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Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Early Childhood Instructional Coaches: An Explanatory Case Study

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF

EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES:

AN EXPLANATORY CASE STUDY

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Laura J. Scamardella has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this 2021 **Spring** Semester.

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The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate's file and submit a copy with your final dissertation.

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"She believed she could, so she did." (R.S. Grey)

Dedication

"She remembered who she was, and the game changed." (Lahla Delia)

This dissertation is dedicated to my children Anthony and Mia Rose who are my heart and soul. The love a mother has for her children cannot be quantified or even truly explained. You are my children, my life, and my dreams for tomorrow. Being your mother has been my greatest accomplishment.

Through my example, remember to be those people who give more than they expect to receive, smile through the sad times, light the way for others, and spread joy to make the world a better place. We are put here on this earth to impart our gifts and talents, so learn everything you can, share what you know, and strive for nothing less than excellence. I have paved the way for both of you; now it is your turn to achieve what you perceive to be impossible.

Throughout your journey, there will be moments that will change your entire world in a matter of minutes. These moments will take your breath away and change you as people. Let these moments make you stronger, smarter, and kinder. Do not allow these moments to make you someone you are not. Instead, I ask you to pick yourself up, put one foot in front of the other, remember who your mother is, and keep moving forward. I love you!

Abstract

High expectations for student achievement, the continuous evolution of teacher evaluation protocols, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have led schools and districts to find effective, ongoing professional development for teachers. Schools and districts have invested a great deal of time, energy, and money offering teachers the opportunities for ongoing professional development. One specific professional development approach many United States schools and districts have adopted is instructional coaching. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of teachers who have worked with early childhood instructional coaches. This study identified a better understanding of what instructional coaches do with early childhood teachers, and the experiences that pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers have when working with early childhood coaches. This inquiry study also aimed to understand how teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy. This qualitative research study was guided by three research questions: (1) How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches? (2) In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers? and (3) How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy? Data were collected by a survey using a Likert 5-pt. scale and open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews, and a document analysis. An explanatory case study design was appropriate for this study to understand teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches. Findings from this research are significant because they will help determine the factors as to why some teachers utilize instructional coaches and why others resist the coaching model.

Keywords: achievement gap, coaching, instructional coaching, master teacher, peer coaching, professional development

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Introduction

Context of the Problem

Often traditional professional development lasts only one day and takes place on district-mandated days built into the school calendar. According to Knight (2009), traditional one-day professional development sessions are not effective for fostering professional learning, and without follow-up sessions or workshops even the best educational leaders can only hope for ten percent implementation. Often, short training sessions involve complex interactions that can actually decrease teachers' interest in growth and improvement and develop a culture that is hostile to professional learning.

Schools and districts have invested a great deal of time, energy, and money offering teachers the opportunities for ongoing professional development. One specific professional development approach many United States schools and districts have adopted is instructional coaching. An instructional coach has the chief professional responsibility to bring evidence-based practices into classrooms by working with teachers and school leaders. The goal of the instructional coach is to increase student engagement, improve achievement, and build teacher capacity within the school (Knight, 2007).

Coaches can be change agents (West & Cameron, 2013), sources of knowledge, and serve as resources in bridging the gap between professional development experiences and classroom instruction. Coaching is a growth-oriented strategy that supports the development of instructional goals designed to improve student outcomes and decrease teacher isolation. To support the professional learning experiences of teachers, coaching must be strategic and intense, supportive and collaborative, and ongoing (Guskey, 2002). In order for professional development

to be meaningful and readily applicable in the classroom, an effective coaching model must be employed (Sheridan et al., 2009).

