher quality, relevant pedagogical content knowledge (Woulfin & Rigby, 2018). Educational experts (Hattie, 2009; Lynch et al., 2016; Marzano et al., 2006; Knight, 2018) have identified instructional coaches as leading contributors to the ongoing improvement of teacher instruction.

Other scholars (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2015; Every Student Succeeds Act; 2015) on educational change stated that some federal, state, and district mandates prescribe coaches as an evidence-based research strategy for instructional improvement. Researchers agreed that mounting pressure is placed on school leaders across the United States to improve the academic experience and performance of students (Fullan, 2011: 2018; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Klocko & Wells, 2016; Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016; Podosky & Sutcher,

2016). Whether the cause for improvement is internally or externally motivated, researchers described how districts routinely sought the support of an instructional coach to ease the heavy burdens placed on site principals and as a way to attain stronger student learning outcomes (Davis, McPartland, Pryseski, & Kim, 2018; Kurz, Reddy, Glover, 2017; Knight, 2016, 2018;). Instructional coaches support principals and student learning outcomes by focusing on high impact pedagogical strategies. Literature stated that instructional coaches support the transformational and instructional growth of individual teachers, as well as entire school organizations (Davis et al., 2018; Kurz et al., 2017; Knight, 2016). Researchers claimed that instructional coaches have the strongest impact when they plan and facilitate collective professional development opportunities and when they engage with teachers in individual coaching cycles (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2015).

Professional Development

In his groundbreaking work on the evaluation of professional development, Guskey (2000) emphasized the collaborative effort that is needed for school staff and administrators to work toward a collective purpose and common student-centered goals, all which are guided by the clear vision of the leader. Kraft and Blazar (2018) described professional development as a collaborative process aimed at increasing pedagogical content knowledge through ongoing learning, implementation, and reflection. Johnson (2016) concurred that effective professional development is critical to school improvement.

Desimone and Pak (2017) and Castillo, Wang, Daye, Shum, and March (2018) explained that traditionally, professional training workshops were one shot deliveries of program or strategy information aimed at improving pedagogical expertise. However, researchers (Knight, 2016, Woulfin & Rigby, 2017) also revealed that more often than not, the traditional approach to

professional development, since not based on a collaborative style, left teachers buried in new information with no plan on how to implement, analyze, and reflect on the new learning. Woulfin and Rigby (2017) associated updated professional development practices with being internally generated, evidence-based, rich in job embedded activities, relevant to site-based needs, and flexible enough to provide differentiated experiences so as to meet individual teachers where they are at with instruction. According to Desimone and Pak (2017) and Woulfin and Rigby (2017), this newer concept of professional development necessitated the need for instructional coach involvement, more specifically for planning and facilitation purposes.

Professional development is considered the link between high quality pedagogical strategies and organizational improvement, which is why Woulfin and Rigby (2017) claimed that professional development was more effective when administrators, coaches, and other teacher leaders worked together to create action steps for monitoring the implementation of the professional development event as well as the effectiveness on improving instructional practices. Literature reviewed, pointed to the growing examples of school leaders who rely on instructional coaches to deliver whole group and small team professional development on a regular basis (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Knight, 2005, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017).

Individualized Instructional Coaching

While leading whole group and small team professional development is one coaching approach used to improve teachers' use of strong pedagogical strategies and instructional practices, literature revealed one-on-one coaching conversations with teachers to be even more effective. Knight (2016, 2018) asserted that most coaches in the field today were once classroom teachers who know a great deal about teaching students, but not necessarily a lot about how to educate adults. An individualized coaching cycle hinges on an understanding of andragogy and

the complex needs of an adult learner (Knight, 2005; Knowles, 1973; Shernoff et al., 2017). McCauley, Hammer, and Hinojosa (2017) and Reddy, Dudek, and Lekwa (2017) used the six assumptions presented in Knowles's (1973) theoretical framework on adult learning as a foundation in their own research: the learner's self-concept, the learner's past experiences, the learner's readiness to learn, the learner's focus on problem/solution learning, the learner's level of motivation, and learner's need to know the purpose of their learning. According to literature reviewed, adult teachers vary in terms of their phase of life and professional development, which is why applying adult learning considerations during instructional coaching conversations is beneficial (Knight, 2016). During an individualized coaching session, it is the coach's job to strike the right balance between giving teachers professional autonomy and pushing on teachers to take instructional risks.

Knight (2016) examined the coaching cycle through different lenses. He used the filter of accountability to describe the long-term benefits that the coaching cycle can have on motivating teachers to set and attain goals. Authors of literature recognized the existence of variations on the coaching cycle. Knight (2016) defined three simple stages of an effective coaching cycle: identify, learn and improve. In the identify stage, the coach and teacher look at the reality of student learning through assessment data, student samples, video-taping, and other feedback gained from students. Then a student-centered goal is developed as well as learning intentions, success criteria, and researched based strategies that support the goal. From there, the teacher learns about the strategy through modeling techniques and other informal methods. Finally, the teacher uses the strategy in the classroom with the coach observing or video recording student progress toward the learning goal. Based on the evidence of student learning, refinements of the strategy are made, or the teacher chooses a different strategy to use, so long as the learning goal

is met. Knight (2016) described how the coaching cycle puts accountability of student learning back on the teacher, so that the coach is not just providing solutions to challenging pedagogical questions.

In another comparative study on the integration of instructional coaches into the classroom environment, Reddy, Dudek, and Lekwa (2017) observed pronounced changes in classroom ecology both during and after implementation of the classroom strategies coaching model. Reddy et al. (2017) described six components to explain the purpose and benefits of the classroom strategies model: (a) an understanding of the integration between effective instructional practices and student behavior is necessary for responding to classroom management needs; (b) ongoing classroom observations and data collection are used as a means of gathering evidence of student learning and providing timely feedback to teacher; (c) post observation problem-solving sessions allow for teacher and coach to discuss areas of strength and weakness and to generate a list of manageable action steps from which to move forward; (d) outlining goals and measuring and monitoring progress toward the goals is revised after each strategy or formative assessment; (e) use of informal learning opportunities, specifically observational modeling, are used to promote content and pedagogical expertise; and (f) the use of visual performance feedback provides new knowledge of learning for a teacher to respond to with new or varied instructional practices.

In addressing aspects of pedagogy, Reddy et al. (2017) incorporated certain aspects of adult learning theory (Knowles, 1973) into the coaching model. As described by Knight (2018), instructional coaches frequently move from a pedagogically centered experience to an experience rich in andragogical understanding. Successful coaches can develop relational trust with teachers by implementing an understanding concepts of andragogy, but the inquiry cycle

work is centered around the teacher's desire to improve in areas of pedagogy (Knight, 2018). Individualized coaching sessions are successful because coaches can strategically apply adult learning strategies to meaningful conversations about pedagogy.

Effects of Authentic Coaching Behaviors

In education, authentic, deliberate, and mindful coaching techniques positively impact teacher performance and can lead to increased leadership capacity (Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, Cunningham, 2016; Fullan, 2016; Hartman, 2017; Johnson, 2016; Kee, Dearing, Anderson, & Shuster, 2017; Klocko, & Wells, 2015; Knight, 2005, 2016, 2018). According to Knight (2016) increased relational trust between teachers is one of the main motivating forces when it comes to teachers changing and improving their instructional practices. Knight (2016) noted that instructional coaches practice coaching moves intended to build relational trust through facilitation of professional development activities, facilitation of small group professional learning communities, and one-on-one coaching conversations. In their research, Knight (2016) and Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016) stated that in the capacity of relationship building, instructional coaches work toward creating an environment that is safe for teachers to confront psychological obstacles related to vulnerability and change.

Coaches help bring a level of individual and collective awareness to personal behaviors, feelings, and thoughts that are otherwise challenging to analyze and alter, when left to work in isolation (Johnson, 2016; Kee et al., 2017; Knight, 2018). Researchers Klocko and Wells (2015) explained that teachers resist change because of unnecessary pressures that administrators place on them. In addition, Klocko and Wells (2015) further stated that when tasks get too overwhelming, it becomes difficult for teachers to identify and fix the issues that are standing in the way of new learning or preventing improvement of instructional practices from occurring.

Klocko and Wells (2015), Knight, (2016), and Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016) suggested that authentic coaching practices elevate levels of self-efficacy in teachers which is directly tied to improved professional performance and receptivity toward change.

Mindful coaching experiences are also linked to the building of human capacity in school organizations (Bryant, Escalante, & Selva, 2017; Edwards-Groves, Grootenboer, & Ronnerman, 2016; Fullan, 2016; Klocko & Wells, 2016). In their research on school leadership, Bryant et al. (2017), discovered a steep increase in school administrator vacancies in counties in the Pacific Northwest from 2014–2017. Important to highlight from the study is that while there were a valid number of individuals (mostly teachers) holding the appropriate credentials needed to fill administrator vacancies, teachers were reluctant to take the positions (Bryant et al., 2017). This in large part is due to a failure to cultivate leadership capacity during the teaching career of educators. Furthermore, Bryant et al. (2017) claimed that there is a limited body of research on how principals identify and train teachers for present school site, as well as future, leadership positions. Certain authors (Bryant et al., 2017; Edwards-Grove, 2016) believed that the lack of capacity building from within the organization is a result of the limited scope principals have when it comes to understanding how to extend leadership roles and responsibilities to others without diminishing the importance of their own position and title.

Much of the thinking by Bryant, Escalante, and Selva, (2017) was in accordance with concepts presented by Edwards-Groves, Grootenboer, and Ronnerman, (2016). Edwards-Groves et al. (2016), stated that the rise of middle leaders (teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and others situated between the teaching staff and the site principal) makes way not only for continued pedagogical development in teachers, but also for increased leadership development in each other. Researchers (Bryant et al., 2017; Edwards-Groves et al., 2016; Fullan, 2016; Klocko

& Wells, 2016) all pointed to the implementation of thoughtful, systematic organizational structures, such as deliberate use of instructional coaches, to cultivate teacher leadership. As noted by Edwards-Groves et al. (2016), teachers develop and apply leadership skills for different reasons. Some teachers choose to remain in teacher leadership or coach positions while others are inspired to go after an administrative credential, regardless of age or years of experience in the classroom. Fullan (2016) furnished other explanations about how the collaborative work facilitated by instructional coaches can build leadership capacity in teachers and lead to systematic change.

The Experienced Teacher Identity

Van der Want, Schellings, and Mommers, (2018) described three distinguishing phases of a teaching career: early, mid, and late career. In literature related to the career paths of teachers, authors Admiraal, Veldman, Mainhard, and Jan (2019), Carrillo and Flores (2018), and Van der Want et al. (2018) agreed that beginning teachers are characterized by excitement, mid-career teachers by stability, and late career teachers by burnout. However, during each phase, Van der Want et al. (2018), discovered that teachers perceive their professional identity differently, which in turn affects their performance and motivation. Early-career teachers attain a positive professional identity because of a rapid growth in teaching expertise and pedagogical understanding (Van der Want et al., 2018) Teachers in this phase may be described as being in survival mode, but also display an eagerness to learn more about the profession.

Further noted in research (Admiraal et al., 2019; Carrillo & Flores, 2018; Fox, Muccio, White, & Tian, 2015) is the attention given to early-career teachers in the form of mentoring and professional development. Van der Want et al. (2018) explained how collaborative opportunities help to break down identity tensions that new teachers confront, leaving them with more positive

interpretations regarding the teaching profession. Tensions, as researched by Bandura (1977) can prevent teachers from finding value in their work and from experiencing job satisfaction. In their research, Van der Want et al. (2018) documented mid-career phase teachers as having maintained a positive identity through the stabilization of teaching expertise and pedagogical understanding. However, in this phase teachers also began to focus more on attrition, work stress, and job satisfaction. Teachers in the later career phase experienced challenges in possessing a positive professional identity and demonstrated a decrease in both commitment and motivation.

Review of Methodological Issues

In terms of methodological issues, researchers used qualitative research methods in the majority of studies reviewed. According to Creswell (2013) and Ravitch and Riggan (2017), the qualitative method allows the researcher to make sense of a topic through the exploration of other people's thoughts and experiences related to that topic. Thus Creswell (2013) asserted that the descriptive nature of qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena at hand. The qualitative research method is common in the field of educational research, as researchers attempt to explore the state of existing phenomena, as it occurs naturally, then seek to interpret and explain the phenomena, and then finally search for ways to add on or improve on the current situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In the literature reviewed, most researchers used case study and phenomenological empirical design types to gain a deeper understanding of the topic through the perspective of the participants (Husserl, 1977). Since instructional coaching is still a relatively new phenomena, the scope of literature remains limited to specific areas of coaching that have grown from the need for coaches to help solve educational challenges related to instructional practices. Similar

problems existing in the literature, mainly focused on how to maximize the coaching experience for teachers so as to improve the instructional needs of students. Of the literature I reviewed, researchers mainly used case study and descriptive phenomenology to highlight site specific coaching experiences so that educational practitioners at similar sites could gain insight into how to effectively implement instructional coaching programs. A case study design was used by researchers whose purpose was to reflect on how coaching worked at certain schools and how the personal nature of the partnership between coach and teacher developed, from the perspective of either one or both individuals. Phenomenology was used by researchers to share thoughts and beliefs of the subjects' experiences as they pertained to instructional coaching, career development in later career years, and organizational changes aimed at improvement.

Out of the nearly 50 qualitative studies examined, researchers primarily used an interview or survey method as a way to collect high quality data and to present an unbiased look at the topic (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). Of the remaining 30 articles reviewed, 16 were a mixed-methods design type. This research aimed to explore and present a connection between instructional coaching interventions and some other facet of teaching, such as instructional practices or student achievement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While the majority of researchers from the reviewed articles used qualitative research methods, six of the articles presented quantitative design types, where the researchers assessed the impact of a program or structural change or sought to determine the effect of a specific instructional coaching practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The remaining articles provided overviews of literature common to the work of school reform initiatives, educational leadership styles needed for college and career readiness in students, instructional coaching models, and teacher leadership.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Researchers on coaching and organizational change in schools arrived at conflicting findings regarding the need for a definition of an instructional coach. Literature from Bryant, Escalante, and Selva (2017) and Davis, McPartland, Pryseski, and Kim (2018) claimed that an instructional coach's role and responsibilities hinge on the context of the situation and the needs of the school community. Therefore, these authors (Bryant, Escalante, & Selva, 2017; Davis, McPartland et al., 2018; Poekert, Alexandrou, & Shannon, 2016) are convinced that teacher leadership, such as coaching, is more about attitude than position and the definition therefore, should be flexible and grow on its own terms. Bryant et al. (2017), Davis et al. (2018), and Poekert et al. (2016) did not believe that one specific definition was necessary for others to discuss the values and the body of knowledge and skill that makes up instructional coaching practices. Furthermore, they stated that this thinking could limit the scope of work an instructional coach performs. More importantly, Bryant et al. (2017) and Davis et al. (2018) pointed to the role of school leadership when creating a meaningful identity and position of credibility for the instructional coach to work from, meaning that there are too many variables that are out of the instructional coaches' realm of control and which prevent one coherent definition from existing.

Conversely, others in literature (Bierly, Doyle, & Smith, 2016; Desimone & Pak, 2017; Hartman, 2017; Kurz, Reddy, Glover, 2017) found that a fundamental working definition of instructional coach is necessary for clarity around goals and alignment with leadership practices. These authors asserted that there are too many actions needed that directly and indirectly relate to the support of high-quality instructional practices of teachers, thereby pulling the instructional coach in too many directions to be considered effective or for coaching practices and routines to

be replicable and sustainable in the future. Since instructional coaches are commonly hired as teachers on special assignment (TOSA) and identify with a status somewhere in between the principal and teacher, research asserted that the instructional coach gets assigned tasks by both teachers and principals that are not always realistic or in service of the school vision (Bierly et al., 2016; Desimone & Pak, 2017; Hartman, 2017; Kurz et al., 2017).

Other findings from research (Admiraal, Veldman, Mainhard, & Jan, 2019; Callahan, 2016; Sebastian, Huang, & Allensworth, 2017; Van der Want, Schellings, & Mommers, 2018) revealed the attention placed on new teachers and how this may devalue the needs of the experienced teacher. Prior research considered the lack of research on experienced teachers and the career developmental needs to be a shortcoming in the educational landscape. Findings by authors (Admiraal et al., 2019; Callahan, 2016; Sebastian et al., 2017; Van der Want et al., 2018), revealed differentiation of professional development as a priority for teacher leadership and instructional coaches to consider.

Critique of Previous Research

Previous scholarship noted that effective instructional coaching is pivotal to the success of high-quality instruction at K–12 public schools (Castillo, Wang, Daye, Shum, and March, 2018; Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2016, 2018; Reddy et al., 2017; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Yet other researchers (Johnson, 2016; Smylie, & Eckert, 2018; Wang, 2017) believed that coaching is not always successful in and of its own right, but that certain leadership styles are more conducive to supporting a coaching model than others. Just by hiring an instructional coach does not solve the on-site instructional challenges at a school or lead to increased academic student performance. Knight (2016) addressed this misconception in his years of research on coaching and concluded that responsive coaching combined with strategic leadership planning opens the

door for a culture of teaching, learning, and coaching to grow and flourish. He concluded that coaches alone cannot make the necessary shifts in thinking, attitude, and behavior needed for teachers to improve classroom practices. Other authors (Cranston & Kusanovich, 2015; McCauley, Hammer, & Hinojosa, 2017) revealed effective coaching to be dependent on the coach's ability to recognize adult learning attributes and needs of adult learners in the field of education.