The use of instructional coaches increased after the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 became law. In response to increased accountability placed on school systems, schools focused on professional development for teachers as a means to improve teaching practices and increase student achievement (Seed, 2008). The traditional approach to professional development had many educators questioning its effectiveness, especially when the goal was to move schools and districts forward as professional learning communities. NCLB requires districts to develop and implement a school improvement plan that includes professional development programs for teachers at schools that are deemed "failing" to make adequate yearly progress. NCLB requires that these professional development programs incorporate instructional coaching as an ongoing, embedded basis. Instructional coaching has shown to be an effective approach to professional learning; therefore, it is not surprising to see an increase in the prevalence and use of coaching as an effective professional development strategy.

Understanding teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches is of great importance. Schools and districts invest a great deal of time and money in professional development for teachers through the practice of instructional coaching. Many schools and districts have a variety of subject coaches available for teachers to call upon. With this effort comes the responsibility to develop and implement coaching programs and models that have the greatest potential to improve classroom instruction with the outcome of increasing student achievement. For this reason, it would be helpful to understand teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches, what instructional coaches do with early childhood teachers, in what ways instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers, and how teachers describe the influence that

coaching has on their instructional pedagogy.

Problem Statement

High expectations for student achievement, the continuous evolution of teacher evaluation protocols, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have led schools and districts to find effective, ongoing professional development for teachers. Instructional coaching (Knight, 2009) offers authentic education that provides differentiated support for adult professional learning. While coaching is not a quick fix, it is an approach that offers time and support for teachers to reflect, discuss, explore, and practice new ways of thinking and doing this remarkably important and complex act called teaching. Perhaps most importantly, coaching puts teachers' needs at the heart of professional learning by individualizing their instruction, and by positioning teachers as professionals.

The necessity for implementing job-embedded, ongoing professional development is widely recognized through the research on instructional coaching; however, very little research has been conducted in the area of teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches. This proposal sought to examine teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches. This proposal specifically addressed the following questions: 1) What do instructional coaches do with early childhood teachers? 2) In what ways do instructional coaches engage with early childhood teachers? and 3) How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

Findings from this research are significant because they will help determine the factors that influence why some teachers utilize instructional coaches and why others resist the coaching model. Providing educational leaders and districts this information could help implement a more effective coaching model for early childhood instructional coaches to utilize. The data generated

from this study could also provide insight into more effective approaches that early childhood coaches could use while working with staff. Additionally, findings from this study will also help educational leadership understand the factors that contribute to teacher agreement and/or resistance. This study will open up a much-needed dialogue among educational leaders to examine the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for early childhood teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of teachers who have worked with early childhood instructional coaches This study also identified a better understanding of what instructional coaches do with early childhood teachers, and the experiences that pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers have when working with early childhood coaches. Finally, this study aimed to understand how teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy. This study will open up a much-needed dialogue between educational leaders to examine the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for teachers.

Research Questions

This study examined three main research questions:

RQ 1. How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches?

RQ 2. In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers?

RQ 3. How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

Significance of the Study

Educational leaders investigating reasons why teachers are in opposition to or in favor of receiving coaching support is imperative. Researchers show that coaching is an effective professional development strategy. Teachers can greatly benefit from working with instructional coaches. Utilizing coaching on a consistent basis for ongoing support and professional development can have favorable outcomes. The findings of this study will contribute to the knowledge base of educators with regard to implications of early childhood education. Instructional coaching findings will also provide information for early childhood education coaches to improve their practices when working with teachers or giving professional development. The more informed leaders make better decisions when implementing a coaching model.

More research is needed in the area of teachers' perceptions of this professional development strategy. The findings of this study could contribute to providing insight into whether results from coaching stems from teachers' beliefs in the efficacy of professional development or other factors behind teachers' resistance. There are only a few experimental studies on instructional coaching, and adding teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaching could allow other researchers to triangulate these studies with existing data to find trends.

Definition of Terms

Achievement Gap

The disproportion in academic performance between white students and ethnically diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 2007).

Coaching

Coaching is an effective job-embedded, non-evaluative, method of professional

development that offers a safe environment for teachers to collaborate and reflect on new integrated skills and strategies that are being implemented in the classroom (Knight, 2007).