Summary

In this review of literature, I explored concepts related to instructional coaching programs. Pertinent to the study are the theoretical foundations which underpin the conceptual framework as well as findings from current research related to instructional coaching. The main theories used to guide the research process, and which were included in this section, are Lewin's theory of organizational change (1948), Knowles's adult learning theory (1973), and Bandura's theory on self-efficacy (1977). I consider all three of these theories interlocking concepts when reviewing how an instructional coach is situated in the school context and in relation to how administrators and fellow teachers receive coaching as a means to system wide school improvement.

Also included in Chapter 2 is the review of current literature which spans other themes connected to instructional coaching. Contributions in this chapter center on literature related to instructional coaching, organizational change, adult learning, and the career phases of educators. With a competitive and sophisticated global job market underway, college and career related school reform initiatives remain at the forefront of our nation's educational policies (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hendersen, 2015; Smylie & Eckert, 2018). Midcareer and late career teachers who entered the profession prior to the college and career readiness era have not experienced the

same preparation regiment as have more recent teacher candidates. This means they may not be as prepared to plan and deliver lessons that adequately shape students to be college and career ready. Teachers now rely heavily on professional development as a way to gain the training they need to become experts in content as well as in the other collaborative and metacognitive learning skills experts say students will need to be successful postsecondary school. As the presentation of traditional professional development proves virtually ineffective (Johnson, 2016; Knight, 2005), policy makers, school leaders, and teachers look to instructional coaching as not just an intervention tool, but rather a preferred and effective form of embedded professional development. Following the literature review will be a description of the qualitative research method used. Also included in Chapter 3 will be a list of guiding research questions, a description of participant selection, instrumentation, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this qualitative study, I employed a hermeneutic phenomenological research approach to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. I chose a hermeneutic phenomenological method as a way to gain deeper understanding of the holistic experiences of high school teachers who work with coaches to improve instructional practices (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 1977; Sibbald, Brennan, & Zecevic, 2018; Stephenson, Giles, & Bissaker, 2018). Through this approach, late career high school teachers shared their real-life stories and described and conveyed their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings around the effects that instructional coaching has on their teaching. Furthermore, teachers' experiential knowledge in relation to instructional coaching was captured through the exploration of their perceptions and an inquiry into their own experiences with coaching. Information provided by directly by teachers adds to the research on instructional coaching and imparts feedback for future implementation of instructional coaching programs.

The methodology used in this study is outlined in Chapter 3. In the following sections, I include a presentation of driving research questions which I used to guide the study and to design the methodology. In addition to introducing my role as the researcher, I review the problem statement and the purpose behind the study. In this methodology chapter, I also outline how the study was conducted. This includes a detailed account of how participants were selected, how information was gathered, what instrumentation methods were used, and how the data was analyzed. Finally, I explain the limitations and validity of the study, present the expected research findings, and discuss ethical issues that may arise during the study.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies?
2. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance?
3. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. Past research has widely focused on how instructional coaching models support the developing identities of new teachers, specifically those transitioning from a teacher credentialing program or those within their first 5 years in the classrooms (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Authors of refereed research suggested that more experienced teachers may be overlooked by instructional coaches because of their seniority status or because of assumptions that experienced teachers already possess the skills and knowledge needed for delivery of effective instruction; therefore, they do not need help. This oversight may cause experienced teachers to interact less with coaches and receive fewer benefits that instructional coaching can provide. For these reasons, little is known about how instructional coaching specifically affects the pedagogical strategies of the experienced high school teacher.

K–12 public school educators benefit from the development and routine refinement of sound pedagogical strategies throughout their careers. In order to meet the growing needs of diverse learners, it is paramount that teachers continually reflect upon their craft so that they can change what is not working and fine-tune what is (Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2016). District leaders can support the advancement and growth of teacher's pedagogical strategies by providing an instructional coach at the site or district level (Dewitt, 2017; Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2016). In addition, with the support of an instructional coach, the aim is to improve students' academic performance and thereby meet state and federal reform mandates (Bierly, Doyle, & Smith, 2016; Hartman, 2017).

Furthermore, with instructional coaching support, teachers set student learning goals and receive non-evaluative feedback from the coach to help meet these goals; thereby improving instruction as well as student learning (Desimone & Pak, 2017; DeWitt, 2017). Student data is a critical piece of the decision-making process when it comes to choosing which pedagogical practices to use and why, as the data demonstrates the areas where students have shown proficiency or where growth is still needed (Knight, 2018; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). However, effectively aligning data results with the right pedagogical strategy can be a challenging task for both new and experienced teachers alike. Instructional coaches can help experienced teachers connect learning goals, also known as intentions, with specific, targeted, researched based, and pedagogically sound strategies intended to improve student learning and enhance the learning experience for both teacher and student (DeWitt, 2017; Hattie, 2017). As suggested by Knight (2016), coaches do this by intentionally asking the right questions to teachers such as:

1. What is the student learning intention?
2. What prior knowledge do students have on the topic?

3. What does success look like for a student who masters the learning intention?
4. What steps does a student need to take in order to successfully achieve the learning intention?
5. What is the next step in learning for the student?

When coaches prompt teachers to think about learning and teaching as interconnecting processes, this strengthens both the planning and implementation stages of the teaching and learning cycle. Relying on an instructional coach to talk through ideas, provide constructive feedback, and act as a reflective partner can be advantageous throughout the teaching and learning journey for experienced teachers (DeWitt, 2017; Kee, Dearing, Anderson, & Shuster, 2017; Knight, 2016).

While coaches aim to serve the instructional needs and improve the pedagogical strategies of all teachers at their site, either through professional development opportunities or compelling one-on-one coaching conversations, researchers of existing literature on instructional coach effectiveness revealed that it is often teachers new to the profession who receive the most instructional coach support (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). There is a gap in literature as to what extent instructional coaches focus on providing support to teachers at different stages of their careers, particularly experienced teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience. By adopting a qualitative lens to this this hermeneutic phenomenological research study, I will explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of instructional coaching on their pedagogical strategies.

A hermeneutic phenomenological research design was used to understand the perspectives of high school teachers in relation to their personal experiences with instructional coaching. According to Creswell (2013) and Husserl (1977), this is the preferred method of

inquiry when obtaining information from multiple participants that includes their subjective perspectives and interpretations of a similar lived experience. By using this method, teacher participants were able to express their thoughts and feelings around the shared experience of instructional coaching and how this interaction had or had not affected the planning and implementation of their pedagogical strategies Through thorough analysis and interpretation, I then made sense of how teachers perceive the reality of their interactions with instructional coaches and how these interactions effect their pedagogical strategies (Creswell, 2014).

Phenomenology was suitable for this study as this method highlights participant observation and perspective and then through interpretation, these become knowledge (Husserl, 1977). In addition, phenomenology was appropriate because the participant group was smaller, consisting of 5–10 participants, and the research was conducted over a shorter amount of time (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, phenomenological research is unbounded, which means there are fewer boundaries placed on the participants when gathering data (Creswell, 2013). By applying a study method with fewer constraints, participants were less inhibited when sharing beliefs and perceptions of their experiences with coaching when relating the effects on their pedagogical strategies. Understanding teachers' perceptions will help to determine specific areas of instructional support that coaches can offer as teachers advance in their careers. This understanding can be used by educational leaders and coaches to prevent burnout, increase motivation, and potentially build teacher capacity within the school.

Research Population and Sampling Method

In a qualitative design study, researchers frequently select a target population of participants who can help in understanding the defined phenomena, as opposed to quantitative research, where random sampling occurs of a smaller group but who is representative of the

larger population (Creswell 2013). Since the purpose of this study was to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of instructional program on their pedagogical strategies, a criterion-based sampling technique was most appropriate. Purposeful selection sampling of experienced public high school teachers from a region in the Pacific Northwest was conducted for this research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The larger target group was public high school teachers from six different high schools, all within the same rural county in the Pacific Northwest. The main criteria used to identify the specific population of participants was years of teaching experience; all participants must have had 10 or more years of credentialed teaching experience to be defined as an experienced teacher or to be considered in the late years of their careers. In addition, the target population must have come from a school setting that implemented coaching as a means of improving the instructional practices of teachers. Furthermore, each school site must have had a designated instructional coach per high school site, as opposed to sites who share coaches, to ensure there was equal access to the instructional coach for each participant.

Participant Selection Logic

Purposeful selection was used to identify the teacher participant group (Creswell, 2013). High school teachers with 10 or more years of credentialed teaching experience were the target group. In addition, teachers were chosen from sites where it was confirmed that site based instructional coaches were working. Selected participants were willing to complete a Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E), to be observed by the researcher, and to participate in a one-on-one interview. Furthermore, all participants were able to discuss topics related to instructional coaching and their pedagogical practices.

Procedures for Recruitment

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are vital issues to consider when gaining access to study participants. Prior to participant selection, approval from the Concordia University Institutional Review Board was required. I first gained authorization from each high school site principal through a hand delivered Authorization for Research letter (see Appendix A). Then, I contacted each of the six school site principals, reviewed the purpose of the study, and asked permission to work with specific teachers from their school. Purposeful selection began first by identifying all experienced high school teachers in the county who worked at comprehensive high schools where an instructional coach was also established. This was done by first inquiring with site principals via phone and email if instructional coaches were used at the school site.

Lists of eligible teachers were provided by high school principals and the district human resources department. From this source of six separate lists, one from each school site, there was a population of 73 experienced teachers identified. Initially, I invited 45% of the experienced teacher population to join the study, first targeting 33 teachers in order to reduce turning away a high number of teachers. As a way to ensure recruitment from each school site, I first divided the lists by gender and names were cut up and then put into two separate containers, one for males and one for females. For the first stage of recruitment, I randomly selected a total of six candidate names from each of the four high schools with the greatest number of experienced teachers, two male names from one container and four female names from the other. Then I repeated the same procedure for each of the lists from the two high schools with fewer experienced teachers. From the one list with 10 experienced teachers, two males and three females were randomly selected; and from the other list with a total of six

experienced high school teachers, one male name and three female teacher names were randomly chosen from each container.

Each teacher in the recruitment pool received an Email Invitation to Participants letter (see Appendix B). Out of all 33 teachers in the recruitment pool, the first three teachers from the largest school and the first two from the other schools, to respond were invited to join the study. In efforts to recruit 13 participants—nine females and four males—I planned to accept more teachers from one school site, if there were fewer or no responses from either gender category, from another school. Four additional teachers were needed as alternates, with no specificity to gender. Since the target enrollment was not met and fewer teachers than anticipated responded favorably to join the study, a second round of invitation letters was sent out to all teachers from the original pool of eligible candidates. A total of 11 teachers agreed to participate.

A detailed account of participant recruitment was as follows. Recruiting occurred first through signed Authorization for Research forms (see Appendix A) from the high school principals. After obtaining participant contact information of teachers who met the study criteria from school site administrators, secretaries and human resources department, an online Email Invitation to Participant letter (see Appendix B) was sent out where I disclosed a clear explanation and clear purpose of the study (Creswell, 2013). Potential participants were given time to think about the study, it's purpose, and any questions or reservations they may have had about continuing as a volunteer for the study; an informal, in-person follow up meeting was offered as well but only two teachers accepted. The purpose of this in person meeting was to build trust, avoid deception, and to answer any questions (Creswell, 2013). To allow for participant processing time, I sent a follow Email Invitation to Participants letter (see Appendix

B) one week later, which gave the experienced teacher candidate the option to accept or reject the invitation to participate in the study. I sent all interested teachers a Participant Consent form (see Appendix C) to complete and return within 10 days. In addition, each candidate received an Initial Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix D). Information from the Initial Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix D) was used to validate the candidates' biographic information and confirm eligibility to participate in the study; no information was used during the data analysis process. Following these steps, I discussed a data collection schedule with participants that included planning for: (a) the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E), (b) the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and (c) privately tape-recorded interview sessions (see Appendix G).

Instrumentation

In this study, I used three types of instrumentation: a Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E), a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and Interview Questions (see Appendix G). All three forms of instrumentation aligned with the hermeneutic phenomenological study design and promoted the possibility of new discoveries to be made around the effects of instructional coaching on experienced high school teachers' pedagogical strategies (Creswell, 2013). Instruments designed specifically for this research study were used to explore the perceptions of teachers (Creswell, 2013).

The first form of instrumentation used was a Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E). This was completed by hand by some teachers, and online by others. Teachers filled out the first section (questions 1–4) during the planning phase of a lesson, and the second section (questions 5–7) was completed after the implementation of a lesson. The form was developed to overlap or coincide with possible professional development opportunities facilitated by an instructional

coach or with a one-on-one coaching conversation which was noted in the questionnaire by the teacher. On the questionnaire, teachers were asked to identify a student centered learning intention they were working on, to define what success of the learning intention should look like, to explain the steps students needed take to achieve the learning intention, and finally to identify at least one instructional strategy they intended to use while delivering the lesson. After the lesson, teachers used the same document where they were asked to reflect on the lesson and the strategy they used. In addition, they were asked to describe what went well during the lesson and to identify any changes they would like to make to that strategy for future instructional improvements. At this point they were also asked to identify what, if any, coaching support they received before, during, or after the lesson.

In addition to the Qualtrics Questionnaire form (see Appendix E), I used a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) as another form of instrumentation. Document review and analysis of the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) strengthened the validity of the instrumentation process. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), observations allow the researcher to get firsthand experience with the participant and to notice behaviors, actions, or thinking in the participant that may not be conveyed through other forms of instrumentation. In this study, teacher observations were used to identify and examine the pedagogical strategies teachers used, as they related to the interactions the teacher may or may not have had with an instructional coach. The instrumentation of a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) aligns with qualitative phenomenology because the document data comes firsthand from experience watching the participants. I used the teacher observation to further investigate the influence that instructional coaching had on the variety and frequency of strategies used by teacher participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Another critical piece of the instrumentation process was semistructured, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews. Dilley (2004) claimed that verbal data obtained from interviews, allows the researcher to dig deeper into the relationship between words and meaning. People use words to make meaning of their experiences, which then affects the actions they use for all future experiences. I used participant interview responses to gain insight into the context of teachers' experiences and to develop a clearer understanding of teachers' instructional behaviors as they related to maintaining or improving pedagogical strategies (Dilley, 2004). Interviews were useful because they allowed participants an opportunity to offer up historical information as well as thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, that would not have been available through observation alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As the sole researcher, the interview process also gave me some control over the line of questioning, which allowed for openness and unscripted direction as relevant topics emerge from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In the interview process, teachers were asked eight open-ended Interview Questions (see Appendix G) which were directly related to the initial research questions. Most specifically, the questions during the interview process focused on teachers' perceptions of their own current instructional pedagogy, their improvement process as a late career teacher, and the role that coaching plays in that improvement cycle. I asked teachers to reflect on their experiences with instructional coaching, whether through professional development, facilitation of department collaboration, one-on-one coaching conversations, or pop up meetings that occurred spontaneously when coaching support was requested. Participants were also be asked to describe ways that coaching influenced their decision-making process when it came to choose the right strategy based on the learning needs of the students. The corroboration of findings through the triangulation of data generated from the Qualtrics Questionnaire responses (see Appendix E), the

Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and responses to Interview Questions (see Appendix G) helped reduce any researcher bias and added credibility to the hermeneutic phenomenology research design.

Data Collection

Data collection procedures were systematically put in place in order to obtain information relevant to the purpose of the study and to the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). First, I created parameters for the study by identifying the sampling and recruitment methods. Next, I collected data from the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E). This questionnaire explored teachers' perceptions on lesson planning and implementation of a specific strategy which was then observed and documented on the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F). Semistructured interviews were held throughout the research period but after the observation had been conducted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Finally, I identified specific protocols that were needed for recording and transcribing the information provided by teacher participants. The data collection methods outlined in this section were based on the availability of data I had access to, as well as the convenience of working with high school teachers in the same county where I work and live. For the purpose of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for each participant.

At the beginning of the 2019 school year, I contacted high school site principals to ask for permission to conduct research at their site by way of a hand delivered Authorization for Research letter (see Appendix A). Experienced high school teachers who currently worked at comprehensive high school sites where there was a site based instructional coach employed, were asked to participate in the study via an electronic Email Invitation to Participants (see Appendix B). As teachers responded to the email study invitation with interest, I then sent out an

electronic participant information sheet titled, Initial Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix D) with a return due date of 10 days. Out of the total eligible participant pool, 11 teachers accepted to join the study. I made online contact and in person visits to two different sites to meet with individuals, to review the data collection process and timeline, to present and explain the Qualtrics Questionnaire form (see Appendix E), and to schedule future observation and interview dates.

In order to explore and interpret the experienced teachers' perceptions of an on-site instructional coaching program, I gathered data from the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E). The questionnaire was presented to teachers in hard copy form and electronically. The questionnaire asked teachers to identify a strategy they planned to use during a lesson and then to reflect upon the implementation of the strategy based on the instructional coaching support they received. The intention was to see how coaching support was transferred by the teacher from theory to action. Questions from the questionnaire focused on the lesson planning and lesson delivery stages which is why one section of the form was completed by the teacher prior to a lesson and the second part of the form after the delivery of a lesson and implementation of the targeted strategy. As the researcher, I picked up some forms from the school sites at the time of the final interview, or they were emailed back to me upon completion. I used process coding to identify emerging categories and concepts from the first data analysis cycle of the Qualtrics Questionnaire responses (Saldaña, 2009).