Instructional Coach

A teacher leader trained to support colleagues as he or she employs research-based instructional strategies into the classroom. The prime goal of an instructional coach is to help teachers build capacity and improve teaching practices (Killion & Harrison, 2006).

Master Teacher

Master teachers are funded in New Jersey's State Preschool Program to provide and maintain high levels of quality by helping and supporting preschool teachers. Their primary role is to visit classrooms and coach teachers using reflective practice to improve instruction (New Jersey Department of Education).

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is a non-threatening form of professional development where self-directed peers with a collegial relationship offer guidance and support to each other through collaboration, communication, and reflection (Vidmar, 2006, p. 136).

Professional Development

Learning activities in which educators take part to learn new skills and knowledge or enhance current abilities to develop their practice (Killion & Harrison, 2006).

Organization of the Study

This inquiry has five chapters. Chapter I includes an introduction to the study and the research questions. Chapter II reviews the literature on instructional coaches and professional development. Chapter III describes the methodology used to conduct the study, including data collection and analysis, and the participants. Chapter IV summarizes the qualitative data that was

collected. Chapter V includes findings, conclusions made, and recommendations for policy

change and potential areas for future studies.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Professional Development

Professional development is defined as an approach to improve the practices and effectiveness of the teacher to bring about necessary change in classroom practices. There has been a transformation in the professional development landscape in recent years because of the ever-growing need for academic improvement and high-stakes testing. Teachers and administrators play a fundamental role in school reform and practices. Griffin (1983) states:

High-quality professional development is a central component in nearly every modern proposal for improving education. Policy-makers increasingly recognize that schools can be no better than the teachers and administrators who work within them. While these proposed professional development programs vary widely in their content and format, most share a common purpose: to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end. (p. 2)

Historically, professional development has been centered around independent, one-day workshops providing teachers training in areas that would otherwise need frequent and consistent revisiting. Loucks-Horsley (1998) found that successful professional development should be a process, not an isolated event. In other words, effective professional development should be authentic, embedded, and foster collaboration with the focus on the adult learner. Joyce and Showers (2002) believe that adult learners expect a professional development framework consisting of authentic artifacts and an immediate purpose. A report to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science, and Training, in support of systemic professional development, lists four main criteria: (1) the development integrated with a comprehensive

change process, (2) a reciprocal relationship between individual and organizational development, (3) the need for individuals to plan their development to suit school needs and for schools to plan according to individual or faculty needs, and (4) the promotion and sustenance of organizational and individual teacher change (Downes et al., 2001). Meeting this criterion proves to be problematic because of many disjointed organizational practices and inconsistent roles (Phillips, 2008). The one-and-done professional development strategy has not led to the desired "systematic change of teachers' practices, attitudes and beliefs, pedagogy, and students' learning outcomes" (Guskey, 2002 p. 381).

In order for teachers to see the outcome of their successes, feedback is essential to reinforcing positive change. Dolan (1980) states, "New practices are likely to be abandoned, however, in the absence of any evidence of their positive effects. It is vitally important to include some procedure by which teachers can receive regular feedback on that outcome to assess the effects of their efforts" (p. 10). Changes in teachers' instructional practices hinge on the affirmation of their consistent efforts so that practices become habits. "It is well known that successful actions are reinforcing and likely to be repeated while those that are unsuccessful tend to be diminished. Similarly, practices that are new and unfamiliar will be accepted and retained when they are perceived as increasing one's competence and effectiveness" (Bredeson et al., 1983; Guskey, 1989; Huberman, 1992 p. 387).