I also collected documentation data through teacher observations. Each teacher participant was observed one time for the duration of one high school period. I used a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) to further explore what types, as well as the variety of strategies teachers were using. In addition, teacher observations provided a firsthand look into

how teachers transferred their thinking of pedagogical strategies during the planning stage, possibly with an instructional coach, to the actual lesson delivery with student learning as the focal point. This also allowed me to observe how students responded to the instructional strategy in the moment. Teacher observations corresponded with dates from the lessons and data identified on the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E). Cross-referencing data from the Qualtrics Questionnaire and the Teacher Observation Checklist provided insight into how teachers perceive the experience of teaching the strategy in relation to how successful they feel they were at teaching the strategy. I used a general color-coding process to begin organizing and analyzing observation data based on those teachers who identified using instructional coaching support and those who did not (Saldaña, 2009).

The final form of data collection was one-on-one, face-to-face, semistructured interviews. As Creswell (2013) describes, the qualitative interview is an interactive, open ended process that can help increase credibility of the study and findings. I sent an explanation of the interview protocols to each participant prior to the individual interview times. In the protocols, I explained the purpose of the interviews, a general overview of the interview questions (see Appendix G), the format for recording the interview, and closing instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A personal laptop computer was used to record the interviews, and as the primary researcher I simultaneously took notes. I saved the recorded information onto the device and converted the recordings to files to be uploaded, transcribed, and analyzed. Three cycles of coding were used. First, I applied open coding to systematically segment the responses into more manageable chunks and to identify specific words and phrases from participants. Then, in order to reduce the data even further, I assigned specific concepts and categories to participant response. Finally, I

linked the major categories to broader themes that were unique to participants but also common amongst participants (Saldaña, 2009).

The setting of the interviews was the teacher's classroom. Also used by one teacher, was a centrally located conference room on campus. Interviews occurred at a designated time before school, during preparation periods, and after school. Each interview took no longer than 45 minutes and was conducted during a 3-month data collection period. Eight open-ended interview questions (see Appendix G) were asked pertaining to the teachers' beliefs on instructional coaching, experiences with instructional coaching, and perceptions of the effectiveness of the instructional coaching program at their site. Teachers were provided an opportunity to offer other relevant information related to their experiences working with an instructional coach and the effects of this work on their pedagogical strategies.

Identification of Attributes

The main attributes for this study were derived from Lewin's (1948) change management theory, Knowles's (1973) adult learning theory, and Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy model. The identified attributes are systematic change, andragogy, and belief. Hattie (2009) stressed how high levels of self-efficacy are a leading indicator of high impact teacher instruction. When teachers have a strong belief in their ability to teach and in addition, believe in their fellow teachers the same way, then collective efficacy rises. The focus on self-efficacy was used to explore how experienced teachers received the instructional coaching program as a support for improving their pedagogical strategies. How teachers perceived their own ability to implement effective instructional strategies may have influenced the type of support they requested or participated in. Self-efficacy can also increase through andragogical approaches that are used by the coach (Knowles, 1973). The attribute of adult learning was included as a way to connect the

work of the instructional coach with the improvement work of the teacher. The efforts of the coach are anchored in the instructional goals set out by the principal and leadership team, with school wide change and improvement as the ultimate objective.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative data analysis and interpretation of data are vital steps in converting collected data into meaningful knowledge. For this reason, I followed Creswell (2013) and Saldaña's (2009) recommendation of winnowing the collected information first through an open coding process, and then by organizing the data sets into relevant and yet similar categories, before attempting to make sense of it. Since the aim was not to generalize findings to other larger populations of teachers, data were analyzed for parallels and patterns as they pertained to the situational context of the participants as well as for their relation back to the research questions. A simultaneous procedures approach was instituted so that I could analyze data from the Qualtrics Questionnaire forms (see Appendix E) and the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) as they were collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Finally, I analyzed transcriptions from interviews last, as they were mostly conducted later in the data collection period.

A thorough analysis of data from the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E) began first from reading all responses to get a general idea of participants' perspectives on how they deliberately planned and implemented specific pedagogical strategies, with or without the support of instructional coaching. On the second reading, I organized and began color coding the forms based on the type of instructional coaching support that the teacher received, being either (a) green for professional development led by a coach, (b) yellow for a one-on-one coaching conversation between coach and experienced teacher, (c) blue for a professional learning

community meeting led by a coach, (d) pink no coaching support was used by the teacher and (e) gray for any combination of one or more coaching supports (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). General color coding of the questionnaire assisted with organizing the data further and in identifying categories that surfaced between participant responses, particularly between the perceptions of teachers who used coaching support during the planning and implementation stages of a lesson and those who did not.

I also utilized process coding (Saldaña, 2009) in order to analyze the intended teacher actions and the types of strategies teachers implemented. Response items were noted in an Excel spread sheet and an initial code was added that describe the actions taken by the teacher during the observation. Following process coding, a word or phrase was used to summarize the data and to analyze teacher's perception of the effect that the strategy has on student learning. Major themes that surfaced in the analysis process, were noted on the spread sheet in a new column. Questionnaire responses were used in conjunction with teacher observation documentation to explore teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical strategy planning and implementation process with or without the support of an instructional coach. I included a cycle of descriptive coding to capture the essence of the teacher's beliefs and to organize responses (Saldaña, 2009).

Working with an instructional coach over time may influence the types of pedagogical decisions experienced teachers make in terms of what instructional strategies to use and why (Knight, 2005). Therefore, after initial color coding with reference to instructional coaching support, I used the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) data to identify the frequency and variety of intentional pedagogical strategies implemented by teacher participants during a lesson. Each Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) was analyzed for the variety of strategies used as well as the most frequently used strategies as they corresponded to

subject area and activity. In addition, I cross referenced the checklist with the corresponding Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E) from the same teacher to identify what type of coaching support, if any, influenced the decision making of the teacher around their pedagogical strategies for that lesson. Color coding was used again, to determine the strategies based on the noted instructional support. The color coding process was consistent with the coding of the questionnaire: (a) green for professional development led by a coach, (b) yellow for a one-on-one coaching conversation between coach and experienced teacher, (c) blue for a professional learning community meeting led by a coach, (d) pink no coaching support was used by the teacher, and (e) gray for any combination of one or more coaching supports.

By then applying a form of Saldaña's (2009) descriptive coding, I analyzed the strategy categories identified as having the most influence from an instructional coach. Then I wrote a word or short phrases to summarize the general strategies and variety of strategies used by teachers on the same spread sheet form. Teachers' perceptions of the effects of instructional coaching on the implementation of their pedagogical strategies, was revealed through the action steps they took in the planning stage of a lesson as well as during the implementation of the strategy. Due to the small number of participants, I did not use any computer software program but coded all data personally by hand.

The first step in analyzing the semistructured interview data was to transcribe the recorded interviews. For this analysis segment and to produce high quality transcriptions of the interviews, an online, paid, transcription site called Scribie was used. Further procedures for analyzing the interview response data were based on a qualitative coding process and include: (a) organizing, cataloging, and preparing the materials, (b) reading the information for ideas related to how teachers are thinking about their experience with coaches as well as their pedagogical

strategies (c) organizing and labeling the information for recurring teacher actions, beliefs, experiences, and progressions, and (d) generating general descriptions of teachers' experiences as they related to major themes that were noticed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I also explored and was open to complex theme connections that emerged during the study.

After interview responses were transcribed, I organized the transcripts by the types of instructional coaching support(s), if any, that the teacher identified using. After, I copied responses to each interview question into an Excel spread sheet, so that I had all the different interview responses from each participant, but for the same question, compiled together. This helped keep response information organized and allowed me to apply open coding to all responses but one item at a time (Saldaña, 2009). During this stage of the process, I analyzed responses and coded with a word or short phrase that came directly from the participant. Then in a third column, I interpreted the major categories that arrived in relation to teacher's perspectives, beliefs, and feelings about the effects that instructional coaching has on their pedagogical strategies. A final round of coding was used to extract common themes that arose from the interview process. These were all noted in a final column and then cross checked with themes from the questionnaire and the teacher observations.

Limitations of the Research Design

The hermeneutic phenomenological research design of this study posed certain limitations. Due to the interactive nature of qualitative research, my personal world views as the researcher, may have influenced the course of the research process. For this reason, my interpretations may have altered the survey or interview responses provided by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While sample findings from qualitative research may be more comprehensive on one hand, they may also be less accurate than if they we analyzed

quantitatively (Creswell, 2014). Since hermeneutic, phenomenology falls under an emergent design, as the researcher I adjusted the line of questioning during interviews, based on individual participant responses; therefore, not all participants were asked all the same questions. Although this allowed all participant responses to be genuine, personal, and accurate portrayals of their experience with instructional coaching, it limited the replicability of the study.

Validation

According to Creswell (2013), the interpretive approach to qualitative research requires focus on the participants as well as the researcher. The two work in partnership to interpret the topic and to gain deeper meaning. Yet the researcher must first question any moral assumptions that could influence and alter the interpretations. Researcher understanding of the topic as well as self-reflection on the experience both contribute to the validation of a research study. Creswell (2013) also points out that close interaction between participant and researcher and detailed descriptions of data can strengthen the validity of a study. Another critical validation strategy highlighted by Creswell (2013) is member checking, whereby the researcher brings interpretations and conclusions back to the participant to check for accuracy of what is written and to provide input on what is missing. Credibility and dependability are key validation criteria when interpreting participants' responses for accuracy.

Credibility

A phenomenological researcher builds trustworthiness throughout different phases of the research process (Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017). In accordance with Creswell and Creswell (2018), I built credibility into the research plan by providing multiple validity procedures. First, I provided clear explanations and rationale as to how and why certain decisions were made about the study (Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017). In addition, I offered

other techniques to ensure credibility such as documenting all the steps of the qualitative research process and acknowledging any bias that occurred, both during the data collection process and when interpreting the findings. Credibility of the study was also strengthened through a data triangulation method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I formed a credible observation base by incorporating data from multiple concrete events related to instructional coaching and by gathering and examining data provided through three different sources, the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E), the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and Interview Questions (see Appendix G). Creswell and Creswell (2018) posit data triangulation as a means of ensuring internal validity and credibility. Finally, I relied on participant check-ins to confirm results with participants and determine if the findings were accurate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

Researchers enhance the overall dependability of their study by documenting all research steps and procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Dependable qualitative studies can be defined as both accurate and consistent as they show data stability over a given period and through varying conditions (Morrow, 2005). This is especially important in hermeneutic phenomenology as the design changes as different developments, such as new research questions, unfold during the research process (Stephenson, Giles, & Bissaker, 2018). As the researcher, I embedded dependability into the research steps by detailing as many aspects of the research process as possible. Furthermore, I used a peer debriefer to review and interpret the research strategies and methods. This allowed for cross-checking for both consistency and accuracy of the procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Expected Findings

I expected information gathered from experienced high school teachers to show a range in the level of influence that instructional coaching had on the use and improvement of pedagogical strategies. Even though all of the teachers worked in the same county and all of the schools were rural, the demographics of each site were slightly different and therefore may have altered how teachers perceive the effects of the instructional coaching program, as the instructional coaches may have distributed their time and prioritized their responsibilities differently based on the situation at their site. However, all teachers, regardless of where they fell on the continuum of new teacher to experienced teacher, had the potential to refine their craft and improve their pedagogical teaching practices in order to meet the needs of the diverse learners in their classes. I expected that some experienced teachers would refrain from reaching out to their instructional coach for one-on-one coaching support and from regularly monitoring their instructional growth, either independently or with the help of a coach. This left me to expect that most experienced high school teachers only interacted with their instructional coach during professional learning community meetings or during more collective professional development sessions. For this reason, I further expected some teachers would have little to no understanding of what an ideal coaching model could look like and how it could potentially service their instructional needs, with the core intent of improving student learning. Even with these expected findings, I remained open to other possible results, themes, or patterns that manifested in the data.

Ethical Issues

When working with human beings in qualitative research it is imperative to make every concerted effort that no harm is done to participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As the

researcher, I protected participants' rights and well-being through informed consent. The informed consent process provided the participant candidates with enough details about the study, the risks, and the benefits so that they could make a well-informed decision of whether or not to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013). I also reassured prospective participants that any identifying information they gave would be kept securely via electronic encryption or locked file inside my home office and that I would not identify them in any publication or report. In addition, I explained that all personal information would always be kept private and that all study documents will be destroyed 3 years after the conclusion of the study.

Furthermore, I anticipated certain ethical issues that became evident as a result of the research instrumentation, allowing me to make concessions when needed and build trustworthiness into the research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ethical considerations I made for this study included: seeking approval of the Concordia University Institutional Review Board; gaining permission from school site principals and participants; disclosing the purpose of the study with honesty; and avoiding any participant deception or power struggles (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Among these and other ethical considerations, I maintained confidentiality as a researcher.

Conflict of Interest Assessment

Currently, I am employed as an instructional coach in the same area where teachers were invited to participate in the study. Although, efforts to work more closely with these teachers may have been misconstrued by other teachers or taken time away from other teachers, the intent was to conduct research after school contract hours so as to not interfere with the responsibilities I have as an instructional coach. There were no competing interests because I did not gain anything monetarily, nor did my status or position change in any way from teachers responding

or providing honest information during the data collection process. Since experienced teachers from the same school site as where I work, participated in the research, the study may have influenced how they interacted with me, how they relied on my coaching support, and how they interpreted my performance as a coach. By keeping a research journal, I documented observations, feelings, and thoughts around these issues as they arose. The journal also helped me refrain from including any reflexive thinking during the interpretation and analysis of teacher responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). No part of the journal document was considered for data collection and analysis.

Researcher's Position

Inherently in qualitative research, there is direct interaction between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2014). As the researcher, I collected data directly from participant feedback forms, through teacher observations, and one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. I analyzed and interpreted the data in order to accurately convey the feelings, observations, and perceptions of teacher participants. Whereas researchers of grounded theory use inductive analysis of participant information to formulate themes, categories, or theories, researchers of hermeneutic phenomenology let the subjective accounts of the participants speak for themselves (Husserl, 1977; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using a narrative format, I described and presented the clearest account of the teachers' experiences with instructional coaching by honing in on details that made the experience subjectively unique to each teacher (Creswell, 2014; Husserl, 1977).

Since qualitative research is interpretive and the researcher and participants are in a close interactive relationship, I exposed in advance, personal and ethical issues related to the topic. Not only did this help in gaining access to a research site, but this also allowed me to form stronger

relationships with participants (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, I presented personal biases and background information up front to help frame the interpretations I made during the study.

As the researcher, I aimed to monitor and reduce bias during the data collection and analysis process. I collected data through the Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E) responses, the Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and by asking Interview Questions (see Appendix G). After, data were analyzed and interpreted in order to accurately convey in narrative form the feelings, observations, and perceptions of participants. Finally, it was also my role of researcher to present findings and to bring experienced high school teachers' stories to the forefront for a larger audience to hear and consider.

Currently, I am a high school instructional coach in the same region where the research study took place. I had access to four high school sites all within the same county. Due to the rural location of the county and the low socioeconomic situation of the general population in the region, the high schools in the area have a high teacher turnover rate. Thus, this has increased the number of new teachers or teachers in an induction program currently working on getting their credential, which in turn has evoked a magnified sense of urgency on the part of leaders to help these new teachers survive.

Even though I am a resident in the area of study and an instructional coach at one of the high schools, to avoid any bias I may have about coaching, I refrained from contributing data and opinions during the data collection and analysis process by keeping a personal research journal (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I used the journal to acknowledge personal reflexive thinking, feelings, beliefs, observations, and other biases that may have influenced how data was interpreted. Journal information was not included as part of the data analysis section, nor did participants see any of the journal information. In addition, I disclosed specific information to

participants at the study site where I also work, that explained how the study data and findings were used as a way to reassure participants that they were not at risk (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As a classroom teacher for over 23 years, I have had positive experiences with highly effective instructional coaches, as well as moderately effective coaches. It was not until my 17th year of teaching that I had interactions with an instructional coach who mobilized me to think differently about my pedagogy and followed through with a coaching cycle to the point of making a profound effect on my teaching practices. The site I worked at as a teacher during this experience was different than the site I currently work at as an instructional coach. The philosophical assumptions and personal experiences I bring to the study are acknowledged as an important part of the qualitative design.

Summary

The descriptive qualitative analysis of a hermeneutic phenomenological research design aligns with the purpose of this study and is supported by research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The holistic nature of this research approach was fundamental to providing the space and framework for teacher participants to share feedback thoughtfully and honestly and to contribute to the data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By using an emergent instrumentation design during this naturalistic research process, I brought forth relevant data surrounding the experiences of late career high school teachers, more specifically their perceptions, behaviors, and feelings toward the effects that instructional coaching had on their pedagogical classroom strategies.

Along with revealing the perceptions of teachers, this hermeneutic phenomenology design also exposed the needs, desires, and routines of the experienced teacher participants as

they related to instructional coaching support (Sibbald, Brennan, & Zecevic, 2018). Therefore, findings revealed during this research process could inform and support any future decisions that school site principals, district administrators, and even county leaders consider making around improvements to instructional practices of teachers and prioritization of instructional coach responsibilities. Even more important is that the phenomenological structure of this research permits the findings to act as testimonials as to how teachers are feeling about their instructional pedagogy as they advance in their careers. Any understanding gained from the research study can be used to reimagine how teachers are supported throughout their careers, to prevent feelings of burnout in experienced teachers, to increase motivation, and to potentially build teacher capacity from within the school, using the expertise and strengths of the experienced teacher.