Professional Development Goals

Professional development should be created with the end in mind, and in collaboration with teachers. Collaborative planning lends itself to effective professional development as found in Guskey (2003). Guskey and Yoon (2009) state that professional development is ineffective if there is no connection between what teachers want to receive as professional development and

what is actually planned. In other words, if early childhood teachers take part in professional development that holds little to no value for them, then pedagogical changes will not occur. Guskey (2003) found that effective professional development programs elicit "change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their attitudes and beliefs, and change in the learning outcomes of students" (p. 10). Professional development will positively affect student achievement if it is driven by student learning outcomes. According to Dufour (2014), specific attributes were found to help develop an effective professional development opportunity. These attributes are: a sustainable focus, goal oriented in nature, and collaborative by design. In summary, teachers today have an innate need to hone their professional skills and strive for growth. Without an effective, meaningful professional development framework, teachers' skills can remain stagnant and pedagogical change will not occur.

Change can be challenging for some and require thorough, repetitive training and practice. "Any change that holds great promise for increasing individuals' competence or enhancing an organization's effectiveness is likely to be slow and require extra work" (Guskey, 2000). Darling-Hammond (2009) found that 90% of American teachers were dissatisfied after receiving professional development. The causes for dissatisfaction were due to (1) rare and weak collaboration, (2) much of the professional development available was not useful, (3) opportunities for training special needs students or limited English proficiency students were virtually nonexistent, and (4) teachers' own priorities for further knowledge were not being addressed (p. 9). Furthermore, it was found that effective professional development focuses on student learning, aligns to school improvement priorities and goals, builds strong building relationships among teachers, and is ongoing and embedded (pp. 10-11). In summary, clear goals, relevance, and teacher buy-in to the process are essential to ensuring teacher satisfaction

with professional development, ultimately leading to positive student outcomes.

Professional Development Flaws

Professional development often fails because program designers frequently overlook the needs of instructing teachers (Bakkeness et al., 2010). Changing instructional pedagogy expects that student learning may decrease under newer practices, causing teachers' resistance. Teachers are hesitant to discard old practices they have developed in their classrooms because of the ever-changing evaluation processes and stressors (Bolster, 1983). "Pressure is often necessary to initiate change among those whose self-impetus for change is not great (Airasian, 1987; Huberman & Crandall, 1983) and it provides the encouragement, motivation, and occasional nudging that many practitioners require to persist in the challenging tasks that are intrinsic to all change efforts" (Huberman & Crandall, p. 5). Teachers need to feel supported in the professional development process so that anxiety lessens and implementation of new practices occurs. In addition, support enables teachers to properly implement strategies without the looming fear of occasional failures.

Professional development is essential for making improvements in education. To change or to try something new means to risk failure. According to Guskey (2002), "It has been suggested that the majority of programs fail because they do not take into account two crucial factors: (1) what motivates teachers to engage in professional development, and (2) the process by which change in teachers typically occurs. It is also important to recognize that no new program or innovation will be implemented uniformly" (p. 4). This is because professional development is being created without teachers' input, even though it is a motivating factor for teachers to reform their practices. While reformation of practices should be the goal of all professional development, Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) assert that reforms based on

assumptions of uniformity in the educational system repeatedly fail. According to Guskey (1986), professional development is often designed to reform teachers' beliefs and specific curriculum ideologies because it is assumed that the end result will be an increase in student achievement.

Coaching Definitions

Coaching can be defined as the art of creating an environment, through conversation and a way of being, that facilitates the process by which a person can move toward desired goals in a fulfilling manner (Gallwey, 2000). According to Aguilar, the title of coach has been loosely and widely applied in the field of education. New teachers are sometimes appointed a coach who might be a mentor and confidante, or simply someone who stops in every other week to fill out paperwork (Aguilar, 2013). Many mandated curricula initiatives deploy coaches to enforce implementation. Schools sometimes even have "data coaches" who gather and analyze data, prepare reports, meet with teachers to discuss the results, and suggest actions to take (Aquilar, 2013). Districts also assign coaches to underperforming veteran teachers as a step in the complicated process of firing a teacher. Principals and department directors have also appointed coaches as part of school improvement. Schools that have failed to improve on test scores qualify for this type of coaching. In addition, some coaches co-plan lessons, observe instruction and offer feedback, model instructional strategies, gather resources, and offer support with new curricula (Aguilar, 2013).

Aguilar (2013) states that a definition of coaching is necessary to come to an overall agreement about what is not coaching. Coaching is not a way to enforce a program. Coaches should never be used as enforcers, reporters, or evaluators. This approach has many negative implications and demeans the field of coaching. Coaching is not a tool for fixing people. It is not

something to do with or to ineffective teachers. Receiving coaching services is not a box to be checked so that a district can move toward disciplinary measures. Coaching should not be mandated, and teachers or principals should be able to opt out of coaching. Coaching, as a form of professional development, won't be effective if the client doesn't want to engage in it. People cannot be forced to learn. Coaching is not therapy (Aguilar, 2013). A coach does not pursue in-depth explorations of someone's psyche, childhood, or emotional issues. While these areas may arise in coaching, the role of a coach is not to dwell here. Sometimes a coach needs to delineate between what she knows and can do and what a mental health expert knows and can do for a client. A coach needs to be very clear about the boundaries between coaching and therapy, and to remember that the focus of coaching is on learning and developing new skills and capacities. Coaching is not consulting. A coach is not necessarily an expert who trains others in a way of doing something; a coach helps build the capacity of others by facilitating their learning.

Knight (2013) states that coaching offers an authentic experience that provides differentiated support for professional learning. Coaching is not a quick solution but is an approach that offers time and support for teachers to reflect, discuss, explore, and practice new ways of thinking about and doing this remarkably important and complex act called teaching. Most importantly, coaching puts teachers' needs at the heart of professional education by individualizing their learning and positioning teachers as professionals. Coaching as a form of professional development has increased in the last ten years. Knight (2013) explains this explosion because of the interest of professional development in the form of coaching. The magnitude can be measured by comparing conference programs from the nation's leading professional learning organization, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC). In 1997, the NSCD used the word coach, or a variation, 19 times. Only ten years later, in 2007, the word

coach or a variation was used 193 times. This research shows that educators are talking and learning about coaching, and school districts and states are implementing coaching on a large scale.

Reiss (2007) defines a coach as a person, a process, a role, and a profession. Toll (2006) defines a coach as one who helps teachers to recognize what they know and can do, assists teachers as they strengthen their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do, and supports teachers as they learn more and do more. Therefore, a coach takes on different roles including that of data coach, resource provider, counselor, mentor, curriculum specialist, instructional specialist, classroom supporter, learning facilitator, school leader, and catalyst for change (Knight, 2009; Marsh et al., 2008). Data coaches help teachers examine student achievement data and use these data to design forms of instruction to meet students' learning needs. Coaches can also act as curriculum specialists who focus on teaching content and classroom support and work side by side with teachers within the classroom. Coaches themselves can be school leaders or catalysts for change, because they contribute to initiatives for reform. By acting as learning facilitators, coaches can design and facilitate adults' learning in schools (Knight, 2009).

Kise's (2006) definition limits coaching to a partnership between the coach and the person being coached. Poglinco and Bach (2004) define coaching as "a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individuals, or groups of teachers and more accomplished peers" (p. 398). Rush and Shelden (2005) define coaching as an adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner's ability to reflect on his or her actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations. Bean (2004) identifies three levels of

activities associated with the coaches. Level one includes informal activities such as curriculum development or leading a study group. Level two activities are focused on area needs such as co-planning and co-teaching lessons, or analyzing student work. Level three refers to visiting classrooms and providing teachers with feedback.