In Chapter 3, I described the methodology I used to conduct the study. I reviewed the research questions as a way to reestablish the purpose and direction of the study. Following the research questions, I explained the data collection and analysis responsibilities that I have as the researcher. The participant criteria established was of experienced high school teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience, working at a site where there is also an instructional coach. Purposeful selection was described to show the selection process for study participants. In addition, I described the instrumentation methods, the data collection process, and further procedures for data analysis. In Chapter 4, I summarize and present the results from this exploration of experienced high school teachers' perceptions of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

High quality pedagogical strategies are linked to improved academic student achievement, however not all teachers receive adequate support in developing these strategies as they move on in their careers (Knight, 2018; Stephenson, Giles, & Bissaker, 2018). Administrators prioritize instructional coaching support for new teachers over ongoing support for experienced teachers, those with 10 or more years of experience, based on the scope of needs that new teachers demand (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). Furthermore, administrators and instructional coaches may have existing preconceptions that experienced teachers already have the essential knowledge and skills needed to support student learning (DeWitt, 2017; Knight, 2015).

While some experienced teachers identify with a strong sense of efficacy and independence, without instructional support they are also susceptible to high levels of frustration and increased feelings of burn out. This may lead to inconsistencies in pedagogical development and a lack of quality instruction (Hunzicker, 2017). In this hermeneutic phenomenological study, I explored how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. Major themes that emerged through data analysis were alternative coaching supports, perceptions of improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties. Findings from this study can help administrators re-prioritize the coaches' role and responsibilities at the high school level so that they are more available to meet the individual needs of teachers throughout different phases of their careers. In addition, the experienced teacher adds a fresh perspective to the concentration of existing literature which primarily focuses on the effects of instructional coaching programs on new teachers (DeWitt, 2017).

I utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological design as a framework for gaining insight into how late career high school teachers experienced an instructional coaching program and the significance that the coaching program had on their pedagogical strategies. In order to thoroughly explore the research topic, qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. These data collection methods were structured as a way to answer the three research questions:

1. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies?
2. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance?
3. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site?

Within Chapter 4, I summarize the data collected, explain the analysis process, and review the findings of the study. To begin, a description of the study site and study sample used in data collection are presented. Following the sample description, I discuss the phenomenological research methodology used to frame the study and then explain how the procedures used to analyze the data align with the methodology. Findings from coding and thematic development are also included in Chapter 4. Finally, a narrative model will be used to report out results from each data collection method and to describe major themes that surfaced.

Description of Sample

The study participant sample was drawn from four different comprehensive high schools from a rural county in the Pacific Northwest. Initially, six site principals were asked to give authorization for research, yet one principal declined for unknown reasons and another principal

stated no structured instructional coaching program had been implemented at the high school level which meant they were not eligible to participate in the study. All high schools were comprehensive high schools; one school also had grade 8 at its site. All schools were in the same county, but from three different school districts.

Participants were selected based on specific study criteria. All participants needed to be late career high school teachers with 10 or more years of credentialed teaching experience. In addition, all participants needed to work at a school that had instituted an on-site instructional coaching program. Purposeful selection was used to gather participants who fulfilled these criteria. A total of 34 experienced high school teachers were sent an Email Invitation to Participants letter (see Appendix B), explaining the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, and also an Initial Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix D), that confirmed eligibility for the study. Of these 34 potential participants, 11 responded in favor of volunteering for the study. While this was fewer than the anticipated number of 13 participants, the group size remained within the acceptable range recommended by Creswell (2013) of 3–15 individuals. This number also remained consistent for data saturation attainment in a phenomenological study. Consent forms (see Appendix C) were given to and signed by all 11 participants. All 11 participants remained in the study for the duration of the research process.

Demographically, the small group size generated a mix of participants that was consistent with the population of experienced teachers in the county. All but two of the 11 teachers self-identified as being White which is consistent with the racial demographic of the area. At the time of the study, roughly 69% of teachers in the county were female and 31% male. Gender representation of the participant sample replicated the population of experienced high school teachers in the county; the study population consisted of eight female high school teachers and

three male high school teachers. Even though the difference between the perceptions of male and female experienced high school teachers and the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies was not a theme that emerged during the course of this study, it is worthy of noting that more information on the topic may be gleaned by exploring the perceptions of high school teachers based on gender.

All participants acknowledged having over 10 years of teaching experience. However, there was a notable range in the number of years of teaching service as shown in Table 1, with 13 being the fewest years and 27 being the greatest number of years. Whereas five of the participants stated having between 13 and 18 years; this included all three males, the remainder of the group, all females, identified having between 20 and 27 years of experience. Also relevant to the study was the number of years teachers identified as having worked at a school site where an instructional coaching program existed. This ranged between 2 and 15 years, but most of the study participants acknowledged working between 2 and 10 years with an instructional coaching program.

There were no set criteria as to the subject matter taught by teacher participants. Teachers represented a wide spectrum of courses and subjects at the high school level. In the study group were individuals who taught child development, conceptual chemistry, Earth science, English, foreign language, history, math, physical education, Special Education, and welding. Most teachers taught combinations of students Grade 9 through Grade 12. One teacher taught students from Grade 8 and Grade 9, and another teacher only taught Grade 11 and Grade 12 students.

Table 1

Description of Sample Population

Participant #	Pseudonym	Number of Years Teaching	Number of Years Teaching at a Site with a Coach	Department
P1	Collin	10–15	5	Math
P2	TJ	16–20	9	Science
P3	Brian	16–20	1	Science
P4	Alma	16–20	10	Career and Technical Education
P5	Dana	21–25	9	Physical Education
P6	Shauna	10–15	4	Special Education
P7	Renee	10–15	6	Science
P8	Linda	21–25	15	English, Social Science
P9	Lorna	26–30	2	World Language
P10	Sonja	16–20	2	Social Science
P11	Abby	21–25	10	English

Methodology and Analysis

A phenomenological methodology was used to guide this study on how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. Through this methodology, I was able to explore the subjective life experiences of the individual teachers as well as to discover the objective experiences that teachers with instructional coaching support had in common with one another (Creswell, 2014). The research methods I employed gave participants multiple opportunities to share their beliefs, feelings, and opinions about instructional coaching and to share how the phenomena of instructional coaching

played out in their life as an experienced teacher. In addition, using a phenomenological approach allowed me to collect multiple forms of data which were then used to develop a complex description of the types of coaching support teachers experienced as well as how they experienced it.

Multiple instruments were used to collect data from study participants: a questionnaire, an observation check list, and semistructured interview questions. Questionnaire statements were designed to explore two of the guiding research questions: (a) How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies? and (b) How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance? Seven open response questions were developed to allow participants an opportunity to reflect on the elements of lesson planning that may or may not have been influenced by instructional coaching support. The questionnaire was created using the web-based software program Qualtrics. Participants were sent an electronic version of the questionnaire via a Qualtrics survey link and in addition, were also given a hard copy of the questionnaire (see Appendix E). Eight of the study volunteers preferred to complete the hard copy of the questionnaire and three opted for the electronic version. All electronic responses were eventually printed out for coding purposes. Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire in stages, part one during the planning stage of a lesson and part two after the delivery of the same lesson. The questionnaire was also developed to correspond with the classroom observation checklist that was used to identify and observe the strategies that were noted by the teacher on the questionnaire.

Two cycles of coding were used to analyze Questionnaire responses. All responses from question 4 were first color coded for the type of instructional coaching support used by the

participant: (a) green for professional development led by a coach, (b) yellow for a one-on-one coaching conversation between coach and experienced teacher, (c) blue for a professional learning community meeting led by a coach, (d) pink for coaching support was used by the teacher, and (e) gray for any combination of one or more coaching supports (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Following color coding of question 4, all questions and responses were documented into an input spreadsheet, organized by the initial response to question 4. Participants who noted using no coaching support were organized together, those with only one coaching support were put together, and then those who acknowledged using a combination of coaching supports were grouped together. From there, a second cycle of process coding was used on questions 2, 3, 5, and 7 to determine the actions teachers took in planning for and implementing pedagogical strategies into their lesson. A final reduction coding cycle was used to interpret the actions that the teacher intended for the students to ensure learning. Concepts from this cycle emerged as: conferencing, discussing, listening, sharing, independent notetaking, participating, following step-by-step directions, copying teacher notes, and annotating. Emerging themes developed as low engagement and low interaction, high engagement but low interaction, and high engagement and high interaction.

Observation data collection was used to further explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. The observation method allowed me to observe the variety, the frequency, and the quality of the instructional strategies implemented during a lesson. During the structured observations, I used a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) to note the specific strategies observed. A list of high impact teaching and learning strategies was created based on John Hattie's (2009) recommendations. Each list corresponded to preassigned categories titled:

questioning strategies, active engagement strategies, and strategies to check for understanding. An area for descriptive notes and comments was also included. Observations were scheduled in advance for a day and time agreed upon by the teacher and in accordance with completion of the first part of the questionnaire. All teacher participants were emailed a copy of the checklist ahead of time and all observations were conducted in the teacher's designated classroom.

Data from the Teacher Observation Checklists (see Appendix F) were reviewed and analyzed for correspondence with information from the Qualtrics Questionnaire document (see Appendix E). Observation data was first coded and then added to the same input spreadsheet. An initial coding cycle was used to determine the number of different strategies used. This information was added to the spread sheet and consisted of ranges of 0–5 strategies, 6–10 strategies, or 11 or more strategies. I then applied descriptive coding to isolate the variety of strategies teachers used. From this descriptive coding cycle, I made sure that all the teaching and learning strategies matched up with one of the categories. Feedback and differentiation categories were added. I cross referenced the strategies observed on the Teacher Observation Checklist with those identified by the teacher on the questionnaire and highlighted them in yellow if they matched and pink if they did not.

Semistructured interviews were included into the data collection process as a way for participants to authentically share their story as experienced high school teachers in an environment where an instructional coaching program is established. As with all the data collection tools, the purpose of the interviews was to gain a richer understanding of the perceptions high school teachers had in relation to the influence of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. The semistructured interviews also provided participants an opportunity to share their beliefs on the concept of coaching and to share their

perceptions on program implementation at their site. A total of eight open ended questions were developed as a starting point for the interviews and were given to participants prior to the scheduled interview date and time. In order to create flow in the conversation, I remained open and flexible as new topics developed but maintained the integrity and credibility of the interview process by asking all participants the same eight questions. In addition, the interview process allowed me to probe more deeply into certain topics and ask follow-up question. All interviews took place in a private classroom at a time that was prearranged with the teacher. The average interview time was 34 minutes.

Interview responses were recorded on a personal laptop device using a voice recording application. Files were then uploaded to a secure, web-based transcription service called Scribie, which had been approved by the Institutional Review Board. Transcriptions of audio files were then downloaded back onto my personal computer where they were safely stored using anonymous file nomenclature. As the sole researcher, I also took descriptive notes at the time of each interview. Interview transcripts were read thoroughly for basic understanding and meaning. Transcription responses to each question were entered into a spread sheet for organization and coding purposes. Information was organized by participant and so that all responses to question 1, appeared in one column, all responses to question 2 appeared in another, and organized using this format until all questions and responses were inputted for all eight questions. An initial open coding cycle was used on segments of participant responses. Key ideas and beliefs were extracted in the exact form the participant stated them. Any information that had relevance to the individual's experience with instructional coaching was inputted at face value, not interpreted. Transcriptions were reread to make sure that ideas and statements had been entered accurately. Another round of descriptive coding was used to identify the main concept or concepts expressed

by the participant. Responses to question 3 (How effective is the instructional coaching program at your site?) and question 5 (How effective has your work with a coach been on the development of your instructional strategies?) were coded by the degree of effectiveness. Responses were then categorized, and common themes were noted on the spread sheet.

By applying multiple data collection methods, I was able to confirm findings and add credibility to the research process. Moreover, triangulation methods allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of instructional coaching, as experienced by late career high school teachers. Each data collection method, the questionnaire, the observation checklist, and the interview questions, helped me understand the instructional coaching program from the participant's point of view. As a result, the triangulation method helped in answering the research questions and added to the comprehensive description narrative used to explain these points of view.

Summary of the Findings

The methods utilized during the data collection process produced a wide range of teacher perspectives. The three data collection instruments, the questionnaire, the observation checklist, and the interview questions, were designed to explore teachers' perceptions on instructional coaching and its effectiveness on their instructional strategies. In addition, the data collection methods were aimed to explore how experienced teachers perceive the benefits of coaching on other areas of their performance and on the effectiveness of program implementation at the school site level. The questionnaire and interview allowed participants an opportunity to share their beliefs and perceptions of coaching; the observation of instructional strategies in the classroom provided context for the results of the coaching experience. Collectively, responses helped gain richer insight into the phenomena of supporting experienced teachers through a

balanced instructional coaching program. In this summary of the findings, I distinguish the themes that were common among participants as well as those themes that were unique to individual participants. While different themes emerged from the multiple instrumentation methods, major themes that stood out from combined data analysis procedures were alternative coaching supports, the concept of improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties.

Question #1: How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies?

Important to the general understanding of teacher perceptions of instructional coaching, was the participants' inherent belief around the concept of instructional coaching. Teachers collectively conveyed inherent beliefs that instructional coaching programs are conceptually and fundamentally a good idea. Participants agreed that school wide benefits could exist from a well-structured coaching model. While no opposing perspective was encountered, there were participants who believed the coaching model could not be delivered without a complimentary and visionary administrative leadership team. The perceptions were that there are too many roles and responsibilities placed on the coach, and without leadership support, the coach is spread too thin and ultimately ineffective. Participants added that prioritization of the coaches' responsibilities should be determined by the instructional needs of the teachers.

The study findings revealed that most experienced teachers perceive their interaction with the instructional coaching program at their site to be minimal, therefore the effect of instructional coaching on the planning and development of their pedagogical strategies was also minimal. Prominent categories that materialized were relevant to teachers' beliefs about their limited interaction with the coach at their site. Teachers expressed ideas that were coded as, administrative duties, lack of content knowledge, missed opportunities, more work, new

teachers, personality conflicts, and teacher confidence, Teachers mostly agreed that the lack of interaction with an instructional coach came from either the teacher's strong self-efficacy in content and pedagogy or their perception that the instructional coach was too busy to work with them. Those participants who expressed confidence in their instructional abilities in turn shared similar beliefs of not needing or wanting to work with a coach. In some cases, the notion of not wanting to work with a coach stemmed from the belief that instructional coaches created more work for the teachers to do. Content expertise was the main reason why some teachers did not feel they needed a coach or that the coach would not have enough content knowledge to help.

Teachers who perceived the coach to be too busy expressed thoughts of not wanting to bother the instructional coach, specifically in relation to the high number of new teachers per site who were visibly in survival mode and in need of coaching support. This mentorship and assistance to new teachers was interpreted by the experienced teachers as a way for them to be able to focus on their own work and not have to spend time mentoring the new teacher. Common to many teachers, were perceptions that the instructional coach was also busy performing administrative duties that were not necessarily in their job description.

In addition to the perceived lack of interaction with instructional coaches, data results also showed that few participants believed instructional coaching effected the planning stage of their lessons. Most teachers perceived the effects of an instructional coaching program on the development and planning of their pedagogical strategies as being insignificant. Some teachers had difficulty remembering and identifying coaches as being the source of new information, new skills, or new instructional strategies. Few teachers acknowledged having any type of classroom modeling or professional development facilitated by a coach, in which they learned new strategies they could apply during their own instructional time. However, from the questionnaire

responses, it was discovered that when considering planning for pedagogical strategies in the future, most participants expressed interest in having a coaching conversation even if they had not received coaching support in the past.

Although the majority of teachers expressed having limited to no interaction with the instructional coach, there were four experienced teachers who identified receiving instructional coaching support in the planning of a lesson, and who perceived positive effects on their pedagogical strategies. Teachers who reflected positively on the effects of instructional coaching mainly experienced one-on-one coaching conversations and professional development facilitated by a coach. According to the participants, the actions taken by the coach gave them ideas to include in their lesson planning and provided specific instructional strategies which they tried during a lesson. They conveyed the importance of thinking through details of a lesson with another person and how this helps be more prepared for the various learner needs. The moments working with a coach were perceived as supportive and motivating.

Whether or not the teacher identified receiving coaching support, results from the classroom observation checklist revealed that experienced teachers include a variety of instructional strategies into their lessons. These were categorized as questioning strategies, active engagement strategies, strategies to check for understanding, and strategies for providing feedback. All teachers included questioning and active engagement strategies into their lesson with varying frequency throughout the class period. In addition, all participants used surface level questioning strategies, and over half asked higher order thinking questions. However, those teachers who self-identified as receiving instructional coaching support during the planning stage of the lesson, still used only a few strategies throughout the entire lesson. Whereas most of the

teachers who received no instructional support used more variety of strategies and with more frequency throughout all stages of the lesson.

General findings revealed that some teachers perceived instructional coaching support to affect the variety and frequency of the strategies implemented during a lesson while other teachers acknowledged having no coaching support at any stage and therefore, no influence from coaching was made on their pedagogical strategy development or implementation. One small group of participants who believed instructional coaching did little to influence their choice of strategies used in the classroom, and who showed the most variety during observations, also revealed their will and interest in exploring outside resources for support and inspiration.