In this study, the definition of the word "coach" aligns itself with Rush and Shelden (2005). Rush and Shelden define coaching as an adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner's ability to reflect on his or her actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations. The district adheres to a reflective coaching model for early childhood teachers. According to Knight (2009), if we are creating a learning partnership, if our partners are equal with us, if they are free to speak their own minds and free to make real, meaningful choices, it follows that one of the most important choices our collaborating partners will make is how to make sense of whatever we are proposing they learn. Partners don't dictate to each other what to believe; they respect their partners' professionalism and provide them enough information so that they can make their own decisions. Instructional coaches encourage collaborating teachers to consider ideas before adopting them. Indeed, instructional coaches recognize that reflective thinkers, by definition, have to be free to choose or reject ideas, or else they simply are not thinkers at all.

Different Coaching Models

Schools use a variety of coaching models. The directive coaching model is instructive coaching that focuses on changing behavior. The coach acts as an expert in a content or strategy and shares her expertise. She might provide resources, make suggestions, model lessons, and teach someone how to do something. This kind of coaching is frequently seen by those who

coach in a particular content, discipline, or instructional framework. In this model, the coach is seen as an expert who is responsible for teaching a set of skills or sharing a body of knowledge (Aguilar, 2013).

The facilitative coaching model supports clients to learn new ways of thinking about and through reflection, analysis, observation, and experimentation. The coach in this model does not share expert knowledge; she works to build on the client's existing skills, knowledge, and beliefs and helps the client to construct new skills, knowledge, and beliefs that will form the basis for future actions. The facilitative coaching model follows the zone of proximal development (ZPD) that was developed by Lev Vygotsky. The ZPD is defined as the range of abilities between what one can do with assistance but cannot yet perform independently. The learner is provided with scaffolding so the skill can be accomplished; therefore, the ZPD is constantly shifting. Cognitive and ontological coaching both have a deep foundation in facilitative coaching methodology (Aguilar, 2013).

The transformational coaching model incorporates strategies from both directive and facilitative coaching models; however, the distinction is the scope that it attempts to affect the processes used. There are three domains: the individual client and his behaviors, beliefs, and being; the institutions and systems in which the client works and the people who work within those systems; and the broader educational and social systems in which we live. A transformational coach works to expose the connection between the three domains to leverage change between them, and to intentionally direct our efforts so that the impact we have on an individual will reverberate on other levels (Aguilar, 2013). Transformational coaching is deeply grounded in systems thinking, which is defined as a conceptual framework for seeing interrelationships and patterns of change rather than isolated events. By seeing the whole, we are

much more effective in working toward transformation (Senge, 1990).

The reflective coaching model has coaches work one-on-one with teachers to help improve instructional methods to better the teaching and learning experience in classrooms. This model shares the same principles as other coaching models in that it offers opportunities for self-development, self-awareness, goal setting, and creating action. In this model, the client is a teacher who is motivated to learn, grow, and is interested in a change in performance (Gareth et al., 2004).

The cognitive coaching model is predicated on the "assumptions that behaviors change after our beliefs change and puts coaching at the heart of the coaching relationship" (Knight, 2007, p. 10). The module involves reflecting on and planning one specific event, which could extend over several years. The coach and colleague must interact on numerous occasions and reflect on a variety of activities. Cognitive coaching requires multiple interactions and opportunities for a teacher to reflect upon the teaching and learning experience. The coaching model consists of the following elements: (1) planning the actual conversation, (2) having the opportunity for the coach to observe the event, and (3) designating time to reflect (Knight, 2007).

Trust needs to be established between coach and teacher. Activities such as helping grade papers or spending time in the classroom assists in building a relationship between teacher and coach. The coach is there as a partner and not a supervisor; the coaching sessions remain confidential so the teacher can be as honest and candid as needed in order to move the teacher forward in his or her practice. The goal is to improve practice by combining good instruction with goal setting, practice, feedback, observations, and discussions of teaching. The coach is there to support, empower, listen, and provide accountability. The focus of this model is to provide a time and space for healthy, respectful conversations in which both the coach and

teacher leave feeling more able and committed to making a positive difference in children's lives (Irwin, Hanton and Kerwin, 2004).

Instructional Coaches

Researchers indicate that instructional coaching has been the professional development of choice over the last decade. One specific type of coaching is instructional coaching, which is a teacher-coach partnership aimed at improving instruction (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches can take on many roles including providing intensive, differentiated support to teachers so that they are able to implement proven practices (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches should have excellent communication skills, a deep respect for teachers' professionalism, and a thorough knowledge of the teaching practices they share with teachers (Knight, 2007). Impactful instructional coaches are able to empathize, listen, and build trusting relationships while encouraging and supporting teachers' reflection about their classroom practices.

Knight (2009) states, "If instructional coaches are going to share proven teaching practices with teachers, they likely need a framework to help them identify where to start. Instructional coaches working with the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning employ a framework we refer to as "The Big Four," which includes (1) classroom management, (2) content, (3), instruction, and (4) assessment for learning" (p. 34). There are also clear components in which instructional coaches respond to personal change. The eight components of the process are to enroll, identify, explain, model, observe, explore, refine, and reflect (Knight, 2009). Instructional coaches will be the focus of this research.

Early Childhood Instructional Coaches

Coaching in the early childhood classrooms is the most commonly used form of professional development (Hindman & Wasik, 2012). The researcher chose to study early

childhood coaches because of the limited amount of research on this topic; however, studies

suggest there is a favorable impact on teachers' understanding of specific content knowledge

(Hindman & Wasik, 2012) and improvement to their practices when instructional coaches are

utilized (Domitrovich et al., 2009).

There have typically been two types of coaching used in early childhood classrooms.

First is content specific coaching and the second is instructional coaching. Instructional coaching

is commonly embedded into early childhood programs such as federal Head Start and New

Jersey's state funded preschool programs. New Jersey's state funded preschool programs have

"master teachers" who take on the role of the instructional coach in the preschool classrooms.

The primary role of the master teacher is to provide and maintain high levels of quality by

helping and supporting preschool teachers. They visit classrooms and coach teachers using

reflective practices to improve instruction (New Jersey Department of Education, 2020).

Master teachers have specific responsibilities. They visit classrooms on a regular basis to

coach and provide feedback to teachers to improve teaching practices through the reflective

cycle:

Coach teachers on the use of Performance-Based Assessments (Teaching Strategies

GOLD, CORE, Work Sampling, etc.), including supporting quality assessment,

interpretation of data and use of assessment data in planning. Administer structured

program evaluation instruments (in assigned classrooms) in the fall-winter to measure

quality practices in preschool classrooms (e.g., ECERS-3, SELA, PCMI, High/Scope

Preschool Program Quality Assessment, Creative Curriculum Fidelity Tool, etc.). Use

performance-based assessment data and results of structured classroom observations to

determine and support a high level of curriculum implementation. Plan specific goals and

training opportunities, including, but not limited to, modeling classroom practices and lessons, facilitating PLC meetings, and planning and implementing workshops, to improve weak areas identified from structured observation instruments (aggregated data), curriculum observation instruments, performance-based assessment results, district evaluation data, and other information. Confer with early childhood supervisors to coordinate, articulate, and provide professional development for all early childhood staff. Provide individualized follow-up support to the teacher's level of development and plan small group meetings/trainings for teachers with similar needs. Reflect on own professional development needs, attend workshops, read research articles, consult with others, etc. (New Jersey Department of Education, 2020).

Master teachers offer many services to those they support and guide such as: (1) confer regularly with the preschool intervention and referral team to discuss how to support teachers and parents with children who have challenging behaviors, (2) meet regularly with the community parent involvement specialist to plan for smooth transitions for children entering preschool or going to kindergarten and assist in planning parent involvement activities (e.g., ensuring that the results of the performance-based assessment along with other information about the preschoolers are shared with kindergarten staff, planning parent workshops together, planning visits to kindergarten classrooms), (3) provide technical assistance to district administrators to discuss curriculum goals, professional development, performance-based assessment, structured observation visits, etc., (4) provide consultation to other master teachers with specific expertise (e.g., inclusion, bilingual education, mathematics, literacy), and (5) perform additional duties as assigned that are directly related to early childhood classroom improvement (New Jersey Department of Education, 2020).