Question #2: How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance?

Themes that emerged from participant responses on the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their performance included: data analysis, English Language Learner support, curriculum development, lesson planning, literacy support, meeting facilitation, relationship building, standards review, substitute teaching, technology support, and testing coordination. Those who did lean on instructional coach support, perceived the value was in the conversations they had, whether planned and structured or on the fly, because the conversation led to inspiration and momentum around the learning goals they had set.

The interview offered participants a chance to explain in detail, other ways coaches have influenced their performance, apart from strategy development. Teachers shared a range of experiences and interactions they have had with coaches. Most acknowledged that the coach helped in building knowledge and comfort with technology and online platforms used at the site. Some viewed general mentorship as an important support received from the coach, while others

described the help coaches provided in handling student behavior issues, unpacking standards, creating a scope and sequence, and finding new curriculum. A few teachers acknowledged the coach as a buffer between the administration and teachers, and felt their performance was stronger simply because the coach helped build school morale. More than half of the teachers related feelings of appreciation towards the coach for taking some responsibilities off them, such as substitute teaching during their prep periods and attending to the needs of new teachers. These teachers believed that the actions taken by the coach allowed them to focus on other instructional and classroom management issues. One teacher mentioned the leadership role the coach at their site held and the role they took on as facilitator of staff meetings and of onsite professional development sessions. This participant also shared that the coach had worked closely with her to develop her own leadership skills and encouraged her to take on different leadership responsibilities in her department.

Question #3: How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site?

Interview question 1, question 3, and question 7 provided teachers an opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the coaching program implementation at their site. Responses were categorized as: (a) believer in the concept of instructional coaching, but not effective at site nor on teacher, (b) believer in the concept of instructional coaching program and it is working at site, but not for teacher, and (c) believer in concept of instructional, it is working at site, and for the teacher. A total of six out of the 11 participants perceived the instructional coaching program as being an effective program at the site level but not working for them personally. A reoccurring theme that was discovered was the concept of new teachers. Teachers relayed the belief that coaching worked at their site because of the specific help provided to new teachers; they viewed

this as support that benefited the entire school. Thus, the help given to new teachers potentially decreased the stress that experienced teachers may have otherwise felt from having to personally mentor the new teachers in some capacity. In contrast however, the few teachers who believed the coaching model was not working at their site, shared concerns that the instructional coach at their site was spending too much time trying to support new teachers; taking them away from other teachers who wanted help. Others shared stories of high functioning and low functioning coaches in relation to how well or how poorly the program was implemented at the time, stating that solid implementation of the instructional coaching program at the site level was dependent on the quality of the instructional coach.

Even though, perceptions of site wide implementation were for the most part positive, a few teachers expressed curiosity as to what the ideal coaching model would look like in comparison to the one used at their site. Teachers who interpreted the coaching program as good for the school, also expressed concern that implementation was unsystematic, and at times haphazard. Moreover, they viewed the purpose and goals of the instructional coaching program to have been poorly communicated to staff and students. Numerous participants mentioned that there were unspoken and unplanned responsibilities that inevitably fell onto the instructional coach, thereby taking them away from other important duties. They believed too much time was spent on data for example, claiming that the coach spent significant amounts of time gathering and interpreting assessment data that was not always used by teachers but by site and district administrators. In addition, some perceived the coaches as being aligned with the administrator's agenda and goals rather than the teacher's agenda and goals.

Participants clearly expressed opinions of how an instructional coaching program could best support their needs when implemented with more organization and clarity. Major themes

that emerged on this topic were: conversation, observation, and feedback. All teachers stressed the importance of having someone at their site to talk to, to share ideas and exchange strategies. Even teachers who considered themselves to be isolationists and said they were fine with the amount of time working autonomously, admitted to wanting a high level, reflective conversation about their instructional practices, preferably with an instructional coach.

The concept of individual, as well as school wide, improvement was a consistent theme that emerged from the exploration into instructional coaching. Some teachers perceived improvement in the high school setting as forced change and equivalent to more work. While some teachers associated an instructional coach with having to change on someone else's terms and according to someone else's time frame. Others believed that the instructional coach was the motivating factor they needed to begin thinking about desired chance in their own practice. There were two teachers who perceived working with a coach as meaning more work and added pressure, and so therefore opted out of any coaching opportunities, even at the cost of improved instructional strategies. These teachers recognized the need for growth and development of instructional pedagogy to arrive more authentically and to be self-initiated. Furthermore, there were also two teachers who believed the approach taken by instructional coaches was more geared toward elementary school teachers and did not match the adult learning needs of the high school teachers.

Teachers who interpreted their years of experience to be consistent with a gain in their level of professional confidence, perceived the instructional coaching program to be less effective. These teachers alluded to high levels of self-efficacy, but less in terms of collective efficacy. This group of participants were also the ones who acknowledged seeking out alternatives to coaching that may be considered equally rewarding in terms of providing

feedback and motivation. For instance, some teachers relied heavily on social network groups for new ideas, feedback, and even motivation. Some participants believed the coaching program was only working for those who needed the most improvement, the new teachers. The same experienced high school participant group who expressed sentiments of being okay working without an instructional coach, were also some of the same teachers who shared strong ideas around the ideal coaching model being well balanced and able to service all teachers.

Presentation of the Data and Results

For this hermeneutic phenomenological study, data were collected using a Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E), a Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F), and Interview Questions (see Appendix G). The various forms of data collection allowed participants to share how they experienced the instructional coaching program at their site. Furthermore, the analysis process of the questionnaire, observation, and interview data also remained true to the hermeneutic phenomenology, in that both interpretation and description were used to capture the essence of the participant's language when sharing their experience. A narrative format was used to present data and results of the study. In order to protect the privacy of all participants, pseudonyms are used throughout the presentation of data and results section.

Questionnaire

The Qualtrics Questionnaire (see Appendix E) was created as a means for teachers to share ways in which instructional coaching influenced lesson planning and implementation. The questionnaire was intentionally designed with six open ended questions and one closed-ended question. Open ended questions were used so that teachers had more freedom in responding in their own words and with an option to add more detail. The one closed-ended question contained the types of coaching supports generally offered at a school site and was intended to match the

same list in other areas of the study. Questions 1–4 were answered before the lesson and questions 5–7 were answered after lesson implementation. The questionnaire instrument was created using Qualtrics web-based software. Teachers had the choice of completing the questionnaire either electronically, via an emailed survey link, or on a hard copy which was provided ahead of time.

Question #1: **What is the standard or student learning goal you are currently working on?** This question elicited a broad range of responses as they related to the general class and standard being taught during the time of the observation. Responses from teachers included, learning the important features of Math XL and how to navigate Math XL mastery check points; understanding gravitational force, usage of the periodic table to classify elements and use it to get information about the elements atomic number; to identify and explain the developmental influences on child development such as nature vs. nurture; to understand and apply the rules of Pickle Ball; to explain the plot structure of the novel *Speak* and learn new vocabulary; to explain the difference between the Bohr model and molecular model; to identify the claim, reasons, evidence, and audience in argumentative writing examples; to apply conjugation rules to ER and IR verbs in Spanish; to answer an essential question (What gives a person the ultimate right to rule over another person?); and to inform students of timed writing structure and format options.

Question #2: Describe how you identified what students already know and do not know about the learning goal? Six of the participants, Alma, Brian, Dana, Shauna, Linda, and Abby all responded that they used an informal check or pre-assessment to determine where students were at in their understanding of the targeted standard before they taught it. Collin engaged in one-on-one conferences with students to determine where they were at and what their

next steps were. Renee developed electronic self-check points, which students had to pass before moving on to the next step. The first was an honest self-assessment of the new topic and standard. TJ, Sonja, and Lorna stated that they delivered the lesson without knowing what students already knew about the topic or standard. Lorna assumed the information was new.

Question #3: What strategies will you use to deliver the lesson so that information is accessible to all learners? Teachers acknowledged a variety of strategies they intended to use to deliver lesson material in an engaging way. Two teachers noted only two strategies, but the others acknowledged trying to incorporate four or more strategies into different points of their lesson. The list of strategies participants intended to use were as follows: Abby, steps for unpacking the prompt, transitional phrase list and practice sheet; Alma, justification of position sentence frames, white boards, exit tickets, and academic vocabulary list; Brian, YouTube Video and interactive notetaking sheet, color coded vocabulary, CLOZE summary of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria; Collin, one-on-one student conferences, Math XL self-assessment rubric, and step-by step plan for improvement sheet; Dana, pickle Ball demonstration video, rule sheet, team presentation of what Pickle Ball does and does not look like; Linda, close Reading and annotation of student exemplar; Lorna, Simon Says game, video, notetaking sheet, improvement options list, partner conversation, Kahoot game, and Quizlet assessment; Renee, bell work online response tool, white boards, job cards, music video, Happy Atom hands on building kit, student collaboration, student self-monitoring, electronic science portfolio; Shauna, synonym and antonym game; Sonja, graphic organizer for person in history, interview question stems; and TJ, copying notes from board

Question #4: What form of coaching has supported you in the planning stage of your pedagogical strategy(s)? This was the only close-ended question and had five responses for

teachers to choose from: professional development led by a coach, one-on-one coaching conversation, professional learning community or department meeting led by a coach, a combination of instructional supports or no coaching support was used. Only one teacher, Shauna, marked the box for a one-on-one coaching conversation. Shauna confirmed having a planned, structured coaching conversation prior to the lesson where coach and teacher came up with specific strategies to include. Linda and Sonja also checked the one-on-one coaching conversation box, but Linda wrote "informal" next to the response and Sonja wrote "on the fly before class." The remaining seven teachers, Collin, TJ, Brian, Alma, Dana, Renee, and Lorna all reported having no coaching support during the planning stage of the lesson. Abby marked the response for a combination of coaching supports. She acknowledged that a professional development session, facilitated by an instructional coach, may have influenced the strategy used during the lesson. However, next to the box labeled professional development led by a coach, the participant wrote, "maybe?"

Question #5: Describe how the delivery of the target strategy(s) went? (a) What went well? (b) What do you want to improve upon? (c) What factors contributed to the success of the lesson? This question had four different parts. Six teachers responded only to the first question but included aspects of the other questions in their responses. Three participants responded to the first two questions and two teachers answered all the questions. TJ, Brian, Alma Dana, Shauna, and Linda all stated that the lesson "went well" or "was fine" because students were answering questions and participating in the assigned activity, such as the game or note taking assignment. Lorna knew the target strategies worked because "students were able to apply the learning by the end of the period and re-teach the concept to a partner." Collin stated that "the lesson was considered successful because by the end of class students were collaborating

together and helping one another to problem solve." TJ commented that the area he wanted to improve on was preparing for the lesson more ahead of time and finding articles that were at students' levels. Lorna said she should "slow down a bit and check in with the students more frequently." TJ said lesson success was because of the good group of students in his class at the time and Lorna said that success was a result of the fast pace she keeps in the class, so students don't have time to think about anything else.

Question #6: Based on your response to Question #4, how did that level of instructional coaching support effect your implementation plan? The same seven participants, Collin, TJ, Brian, Alma, Dana, Renee, and Lorna who on Question #4, responded that no form of instructional coaching supported them in the planning stage, reported similarly to Question #6. One participant just wrote the word "didn't", three wrote N/A, and three provided no response at all. Of the other four participants who did mark on Question #4 that coaching support was utilized, all remarked similarly; that talking to a coach got them thinking about what instructional strategies they could incorporate into the lesson.

Question #7: As you move forward considering different strategies in your lesson planning, what support resources will you continue to utilize? Five teachers stated they would continue using online tools and resources so they could use more technology in the class. Four teachers left this answer blank. Another teacher mentioned rebounding ideas off other members in the department more frequently to get input and feedback. One teacher, Linda, said she would consider using the adopted curriculum to help make decisions around lesson planning and the types of strategies to include based on where the students were at in their understanding of the concept or topic.

Observation

The Teacher Observation Checklist (see Appendix F) was developed to coincide with the questionnaire. As teachers identified on the questionnaire the lesson and strategy(s) they would be teaching, arrangements were made to observe that same lesson. Based on their perceptions of the planning and implementation stages of the lesson, the observation tool allowed me to focus in on the types of strategies used during the lesson as well as the frequency with which they were implemented. The observation checklist was divided into three sections, questioning strategies, active engagement strategies, and strategies to check for understanding. In addition, a section for descriptions and comments was included. After all the observations were conducted, it became apparent that a fourth category of strategies was needed, which would include strategies for providing feedback to students; these were all noted in the comment boxes and added to the spread sheet for analysis. Checks next to the types of questions the teacher used, either knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. Also added, were the times during the lesson that questions were asked, either beginning, middle, or end. Over 20 strategies were listed in the active engagement section to provide a reference point for the types of common, yet high quality, strategies that may be seen during a lesson. In the checking for understanding section, a range of informal assessment strategies were also provided. Others were added as they were observed.

Results from the checklist included the number of questions asked, the types of questions asked, the variety of active engagement strategies, the variety of strategies to check for understanding, and the variety of strategies for providing feedback. In all, four teachers, Abby, Linda, Shauna, and Sonja, all stated that they received some type of instructional coaching support on the lesson. Abby and Linda had a formal coaching conversation, Sonja had an informal coaching conversation, and Shauna received lesson planning support.

Abby asked a total of five questions that fell into the knowledge, application and analysis categories. The strategies she incorporated into her timed writing preparation lesson were direct instruction, note taking, use of technology, graphic organizers, and checklists. She checked for understanding through an in class out line, filled out by students, and she created an opportunity for provided peer-to-peer feedback on the outline through a rubric. Linda asked her students nine questions that covered knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation. The interactive strategies she used included, direct instruction, partner think-pair-share, use of technology, close read, and annotation. An exit ticket was used by Linda to check for understanding of credible evidence in an argumentative writing exemplar. No feedback to students was observed. Shauna asked a total of three questions that were categorized as knowledge and comprehension. She included direct instruction and vocabulary building strategies into her lesson. The lesson was based on direct instruction which included some vocabulary building. A total of seven knowledge, application, and analysis questions were asked to students by Sonja. Her lesson comprised of direct instruction, note taking, use of technology, graphic organizers, and check lists. There were no strategies used to check for understanding or for providing feedback.

The other participants, Alma, Brian, Collin, Dana, Lorna, Renee, and TJ, all stated that they had no instructional coaching support during the planning or implementation stages of their lesson. The experienced teachers who acknowledged having no instructional coaching support asked a range of questions that fell into the categories of knowledge, comprehension, and application. Alma and Renee also asked questions that prompted students to analyze and evaluate. All teachers who did not rely on coaching supports, included direct instruction and a wide range of other strategies into the lessons. In order to reach the learning intentions, Alma

relied on partner share outs, technology, vocabulary building, white boards, kinesthetic learning, and repetition. To check for understanding, she incorporated white boards, self-check-ins, self-reflections, and web-based games into her lesson. Brian used many similar strategies as Alma, but also included graphic organizers and check lists. He checked for student understanding through a self-reflection sheet and check list. Collin enlisted students in academic conversations, worked on building schema, and helped make connections to prior knowledge. Self-reflections were his choice of checking for understanding on the topic.

Dana asked questions that prompted knowledge, comprehension, and application. She included connections to prior knowledge, direct instruction, guided practice, independent practice, kinesthetic engagement, partner talk, modeling, and vocabulary building. She used an in class short assessment to check for understanding. During guided practice time, she offered verbal corrective feedback to students. Lorna and Renee both kept their questioning at knowledge and comprehension levels throughout the lesson. Lorna asked a total of 11 questions and Renee asked over 15 questions. While Lorena concentrated on academic conversations, direct instruction, kinesthetic engagement, note taking, and vocabulary building strategies to support learning, Renee designed her lessons to be individually based but with an option of over 14 different learning strategies, depending on where the student was at in their learning journey. Lorna focused on review games, self-reflection, and informal assessments as a form of checking for student understanding and provided immediate feedback through a web-based game dashboard that told students if their response was right or wrong. It also gave them an opportunity to think through the correct response and resubmit their answer. Students in Renee's class showed understanding through an evaluation of their job cards and responses to self-check points. TJ asked questions at the comprehension level and used direct instruction and check lists

as his main instructional strategies. He did not check for student understanding throughout the lesson, nor did he provide feedback to students.

Interview

Question #1: What do you inherently believe about the concept of instructional coaching? All teacher participants conveyed positive beliefs around the concept of instructional coaching. Linda, Alma, and Brian shared their experiences of watching the coaching program change and grow considerably over the past 10 years. Two admitted to initially being non-believers in the district's coaching program model but have since changed their perception as the program has gained momentum and is delivered with clearer objectives. Linda stated, "I was very against coaching at first and really fought to get rid of coaches early on. I did not like that they were taking away jobs from teachers but were just acting as administrator helpers.". Renee and Collin had similar thoughts and believed that coaches reacted to the unattended responsibilities of the principal and were therefore perceived more as administrators than teachers.

Similarly, Sonja believed in the idea of coaching as she had seen it work in the past at other school sites, but felt that "too many other demands are being placed on coaches for them to actually coach and are keeping the program from getting good." TJ stated that the program had the potential to be an important support system for teachers in any phase of their career but that teachers did not know how to take advantage of it, so he considered coaching to be a "missed opportunity" for the majority of teachers. Shauna, Alma, Linda, Dana, Abby, and Brian asserted the importance of an instructional coaching program for new teachers. Brian shared, "Too many teachers are walking into classrooms without a credential, with no experience, and with no clue on what to do. Who else has time to do what coaches are doing to help all these new teachers?"

Shauna emphasized that the coaching program is, “absolutely necessary if the district is going to continue hiring so many new teachers who don’t even have a credential.”

Question #2: In your opinion, what are the roles and responsibilities of the instructional coach? Each participant perceived the roles and responsibilities of the instructional coach differently, yet major themes that emerged were observation, conversation, curriculum, and feedback. Collin specifically stated that he believed, “the purpose of coaches was to observe teachers and provide feedback on a more regular basis than the once or twice a year evaluation done by the administrator.” TJ, Shauna, Dana, Lorna, and Abby all thought that coaches should bring new ideas and strategies to teachers with more frequency.

Lorna specified that the types of strategies should align with the different learning needs of the students in their classrooms. Brian believed the coaches’ role was to assist new teachers and “to keep an eye out for teachers who were getting stuck.” Renee perceived the role of the coach to be that of a master teacher where they provide an opportunity for other teachers to observe them teaching a class. She believed that the coach should employ a hybrid model of teaching and coaching so that, “they always have one foot in the classroom door.” Linda also believed that it is the coach’s responsibility to provide a demonstration classroom where other teachers can go observe and take away new strategies, techniques, and ideas. Sonja felt that the roles and responsibilities would vary based on the level of experience of the teachers on site. For teachers with experience, she believed the coach should act as a thinking partner and a sounding board for ideas.

Question #3: How effective is instructional coaching at your site? Two teachers admitted that it was too hard to determine the effectiveness of the instructional coaching program at their site because there were so many variables involved, and they did not know how to

measure effectiveness of the program. Five teachers explained that the program had limited effectiveness. Renee stated, “I would rate the program a 4 out of 10 (10 being very effective) simply because there are too many roles and responsibilities for the coach, so that the quantity of the demands inhibits the quality of the work.” Three teachers perceived the program as having visibly, positive effects on new teachers. These teachers had witnessed the instructional coach offering guidance and instructional expertise to the new teachers at their site, on more than one occasion. One teacher expressed that the instructional coach at their site offered ongoing support to them personally, and so perceived the program as being extremely effective.

Question #4: Tell me about your own experiences working with the instructional coach at your site? All but two participants shared positive personal experiences of interacting with an instructional coach at their site. While the two teachers with no personal experience to share, Collin and Lorna did acknowledge the work the coaches were doing at their site as being productive. They both viewed the work of the coach as administrative and too removed from the classroom. Lorna stated that the coach at her site was, “so busy working on paperwork for the upcoming Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) visit that she has no time for anything else.” Collin’s perception of his experience was similar. He felt the coach at his site was busy acting as a testing and technology coordinator, and therefore was not able to visit classrooms or meet with teachers.

TJ, Sonja, and Abby identified a time when the coach offered planning and curriculum support, yet emphasized that it did not happen frequently, just once or twice. TJ noted, “Last year the coach helped me read and dissect all the new science standards and even helped me plan out some lessons. It was extremely helpful.” Brian recalled a time when his onsite instructional coach held a professional development on literacy across the curriculum. He remembered taking

away some new ideas but could not recall using them in the classroom. Alma, Shauna, Dana, Renee, and Linda perceived a time when they each, separately, engaged in a coaching conversation as being the most valuable. Shauna identified the coach's willingness to work with the Special Education department as being the most beneficial.

Question #5: How effective has your work with a coach been in the development of your instructional strategies? How so? Six teachers, Collin, Brian, Dana, Lorna, Renee, and Sonja all perceived their work with an instructional coach as having no effect on their choice and development of instructional strategies. Brian stated, "I don't think I have really gotten any specific strategies directly from a coach. I do change things up and add new strategies on my own, but I always wonder if I would have changed earlier and become a better teacher if I had more time with a coach." Collin revealed that he found the strategies and techniques posed by the instructional coach to be juvenile and insulting to high schoolers, and teachers and so limited his interaction with the instructional coach. Renee's perception was that, "coaches who don't understand science stay away from science teachers . . . and they really don't like the way I teach."

Even though TJ admitted to having taught for nearly nine years at a site with a coach, he said that nothing stood out in terms of the effectiveness that coaching had on his instructional strategies. Linda believed that at some point in her 15 years working at a site with a coach, that "something a coach may have said or an idea from a coach may have sunk in to my brain but then waited and came back to me later on." Alma considered the feedback from coaches to be affirming of the instructional strategies she used in the classroom. She could not identify a specific strategy she got from a coach but felt certain there were some she learned from a coach at some point over the past 10 years. Shauna recognized the interaction she had with her current

instructional coach of only 2 years as being the most effective because the coach was not afraid to work with Special Education teachers. She was aware of specific reading and writing strategies that she used which had been suggested by the coach. Abby expressed the most personal satisfaction with the relationship she had built with the coach at her site and the work they had done together on lesson planning and strategy development.

Question #6: In your opinion, what other ways, besides instructional coaching support can experienced educators improve their pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of all students? All participants perceived one or more ways for experienced teachers to improve their pedagogical strategies. Repeated categories were professional development, social networks, conferences, mentors, and high-quality site collaboration. One teacher added specificity to their response and remarked that there was a difference between content pedagogy and instructional pedagogy and that he was still getting bogged down in content pedagogy since he had switched grade levels last year. More than half the teachers perceived the idea of improvement as something that needed to be desired by the teacher first and not forced upon by the coach or administrator. Some teachers perceived their school's goals as unrealistic and therefore the coach was working tirelessly toward something that was unattainable.

Question #7: Describe what the ideal instructional program would be? Although participants all shared their own unique ideas around the ideal instructional coaching program, most teachers similarly described a coaching program that was focused just on coaching and a program that helped to motivate teachers. Some listed the extra duties and expectations they would like to take away from the instructional coach at their site. Teachers admitted that the coach took on more work because there was no one else to fill in during moments of urgency. The teachers perceived though that seeing the coach in supporting roles such as librarian,

counselor, substitute teacher, testing coordinator, technology director, and campus monitor sent the message that the coach was too busy to work with teachers.

Common themes that emerged from question responses were relationships, motivation, feedback, pedagogy, and balanced model. Teachers who previously shared that they understood how busy the coaches at their site were, and felt fine working more independently, were also teachers who believed that the ideal program should reach the needs of all teachers. Four teachers emphasized the importance of observations and feedback in the ideal coaching program and two participants believed that a coaching program should be centered on strong relationships. Another participant perceived the ideal coaching program to be one that emphasizes more on the how than on the what and meets teachers where they are at in terms of pedagogy and content.

Question #8: Describe the ideal coach within that program? Teachers responded to Question 8 with a list of specific characteristics they believed an instructional coach should possess. Abby stated that a coach is someone who anticipates, is creative, is fun but takes their job seriously, and who cares about student learning. Alma believed the coach is an individual who is approachable, calm, cooperative, flexible, and understanding. Brian described the ideal coach as someone who is sensitive, a problem solver, and a self-initiator. Collin conveyed that a coach should know how to be student-focused, but teacher centered and should be someone who understands metacognitive components to teaching and can discuss them. Dana considered the ideal coach should be knowledgeable in teaching and can bring people together. Linda perceived the ideal coach to be someone who stays current in teaching practices, is resourceful, is reflective, and who is a strong communicator.

Lorna stated that the person should be reflective on teaching instruction and be good at coaching, not bossy; Renee said the coach should be supportive and Shauna said they are good at building relationships. Important to Sonja was the coach being nonjudgmental and for T.J., he believed the ideal coach is caring, consistent, a great listener, inspiring, and passionate about teaching. Brian and Linda both provided descriptions of past instructional coaches they did not connect with and explained how the experience tainted their perspective on coaching. During the interview, all teacher participants produced responses to this question without hesitancy; they quickly identified what they would like to see in the ideal instructional coach.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the results from my study on how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. To maintain structure and consistency, the attributes of phenomenological methodology were connected to the data collection instruments and procedures, as well as to the data analysis process. The instrumentation tools used to collect data were a questionnaire, a classroom observation checklist, and interview questions. Various coding cycles were used to reduce the information into categories and to find emergent patterns and meanings from participants' experiences teaching at a site with an instructional coaching program.

Overall findings from this study revealed that experienced teachers had minimal interaction with instructional coaches at their site and therefore did not perceive instructional coaching to be influential on their pedagogical strategy development. Themes that emerged were new teachers, administrative duties, autonomy/self-sufficiency, and consistency/follow through. Teachers believed that the needs of new teachers significantly outweighed the needs of experienced teachers, and therefore, intentionally chose not to work with the coach so that the

coach could work with the new teachers at their site. Additionally, teachers perceived the coaches' roles and responsibilities to be more in line with administrative tasks and less connected to work focused on teacher needs and instructional development. Some teachers spoke to a lack of trust with the coach because of the perceived administrative alliance.

Yet other findings indicated that teachers inherently believed positively in the idea of instructional coaching and when given the opportunity to choose support strategies for further lesson planning and teaching and learning strategy development, most participants revealed they would be interested in having a coaching conversation. This aligns with Knight's (2018) assertions that more important than facilitative or directive coaching, is dialogical coaching, whereby instructional coaches and teachers act in a thinking partnership that brings about new ideas. In addition, findings from the study showed that with or without instructional coaching support, experienced teachers implemented a variety of strategies during a class period. Teachers included strategies that involved questioning, student interaction and engagement, checking for understanding, providing feedback, and differentiating lessons to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Data have also shown that experienced teachers are likely to seek out other coaching opportunities not related to the school site or district, that seem to replicate the coaching experience. Teachers who took advantage of outside opportunities such as connecting with past mentors and joining educationally based social network groups identified as having advanced their pedagogical expertise in areas of instruction and content. Evident from the findings are teachers' perceptions that coaches are too busy with new teachers, coaches have significant administrative tasks on their agenda, experienced teachers are more self-sufficient and therefore do not need coaching, and that past coaching experiences offered little follow through.

Experienced teachers have also shared their beliefs that having coaching support in relation to the planning of their instructional practices is a consideration they would like to have in the future.

In Chapter 4, I revisited the methodological framework guiding the study and acknowledged how the methodology guided the data collection process which led result that answered the three research questions. In addition, I summarized the analysis procedures and the results. In Chapter 5, I will present a closer look at the findings and explain how they relate to current literature on the topic. Furthermore, the limitations of the study will be presented as will the implications of the results for future transformation. I will outline the implications on practice, policy, and theory. In Chapter 5, I will also suggest recommendations for further research on how to offer pedagogical support to teachers as they advance in their careers.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Quality instruction is proven to show an increase in student learning (Hattie, 2009; Lynch et al., 2016; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2006). When teachers intentionally plan for and implement high leverage pedagogical strategies in their lessons, they provide opportunities for students to interact with the material and in turn to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts (Davis, McPartland, Pryseski, & Kim, 2018; Hattie, 2009; Lynch et al., 2016; Pryseski & Kim, 2018). In order to help teachers to strengthen their pedagogical practices, and to ensure instructional quality and relevancy, administrators rely on school wide systematic improvement plans that often include an instructional coaching program (Woulfin & Rigby, 2018). Educational experts (Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2018; Lynch et al., 2016; Marzano et al., 2006) have identified instructional coaches as leading support agents in helping teachers successfully move through improvement cycles to identify pedagogical strategies that impact student learning. Effectively using instructional coaches to enhance the instructional performance of all teachers, regardless of where they are at in their teaching career, remains a challenge.

Benefits of instructional coaching have been focused primarily on teachers new to the profession, or those within their first 5 years of teaching, and less on experienced or late career teachers (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). This is in part because of the assumptions made by instructional coaches and administrators, that experienced teachers already possess the strong pedagogical skills and knowledge needed to teach students and therefore do not really need to be coached (Knight, 2015). Additionally, more instructional coaching attention falls on newer teachers simply because of the mentoring needs that teachers have early in their careers (DeWitt, 2017). The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore how

experienced teachers perceived the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies.

In this study, I used purposeful selection, to acquire the participation of 11 late career high school teachers who had 10 or more years of teaching experience, and who worked at a school site where an instructional program had been implemented. Data were collected from study participants through questionnaires, classroom observations, and semistructured interviews. Information collected was used to answer the following research questions: (a) How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies, (b) How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance? and (c) How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site? A thorough analysis was conducted using a multi-cycle coding process so that interpretations and meaning could be made from the data.

In this concluding chapter, I provide a summary of the research results by highlighting specific discoveries made about teachers' perceptions on instructional coaching programs. Also included in Chapter 5 is a discussion of the results as well as a review of the results in relation to current literature on the topic of instructional coaching. I further explain the limitations of the study, the implications of the results, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Results

Since new teachers receive a significant amount of instructional coaching attention, less is known about how experienced teachers perceived the influence of instructional coaching on their own practice (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). Using a hermeneutic, phenomenology framework, experienced high school teachers were able to share their

perceptions and beliefs on how the instructional coaching program at their site effects their pedagogical strategies. In summary, the methods utilized during the data collection process produced a wide range of results. Major themes that emerged from data findings were alternative coaching methods, perceptions of improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties. The posed research questions were also sufficiently answered.

All study participants stated they inherently believed coaching to be a good idea and agreed that school wide benefits could exist from a well-structured coaching model. However even though, participants agreed with the concept of coaching, most experienced teachers perceived their interaction with the instructional coaching program at their site to be minimal. Limited interaction with the coach, therefore, generated little to no effect on the planning and development of their pedagogical strategies. Participants could remember at least one experience they had interacting with a coach, but no stories came about of ongoing sustained work around instructional improvement.

A range of categories emerged as to why experienced teachers had little interaction with the instructional coaching program. Some participants clearly felt averse to the individual who held the instructional coach position and so refrained from any engagement with the coach that was not mandatory. Participants provided a variety of other responses as to why time with an instructional coach was limited. They stated that: the coach was performing administrative duties in lieu of providing coaching; there was a lack of content knowledge on the coaches' part; they interpreted time with a coach as more pressure and more work for teachers; the needs of new teachers were a higher priority; and experienced teachers simply had more confidence to get the job done independently. Teachers mostly agreed that the lack of interaction with an instructional coach came from either their strong self-efficacy in content and pedagogy or their perception that

the instructional coach was too busy to work with them. Content expertise was the main reason why some teachers did not feel they needed a coach or that the coach would not have enough content knowledge to help.

Due to limited interaction with a coach, most teachers perceived the effects of an instructional coaching program on the development and planning of their pedagogical strategies as being insignificant. Few teachers acknowledged moments where the coach modeled lessons or facilitated meaningful professional development, in which they learned new strategies they could apply directly to their own instructional practice. During interviews, they did not attribute coaches as being a source of new information, new skills, or new instructional strategies. Yet, even though responses did not reveal nominal influence on their pedagogical strategies, it was discovered when considering planning for future lesson, most participants expressed interest in having a coaching conversation even if they had not received coaching support in the past.

Although the majority of teachers expressed having little to no interaction with the instructional coach, there were a couple of experienced teachers who identified receiving instructional coaching support in the planning of a lesson, and who perceived positive effects on their pedagogical strategies. Teachers who reflected positively on the effects of instructional coaching experienced classroom modeling, one-on-one coaching conversations, and professional development facilitated by a coach. According to the participants, the actions taken by the coach gave them ideas to include in their lesson planning and provided specific instructional strategies which they tried during a lesson. One participant shared the importance of a feedback note that her coach gave her after a classroom visit, which she perceived as supportive and motivating.

Overall, varied perceptions became apparent through study findings. Some teachers perceived instructional coaching support to affect the variety and quality of the strategies

implemented during a lesson while other teachers acknowledged having no coaching support at any stage and therefore, no influence from coaching was made on their pedagogical strategy development or implementation. One small group of participants who believed instructional coaching did little to influence their choice of strategies used in the classroom, and who showed the most variety during observations, also revealed their will and interest in exploring outside resources for support and inspiration. This was a unique finding for two reasons. One, it reflected the resourcefulness of the experienced teacher to seek out other supports that influenced their pedagogical strategies and it revealed the idea that alternative coach-like options exist for teachers. For instance, teachers mentioned using online social networks that are interactive and provide constructive feedback, helping the experienced teacher authentically grow and at their own pace.

Data collection from the semi structured interviews helped in answering the second research question on how experienced teachers perceived the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their job performance. Most teachers acknowledged that the other duties performed by the coach allowed the experienced teacher to perform better at his/her job. In addition, participants stated that the coach took on jobs that would have otherwise been neglected or would have fallen on them. When asked what the perceived roles and responsibilities of the coach were, participants listed many tasks that were unrelated to academic improvement and pedagogical strategies. Out of the total participants, two stated that the coach helped with relationship building between staff which elevated the morale of their colleagues. Participants viewed the coaches as having expert knowledge in the technology systems and online platforms used at the site and which were vital to a successful school day.

Nearly half the participants considered general mentorship as an important support received from the coach. Others described the help coaches provided in terms of coordinating student assessments, creating a scope and sequence, finding new curriculum, handling student behavior issues, and unpacking standards. More than half of the teachers related feelings of appreciation towards the coach for taking some responsibilities off them, such as substitute teaching during their prep periods, taking on campus supervisory duties, working with individual students on homework, and attending to the needs of new teachers. These teachers believed that the actions taken by the coach provided immediate relief and allowed them to focus on other instructional and classroom management issues.

Most study participants expressed positive perceptions of the effectiveness of the coaching program implementation at their site. Responses were organized into four categories in relation to how the experienced teacher perceived the concept of coaching, the individual effects of coaching, and site implementation of coaching. The categories were: (a) believer in the concept of instructional coaching, but not effective at site nor on teacher, (b) believer in the concept of instructional coaching program and it is working at site, but not for teacher, and (c) believer in concept of instructional, it is working at site, and for the teacher. Over half the participants believed in the concept of coaching, perceived the coaching program was successfully implemented at their site, but did not believe it was working for them personally. Some participants were reluctant to answer because they did not know what indicators to use in considering whether the coaching program was implemented successfully or unsuccessfully. The few teachers who shared positive perceptions of the implementation of the instructional coaching program, emphasized the support it was providing to new teachers.

Two out of 11 study participants admitted to experiencing a transformation in their attitude toward coaching over the years. Initially, they were adamantly opposed to the concept of coaching and to the implementation of the coaching program model, so they resisted working personally with a coach. Participants stated that due to the districts' efforts in conveying the importance of coaches, these two participants now believe in the concept of coaching and in the model; they still did not perceive any benefits from coaching on their own instructional practice or pedagogical development.

Discussion of the Results

Systematic data collection and analysis procedures were used to identify attributes that were both common and unique to participants' experiences with instructional coaching programs. Participants shared their beliefs and personal stories through data collection methods that included: classroom observations, questionnaires, and semistructured interviews. Each data collection method produced a variety of categories and themes. After thorough analysis of the combined data, four major themes emerged: alternative coaching supports, improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties.

Alternative Coaching Supports

Findings showed that most experienced teachers who did not receive regular time with an instructional coach found other ways to feel supported in the development of their pedagogical strategies. Since most believed that coaches were either too busy to work with them or did not possess enough content knowledge in each subject area to be effective, they felt it was their professional responsibility to find alternative coaching supports. One teacher pointed out that she had always operated with a willingness to keep getting better at teaching and always took advantage of outside support opportunities. She also stated that she knew how to operate this

way long before coaches were ever a part of the school community. When coaches finally joined the school district, she did not feel any loss that they had no time for her as she had already established improvement routines.

When asked what other resources teachers can turn to for instructional improvement support, participants identified many alternatives. A few relied on relationships with past mentors and past colleagues to help them think through challenges and solutions to a classroom issue. Many said they engaged in reading and watching videos to find new strategy ideas. Two teachers described online educator social groups that they engage in regularly. Using this platform, the teachers were able seek out advice on how to teach a specific concept related to their content area, and then could interact with the same group at a later point to get feedback. While this may not completely replicate a face-to-face coaching conversation cycle, it revealed that participants found other innovative ways to incorporate coach-like supports.

Coaching Conversations

The theme of reflective coaching conversations was prominent throughout the study. Teachers named conversation and feedback as two of the most important roles an instructional coach has. When asked what future support teachers would be willing to participate in, many identified a coaching conversation as a vital step in thinking through their lesson design. Participants also commented that the ideal coach is someone who they can have an honest conversation with, someone who will listen to them, and someone who will bring new ideas and strategies to the table. In addition, participants who perceived the instructional coaching program as effecting their pedagogical strategies, identified coaching conversations as the most significant coaching support. Questionnaire and interview question responses revealed that participants who had a coaching conversation included the ideas and strategies discussed during the conversation,

into a future lesson. Shauna shared that the coaching conversation gave her confidence to try something new, and she felt more prepared since she had thought through the details of lesson together with the coach. Sonja praised the reflective conversation she had with a coach after an informal observation as a way to identify strategies that had the most impact on student learning during the lesson. Coaching conversations that were structured and planned, along with conversations that were more on the fly, were described by participants.

Improvement

Teacher participants conveyed thoughts on how coaching fit in to their perceptions of improvement which is why it developed into a major theme. Even though all teachers admitted to believing in the concept of instructional coaching, some experienced teachers interpreted the concept of coaching as a sign of weakness which challenged their identity as an experienced and expert teacher. They either did not believe they needed coaching because of their years of experience, or they did not believe the coach had expertise in their content area and therefore could not help them, or both. Furthermore, findings showed that not all experienced teachers wanted coaching support because they equated it with extra pressure and more work. Teacher participants noted that it was work that did not necessarily fit into their own instructional agenda or align with their own instructional goals. A few teachers explained how they dramatically improved early on in their careers, and now used the best of what they had learned in the classroom. They reported being satisfied with where they were at in their career and did not want to learn anything new.

In the post lesson reflection, when participants were asked what they wanted to improve upon regarding the observed lesson, most responded with answers related to student behavior and engagement. Evidence from responses also revealed that participants were frustrated by the

large class sizes and could not meet the needs of all the diverse learners in the class. Even though a few noted changes they would want to see in specific students' behaviors, others identified how they could improve the lesson by increasing student interest. These findings illustrate teachers' desire to make changes and work toward an ideal classroom setting by focusing on instructional improvements. The idea of more personalized teacher improvement plans was articulated by some teachers who expressed feeling frustrated by time wasted listening to coaches. Teachers mainly mentioned perceptions of individual improvement; only one teacher connected individual teacher improvement to school wide improvement.

Leadership

Leadership emerged as a theme in two manners. During the interviews, teachers perceived some of the tasks performed by coaches as administrative. They viewed the coach as taking on more leadership responsibilities than they should, and the teachers believed this was preventing the coach from working directly with teachers. Participants believed that site administrators needed to communicate more clearly what leadership roles the coach should or should not have. Varied findings showed that some participants identified the coach as a leader and at other times the coach was perceived as a teacher with some leadership responsibilities. It was also noted by teacher participants, that a range of trust existed between teachers and coaches depending on the level of leadership tasks carried out. Some teachers perceived less trust with a coach when they had more leadership roles, while other teachers perceived more trust with the coach the more leadership roles they had. One teacher noted that when administrators help in positioning the instructional coach as a middle leader, then the coach may be more well received and trusted.

Leadership also developed as a theme after certain participants acknowledged how a coach encouraged them to take on more leadership responsibilities at different site levels. Teachers shared that the coach was so busy they wanted to take some responsibilities and pressure off the coach. They perceived this as a good way to help and to learn more school wide systems. Others stated the coach intentionally developed future teacher leaders by handing over certain responsibilities such as meeting facilitation and testing coordination.

Prioritization of Duties

How coaches prioritize their roles and responsibilities emerged as a main theme. Teachers perceived observation, demonstration, conversation, reflection, and feedback as the primary focus areas for coaches when working with teachers. However, when sharing the types of experiences, not many teachers expressed having participated in those areas with a coach on a regular basis. Nearly all the study participants regarded the number of new teachers at their site, as the main reason why coaches have had to rearrange their priorities. They explained that the demands new teachers place on the system have taken coaches away from the priorities they once had. Other urgencies and distractions were recognized by teachers as keeping coaches away from priority tasks. Administrative duties, technology and testing were perceived by teachers as the most significant, ongoing distractions and interruptions. Some participants identified having relatively new principals at their sites, and so believed the instructional coach was having to do the work that the site principal did not yet know how to do or did not have time for.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Themes surfaced during the data analysis process that showed relevance and alignment to the conceptual framework guiding this study as well as other literature on instructional coaching. Concepts developed by specific theorists were used to provide an overarching framework around

instructional coaching and its effects on the pedagogical strategies of experienced teachers. Specific to the study were Lewin's (1948) change management theory, Knowles's (1973) adult learning theory, and Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy model. Ideas presented by these theorists were used as a main reference point during the study exploration and remain critical in the discussion of the results, and specifically in relation to the current literature.

Lewin (1948) presented ideas around change that focused on the individual as well as the whole system. He observed peoples' behaviors and attitude toward change and then applied patterns of change to larger groups. His model involved three stages: *unfreeze*, *change,* and *refreeze*. During the unfreeze stage is when an organization looks closely at their core values to determine whether the group operates in accordance with these values or not. This stage helps individuals prepare for the upcoming change through acknowledgement of what is and is not working, and more importantly why it is not working (Lewin, 1948). Identifying goals, action steps to reach those goals, ways to monitor and measure goal attainment, are key in understanding the change process and in laying the foundation for the change process.

Consistent with the work of Lewin (1948), Fullan (2008) and Knight (2016) stated that the purpose of instructional coaching programs is connected to the larger concept of system wide, or organizational, change. The instructional coach position in K–12 schools grew out of a need to change educational practices that were no longer meeting the needs of students. Instructional coaching programs were designed as an intervention: by helping teachers improve the quality of their instruction, students would increase their academic performance and schools would meet state and federal reform mandates (Bierly, Doyle, & Smith, 2016; Hartman, 2017).

Results from the study illustrated that teachers perceived the roles and responsibilities of the coach to be in alignment with individual instructional improvement which was consistent

with research (Fullan, 2008, Knight, 2016; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). However, results did not reveal what action steps site leaders had taken prior to the study to prepare teachers for instructional coaching support. Just because an instructional coaching program existed at the site, did not mean it was centered on reflective coaching practices or that all teachers understood why the program was in place and how it could benefit them. According to Fullan (2008), even when school leaders implement well intended programs such as instructional coaching, they often fail to meet the desired organizational outcomes. This is because leaders expect a transformation in teacher behaviors without taking the time for staff to reflect on the values of the organization and the purpose of the proposed change.

Study participants connected the actions of the coach with their own classroom instruction, but no evidence was provided of their perceptions of instructional coaching in relation to school wide goals or improvement plans. They interpreted coaching as way to change or develop good instructional behaviors with the intent of positively impacting student learning (Knight, 2016). Even though responses were varied, perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of the instructional coach were categorized as: observation, conversation, demonstration, reflection, and feedback. These descriptions were consistent with what leading researchers declare are the primary supports that coaches can provide (Davis et al., 2018; Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2016).

Study findings were also relevant to concepts on andragogy, presented by Knowles (1973). He believed that adults learn differently than children and thus need to be taught in a different way. According to Knowles (1973) changes in behavior and performance occur when adult learning principles are applied. He argued for strategic plans that invite more adult learning opportunities. In his plan he outlined the following assumptions as a basis to his thinking on

andragogy: (a) adult learners shift their self-concept from one of dependence as a child to one of independence and self-direction as an adult, (b) the adult learner has past experiences that provide knowledge and resources for future learning, (c) adults at different stages of development are ready to learn different information or skills, (d) adults enter learning for problem or performance centered reasons, (e) adults are internally motivated to learn to the extent to which the learning will benefit them or aid them in achieving a goal or task.

Reddy, Dudek, and Lekwa (2017) asserted that to achieve coaching success, it is critical for instructional coaches to understand the concept of andragogy and how to create authentic adult learning situations. Study participants were experienced high school teachers. General findings found participants disconnected from the approach and methods coaches were using to impart new pedagogical knowledge. Sometimes the concept or practice presented by the coach was not relevant to goals of the teacher, nor did it fit in with their style of teaching. Other times teachers found the delivery of the new idea or strategy to be presented with an elementary school approach, which caused certain teachers to tune out and disregard the new information or strategy. Knight (2008) also asserted that many instructional coaches are former teachers who may have a solid understanding of pedagogy but may not be well-versed in how to support the concept of pedagogy through andragogical practices. This connection to literature was apparent in the research findings.

In accordance with Knowles's (1973) thinking, participants highlighted the independence and autonomy they had earned as late career teachers, as they gained more experience they were left alone more by administrators. Yet the study findings also showed that experienced teachers who had once rejected instructional coaching support or felt neglected by their coach, responded positively to their current coaches' approach especially in the form of reflective conversations

(Knight, 2016). Many of the teachers perceived themselves as being internally motivated and therefore did not feel the need to work with a coach. Those who did not view themselves as possessing internal motivation explained how they would be open to the idea of working with a coach. Findings demonstrated that all participants viewed coaching conversations as a valued part of the ideal coaching program.

Efficacy is the judgement of an individual's capability. Bandura (1995) claimed that changes in behavior and increases in performance and productivity occur as a result of strong levels of self-efficacy. For adult learners, self-efficacy levels strengthen when they have more opportunities to feel success and when they feel in control of repeating the conditions that provided the success in the first place. When teachers believe they have the skill, the content knowledge, and the ability to deliver quality lessons each day in the classroom, then they are demonstrating high levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, teachers contribute to the collective efficacy of the school, by believing that all members of the school organization are showing up and doing their best to service students (Bandura, 1977; Hattie, 2009). Collective efficacy drives the momentum needed for organizational change and improvement (Hattie, 2009; Lewin, 1948). Believing in the ability of others is a fundamental tenant of instructional coaching. Hattie (2009) and Knight (2016) both describe self-efficacy and collective efficacy as leading influences on student and teacher performance.

The concepts of self-efficacy and collective efficacy were established in literature and were equally supported in findings from this study. From the questionnaire, it was revealed that most participants believed they delivered an average lesson at the time of the observation. They perceived the success of the lesson to be based on completion of work and not on mastery of learning. They demonstrated confidence in their delivery of the content but low self-efficacy in

their belief that they were going to teach the content in a way that all students would learn it. Nor did they reveal interest in find better ways that ensured all students were learning what they were teaching.

However, most participants presented stories of at least one coach whom they believed in and trusted over the course of their career. They discussed the good work performed by the coach at the school level and an individual level. According to Johnson (2016), levels of efficacy increase when the coach and the teacher demonstrate relational trust. However, study participants also shared that they had had unfavorable experiences with a coach and whereas a result, relational trust suffered. Equally important was that all participants shared that they inherently believed that the concept of coaching is good. However, they did not trust in the process and the day to day operations of the program. Like Bandura (1995), Johnson (2016) and Klocko and Wells (2015) asserted that efficacy grows the more mastery experiences an individual has, and only then can a transformation of behaviors begin, eventually leading to desired shifts and improvements at the organizational level. Only one teacher shared a heightened past-experience where the coaching program was deemed as working, not because of the coaches' personality or likability, but because the program was anchored in the premise that everyone at the school had room to grow and learn.

Limitations

Specific limitations existed within this hermeneutic phenomenological study. The study demographic consisted of only high school teachers with 10 or more years of certificated teaching experience. No experienced elementary or middle school teachers were invited to join the study which may have limited the range of perspectives on the topic. However, there was one teacher included in the study who worked at a site that was Grades 8–12, and taught English in

both Grade 8 and Grade 9. Teacher participants came from four different comprehensive high schools in the region; however, representation was higher from two schools than the others. Thus, the situational context of the coaching program was similar for the majority of participants, which may have limited the variety and scope of responses. Another limitation was the smaller than anticipated participant sample size. A smaller sample size may affect the reliability of the study and possibly increase the variability.

At the onset of the participant recruitment and data collection phase, major wildfires broke out resulting in mandatory power outages for over 10 days for all schools in the region. Teachers may have been reluctant to join the study because of having to make up for lost time with so many days off. This also limited communication between me and study volunteers and delayed observations and interviews by over one month. Teachers who felt pressure due to school closure may also have been less inclined to complete the questionnaire completely. This could have led to restrictions in the results and findings.

As the researcher and an instructional coach at the site where some participants also worked, there could have been other limitations included in the study. Teachers could have left out certain details or refrained from candidly sharing their whole story, for fear of exposing certain situations at their site. This therefore may have compromised the exploration into and understanding of the phenomena.

Implications of the Results for Transformation

Exploration into how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical practices disclosed findings that are relevant to future instructional coaching program implementation. Discoveries made through this phenomenological study may have implications on the design of more balanced instructional

coaching programs, with an emphasis on specific support systems that can be provided to both new and late career teachers. Theoretical developments made during this study can help guide leadership teams in how they approach late career teachers, so that their experience and expertise are maximized. In this section, I discuss the political, practical, and theoretical contributions derived from this study.

Implications on Policy

Developing teachers so that they deliver quality first instruction with regularity is an ongoing goal for educational leaders and policy makers. Consistent quality instruction is linked to increases in student academic performance (DeWitt, 2017; Fullan, 2011; Hattie, 2007; Senge et al., 2012). Improved student academic performance allows school districts to meet state and federal reform mandates and to maintain in good standing. Ensuring teachers are upholding high leverage instructional approaches that meet the needs of all learners means instituting practices to help teachers improve their instruction in a meaningful, manageable, and sustainable manner. Instructional coaching programs have been one solution in the efforts by policy makers and educational leaders, to enhance the teaching and learning experience (Knight, 2005).

Findings from this study, as well as other relevant literature (Desimone & Pak, 2016; DeWitt, 2017; Hattie, 2009; Knight, 2016) on the topic, demonstrated that not all teachers respond to the work of the instructional coach, nor do all instructional coaching plans yield the desired results of increased academic performance. By promoting other improvement initiatives that are more authentic and more realistic in their ability to service all teachers, whatever stage they are at in their careers, should be the ongoing work of policy makers and educational leaders. An implication of this study on future policy would be the design of embedded support systems into all accountability plans so that leaders are not just forced to show the growth and

improvement in students, but in teachers as well. Instructional coaching programs were a well-intended initiative, but it could not keep up with the growing needs from number of new teachers entering the classroom with no credential or with limited experience. For this reason, it is essential that policy makers look closely at how they move from a one-size-fits-all approach and clarify operational supports at each stage of a teacher's career.

An initiative that gives teachers options on how they can demonstrate their ongoing professional development as they advance in their careers, as well as the effect of their development on student learning, would be key objectives. Furthermore, an initiative that replicates the attributes of an instructional coaching model, but on a smaller scale so that colleagues are responsible for upholding quality of instruction in each other, would assist in building support capacity from within the school. Measures to improve and elaborate on existing support programs requires scrutiny of what is currently working and what is not working. Expanding and elaborating on existing support programs for teachers, may mean adding more middle leadership teams at each site who are equipped to support teachers in their pursuits of instructional development.

Implications on Practice

An implication for future practice would be to examine and evaluate the perceived induvial needs of the experienced teacher at the site level. In doing so, patterns could be identified and supports could be put in place for individuals as well as groups of teachers with similar needs. From this study, it can be gleaned that all participants acknowledged the potential good that can come from an instructional coaching program and had their own unique ideas on what the ideal coaching program encompasses. However, there was a significant disconnect

between what they perceived their reality to be with instructional coaching support and what they ideally believe an instructional program could be.

Another implication for future practice is to explore the perceptions of instructional coaches at the site level, to see if they are living up to their own ideal reality of providing instructional coaching support. It was noted by participants, that instructional coaches were often to busy to meet the needs of experienced teachers. Understanding what instructional coaches think reasons are as to why they are perceived as being too busy, might help in breaking down the existing tensions and barriers. Honest and open dialogue that confronts misconceptions about the coaches' roles and responsibilities, can also help eliminate the disconnect between what the teachers need and what the coach is doing.

Implications on Theory

Theoretical implications of this study are on the awareness that educational leaders and instructional coaches need to have on the adult learning approaches to use with experienced teachers (Knowles, 1973). Being more attentive to way in which information is delivered may help move ideas on change from being theoretical to being actionable. Findings from participant responses indicated that teachers were unsatisfied with the material and the approaches that coaches had used to deliver new thinking on improvement strategies. Techniques employed by coaches were perceived by the high school teacher participants as being juvenile and more geared toward staff of elementary level students. As the coaches of elementary teachers may use elementary techniques in professional development sessions to model what the strategy should look like in the classroom; teachers acknowledged this as being acceptable and suitable for the audience. Study participants may have been asked to implement certain pedagogical changes to meet the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms and increase academic performance but

may have had difficulty in transferring the concepts of change into realistic steps because of how they were taught the new concepts.

In his theory on adult learning, Knowles (1973) emphasized the importance of providing multiple informal learning opportunities to the adult learner for them to obtain a mastery experience. Asking teachers to change their behaviors and pedagogical strategies, means going beyond just telling them what to do. An explanation of why and how to do it should also be furnished, as well as opportunities to practice what is expected. Classroom observations amongst colleagues, coteaching experiences, and modeling lessons are commonly identified as mentorship practices for the new teacher (Knight, 2016). Yet the importance of these techniques on the development on the maintenance and growth of the experienced teacher, may provide opportunities for more mastery experiences on new concepts and strategies. Knowles (1973) further suggested that repeated mastery experiences can lead to increased job satisfaction and higher levels of self-efficacy. Rediscovering the benefits of more interactive approaches may be another theoretical implication of this study.

Teacher participants reported having more autonomy and less frequent visits from principals however, they did not identify this as being a good or bad reflection on either their teaching or the principal. This can be interpreted as meaning that they were so good at their job, that they did not need to be checked up on by an administrator. At the same time, many participants also stated that they would be open to having a coaching conversation as a possible next step for lesson improvement. Even while experienced teachers from this study perceived being left along with being good, and even comfortable in their position, they also showed an interest in improving their instructional practices. Moving the experienced teacher from a place

of being alright with being comfortable, to a place where they are still interested in advancing their pedagogical skill and knowledge set, means tending to their adult learner needs.

Bringing awareness to how best to interact with experienced educators, may also help in aligning individual improvement goals with school wide goals of educational excellence. As reported by Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) and Senge et al. (2012), educational excellence is no longer equated with just high student test scores but is an ongoing professional process of improvement based on collaboration and inquiry When coaches and educational leaders use transformative and instructional leadership practices, such as adult learning theory (Knowles, 1973), they heighten the collaboration and inquiry experiences for new and experienced teachers (Knight, 2005; Fullan, 2011; Spillane, 2007).

Recommendations for Further Research

From this study, I derived numerous recommendations for further research. The first recommendation is to include student evidence and assessment data in the data collection process to extract perceptions that experienced teachers could have on their pedagogical strategies. Using an inquiry-based format during the interview process could help teachers formulate stronger opinions of what worked or did not work during their lesson delivery.

In this study, the teacher observation and checklist were intended to extrapolate more information from participants. A limitation to this study was the small sample size. Only teachers who worked at a comprehensive high school with an instructional coaching program and who had 10 or more years of teaching experience were invited into the sample pool. Expanding the sample population to include experienced teachers of elementary, middle school, and nontraditional schools, would provide a broader scope of perspectives. This could also help identify more significant patterns and make the results be more generalizable. In addition,

including experienced teachers from a range of grade levels could provide specific evidence of the effects of instructional coaching on the pedagogical strategies of one grade level over another.

In this study, there was no set participation criteria for gender, or the high school subject taught by the experienced teacher. Focusing on gender could assist in determining if one gender group is more receptive to coaching than another or as a way to break down preexisting barriers that may prevent one gender or another from interacting as frequently with the instructional coaching program. Similarly, looking more closely at experienced teachers of specific content areas could help deduce if there are certain teachers of specific content areas who regularly meet student academic goals, individual instructional goals, and work in service of school wide goals, through the support of an instructional coach. Further considerations could be to analyze data comparatively, by the number of years of teaching experience, the number of years the teacher has worked at a site with a coach, and even by the number of years the coaching program has been implemented at the site.

Further research is also needed to explore the perspectives that instructional coaches have on the concept of a balanced instructional coaching program, especially in relation to serving the needs of experienced teachers. Past research has focused on the benefits that instructional coaches have on new teachers, or those within their first 5 years in the classroom and less on how it effects experienced teachers (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017). Tracing back when all the attention on new teachers began, why it started, and what other options are available to support new teachers at a site, could help redirect instructional coaches back to meeting the needs of all teachers. Providing history to an issue that has just become acceptable could help

instructional coaching programs recreate their identity at sites with large numbers of new teachers as well as reduce potential barriers for upcoming work.

A final recommendation is for a research case study on an experienced teacher. Nuances of the experienced teacher's life and how they perceive improvement and support are critical in understanding how to elevate experienced teachers at the end of their careers. In order to support teachers as they advance in years of experience, it could behoove leaders and instructional coaches to look more closely at specific ways to preserve feelings of job satisfaction and motivation. A case study of an experienced teacher could provide insight into the unreported details, feelings, and beliefs that are central to that understanding.

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore how experienced high school teachers perceived the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. The possibility existed for systematic instructional coaching programs to be implemented in a way so that both new and experienced teachers received the support they needed, wanted, and felt they deserved. As a result, a program designed with all levels of teaching experience in mind, could have led to higher quality instruction, more student engagement, as well as teachers who were more satisfied with teaching and their instructional coaching program. The hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology applied in this study was designed to answer the following three research questions:

1. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies?
2. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the benefits of an instructional coaching program on other areas of their teaching performance?

3. How do experienced high school teachers perceive the implementation of an instructional coaching program at their site?

The sample population was experienced high school teachers, with 10 or more years of teaching experience, working at a site with an instructional coach. Data were collected from participants in the form of questionnaires, classroom observations, and semistructured interviews. Using multiple coding cycles, four main themes were determined: alternative coaching supports, improvement, leadership, and prioritization of duties.

Based on qualitative analysis of the data, it can be concluded that only a few experienced high school teachers perceived the effects of the instructional coaching program on their pedagogical practices to be substantial. By most teachers' accounts, there was little perceived on-going interaction with instructional coaches which prevented the instructional coaching program to have a direct effect on the experienced teachers' pedagogical strategies. The few teachers who perceived the instructional coaching program to be influential on their pedagogical strategies, stated this was primarily through the form of coaching conversations.

Findings showed that participants perceived various benefits of the coaching program on other areas of their performance. There was acknowledgement of the coaches' efforts to handle urgent situations which took direct pressure off them and freed them up to attend to other work. They also perceived the coach as a support in other areas such as assessment, curriculum, English Language Learners, grading, graduation, literacy, scheduling, Special Education, student behavior, teacher absences, and technology. Participants perceived this work from the coach as an added school wide support.

Late career high school teachers offered fresh perspective on how working at a school with an instructional coaching program can affect the pedagogical strategies implemented by the

teacher. The phenomenological essence of their teaching experience was perceived as the instructional coaching program being an effective program at the site level but not working for them personally. A reoccurring theme that was discovered was the concept of new teachers. Teachers relayed the belief that coaching worked at their site because of the specific help provided to new teachers; they viewed this as support that benefited the entire school. Thus, the help given to new teachers potentially decreased the stress that experienced teachers may have otherwise felt from having to personally mentor the new teachers in some capacity.

Overall results from this study showed that participants perceived there to be a range of variables which influenced the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. For some the idea of coaching is a good idea but simultaneously it threatens their experienced teacher identity. Teachers were appreciative of the work coaches were doing to support new teachers, but again they simultaneously perceived new teachers as the main reason coaches neglected the experienced teachers. For others, the coaching experience was a personal matter; they were just looking for the right coach to connect with and who would show belief in them. Teachers who interpreted the coaching program to be a success, attributed coaching conversations as being the most influential on their pedagogical strategies and even those teachers who shared no effect to be present all showed interest in the possibility of a future coaching conversation. Structured coaching opportunities elevate the teaching and learning process because they allow teachers to make sense of where they are at in meeting their instructional goals, and what they still need to do to meet them.

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Appendix A: Authorization for Research

August 15, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Marcia Tierney will be working with teachers from [redact] during the fall semester of the 2019 school year as a part of her doctoral dissertation. Ms. Tierney's dissertation is a phenomenological study exploring the perceptions that experienced high school teachers have about the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. I authorize Ms. Tierney to engage in data collection associated with our instructional coaching program that will come in the form of questionnaire responses, a classroom observation, and one-on-one interviews.

This authorization covers the time period of September 3 – December 20, 2019.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that this research is being conducted to fulfill requirements for a doctoral dissertation in the field of education. The study site will remain confidential when the results are published in the dissertation.

Sincerely,

District Superintendent/Principal Signature

Appendix B: Email Invitation to Participants

From: Tierney, Marcia
Sent: September 3, 2019
To:
Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Dear Teachers,
I am conducting research to explore how experienced (10 or more years) high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical strategies. You are being contacted as one who works at a high school in Lake County where there is an instructional coach and who has more than 10 years of certificated teaching experience.

Purpose and what you will be doing:
The purpose of this research is to explore how you perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on your pedagogical practices. We expect approximately 13 volunteers. No one will be paid to be in the study. To be in the study, you will complete an Initial Teacher Questionnaire, a Qualtrics Questionnaire, a classroom observation, and participate in an 8-question face-to-face, one-on-one interview answering questions about your experience with instructional coaching and pedagogical strategy implementation. Doing these things should take less than 3 hours of your time.

Risks:
There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, I will protect your information. I, the principal investigator, will collect and analyze data from Qualtrics Questionnaire, the Teacher Observation Checklist, and transcriptions of the recorded interviews. The recording will be transcribed by a computer software program called Scribie. Any data you provide will be coded so people who are not the investigator cannot link your information to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption on my password protected computer. The recording will be deleted at the conclusion of the study.
Please understand that your current and future employment, education, and/or medical care with your school district will not be affected by whether or not you participate. Specifically, your care will not be jeopardized if you choose not to participate.

Benefits:
Information you provide will help district leaders, administrators, and instructional coaches make improvements to instructional coaching programs so that ongoing instructional supports are provided to teachers throughout all phases of their careers. A summary of the research results will be provided to each high school site principal and district superintendent at the conclusion of the study.

If you would like to volunteer for this study, please reply to this email.

Thank you,
Marcia Tierney

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Research Study Title: How Experienced High School Teachers Perceive the Effects of an Instructional Coaching Program on Their Pedagogical Strategies?
Principal Investigator: Marcia Tierney
Research Institution: Concordia University
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Christopher Maddox

Purpose and what you will be doing:
The purpose of this survey is to explore how experienced high school teachers perceive the effects of an instructional coaching program on their pedagogical studies. We expect approximately 13 volunteers. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on 09/03/2019 and end enrollment on 09/23/2019. To be in the study, you will complete an Initial Teacher Questionnaire, a Qualtrics Questionnaire, a classroom observation, and participate in an 8 question, face-to-face interview. Doing these things should take less than 3 hours of your time.

Risks:
There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption or locked file inside my home office. When we or any of our investigators look at the data, none of the data will have your name or identifying information. We will only use a secret code to analyze the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed 3 years after we conclude this study.

Benefits:
Information you provide will help district leaders, administrators, and instructional coaches make improvements to instructional coaching programs so that high quality, ongoing instructional supports are provided to teachers throughout all phases of their careers.

Confidentiality:
This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions.

Contact Information:
You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Marcia Tierney at [redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_____ _____
Participant Name Date

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

_____ _____
Investigator Name Date

_____ _____
Investigator Signature Date

Investigator: Marcia Tierney email: [redacted]
c/o: Professor Christopher Maddox
Concordia University–Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221

Appendix D: Initial Teacher Questionnaire

Information is needed in preparation of your participation in the research study titled: How do Experienced High School Teachers Perceive the Effects of an Instructional Coaching Program on their Pedagogical Strategies? Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability and email this questionnaire back to me within 10 days of receiving it to [redacted]

1. Teacher name:
2. Number of years you have been a credentialed teacher:
3. Number of years you have been teaching at a site with an instructional coach:
4. Grade level and content area(s) you currently teach:
5. Check the types of instructional coaching support that you have experienced as a teacher at this site:

    ☐ Professional development led by a coach

    ☐ One-on-one coaching conversations

    ☐ Professional learning community meetings led by a coach

    ☐ A combination of instructional supports

    ☐ I have received no coaching support at this site

Appendix E: Qualtrics Questionnaire

Please take a moment to complete questions 1–4 during the planning stages of a lesson and then follow up with questions 5–7 after you have implemented the lesson.

Teacher Name: _____

Date of lesson: _____

Planning

1. What is the standard or student learning goal you are currently working on?
2. Describe how you identified what students already know and do not now about the learning goal?
3. What strategies will you use to deliver the lesson so that information is accessible to all learners?
4. What form of coaching has supported you in the planning stage of your pedagogical strategy(s)? Please check all that apply.

    ☐ Professional development led by a coach

    ☐ One-on-one coaching conversation

    ☐ Professional learning community or department meeting led by a coach

    ☐ A combination of instructional coaching supports

    ☐ None

Post Lesson Reflection

5. Describe how the delivery of the targeted strategy(s) went.

    a. What went well? How do you know?
    b. What do you want to improve upon? Why?
    c. What factors contributed to the success of the lesson?
6. Based on your response to question 4, how did that level of instructional coaching support effect your implementation plan?
7. As you move forward considering different strategies in your lesson planning, what support resources will you utilize?

Appendix F: Teacher Observation Checklist

Each teacher participant will be observed during one class period. The checklist will be used to identify the types of pedagogical strategies used during the lesson.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Questioning Strategies</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Questions Asked
○ Knowledge – to recall information
○ Comprehension – understand meaning
○ Application – use a concept in a new situation
○ Analysis – separate concepts into parts; distinguish between facts and inferences
○ Synthesis – combine parts to form new meaning
○ Evaluation – make judgments about the value of ideas or products</td>
<td>Number of Questions
○ 0-5 questions
○ 6-10 questions
○ 11 or more questions

When During the Lesson
○ Beginning
○ Middle
○ End

Teacher Response
○ Redirecting
○ Probing
○ Responding</td>
<td>Wait Time
○ 1-10 seconds
○ 11- 30 seconds
○ Longer than 30 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Description/comments:</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Active Engagement Strategies</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Direct Instruction
○ Partner think/pair/share
○ Cooperative group work
○ Independent practice
○ Academic conversation
○ Scaffolding
○ Sentence frames/starters</td>
<td>○ Connect to prior knowledge
○ Schema
○ Note taking
○ Graphic organizers
○ Use of technology
○ Vocabulary
○ Check lists</td>
<td>○ Modeling
○ Prompts
○ Close reading
○ Annotating
○ Kinesthetic
○ Music/song</td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Description/comments:</td></tr>
</table>

Strategies to Check for Understanding		
○ White boards/review cards ○ Exit tickets ○ Review games	○ Summarizing ○ Debates ○ Presentations	○ Assessments ○ Self-reflection ○ Socratic Seminar
Description/comments:		
Other Strategies:		

Appendix G: Interview Questions

1. What do you inherently believe about the concept of instructional coaching?
2. In your opinion, what are the roles and responsibilities of the instructional coach at your site?
3. How effective is instructional coaching at your site?
4. Tell me about your own experiences working with the instructional coach at your site?
5. How effective has your work with a coach been in the development of your pedagogical strategies? How so?
6. In your opinion, what other ways, besides instructional coaching support, can educators improve their pedagogical strategies to meet the learning needs of all students?
7. Describe what the ideal instructional program would be?
8. Describe the ideal coach within that program?

Appendix H: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does "fraudulent" mean?

"Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.

What is "unauthorized" assistance?

"Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.

Marcia Tierney

_____

Digital Signature

Marcia Tierney

_____

Name (Typed)

March 31, 2020

_____

Date