Master teachers have two main priorities. According to the New Jersey Department of Education:

"The first priority is they should dedicate the greatest amount of time to classroom visits engaging teachers in reflective practice. During these visits, master teachers should observe classroom practices and provide feedback directly to teaching staff, plan and model exemplary practices, and meet with the program directors or principals. Recordkeeping, including use of the Reflective Cycle, should be maintained during these visits. A second priority is they should spend a substantial amount of time, but less than that devoted to classroom visits, dedicated to providing and planning for professional development experiences for classroom teachers. Professional development experiences should be aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, the school district's DOE approved curriculum and the district's DOE approved professional development plan. Experiences should be differentiated to match varying levels of experience and expertise of the instructional staff. Professional development should be presented in a variety of participant settings, ranging from small groups to cohorts to entire staff" (New Jersey Department of Education, 2020).

Coaching is a relationship-based professional development strategy; the expertise and training of both the teacher and the coach can either assist or distract from building an effective learning relationship (Domitrovich et al., 2013). Other factors such as a culture of collaboration, schedule design, and the degree of support and connection administration has with staff directly impacts the ability to develop trusting, collaborative, and productive coaching relationships (Ackerman, 2008; Wilson et al., 2012). What has not been fully examined in the current research is the perception that early childhood teachers have with regard to mentor teachers. Although it

has been acknowledged that coaches "must possess specialized knowledge and skills in evidence-based practices that support adult learning to effectively 'individualize' the coaching component" (Gupta & Daniels, 2012, p. 217), little is known in the ways mentor teachers work or engage with early childhood teachers, early childhood teachers' experiences with working with mentor teachers, and if early childhood teachers change their pedagogy after working with the mentor teacher. In the researcher's current district, early childhood teachers work directly in a cohort with a novice through second year preschool teachers so understanding the impact that mentor teachers have would be beneficial for continuing this practice.

According to Joyce and Showers (2002), delivering effective professional development consists of four main components: (1) developing knowledge through exploring theory to understand the concepts behind a skill or strategy, (2) the demonstration or modeling of a skill, (3) the practice of skill with feedback, and (4) ongoing coaching and follow up (often referenced as peer coaching or instructional coaching). Given the previous information on how to impact teaching practices and attitudes, it is clear that in order for students to benefit from the professional development experiences of teachers, the traditional "sit and get" methods will not be effective. Teachers need a more comprehensive approach, which includes meaningful practice, feedback, and ongoing support.

Joyce and Showers (2002) suggest there are four components to successful professional development. The first component is theory. The teacher must understand the underlying research base and rationale for the new instructional strategy, skill, or concept being presented. Only those ideas supported by scientific research as capable of improving student achievement should be included. The second component is demonstration. The teacher must be provided with models of what is being taught. This demonstration can be provided by the instructor or perhaps

by observing videos where the practice is modeled. The third component is practice and feedback. Immediately following the demonstration, within the PD session, opportunities to practice what has been demonstrated are provided and immediate feedback is given. One example of this practice is called microteaching and is explained in greater detail below. The fourth component is coaching and follow-up. Coaching is the process of being observed, often by a peer, and receiving immediate feedback. This helps the teacher internalize what is being learned through observation and feedback. Follow-up includes discussions after the coaching session as well as any additional training or technical assistance that is necessary to successfully implement the practice and/or program. The last step ensures that the teacher is likely to keep the strategy, skill, or concept and incorporate it as part of classroom practice.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches

Instructional coaches take on many different roles and responsibilities. For example, coaches participate in specific professional development about coaching to become skillful. In professional development, coaches examine their fundamental beliefs about student learning, teaching, and coaching; acquire deep knowledge about adult development and change; and acquire skillfulness with a broad range of strategies to use in their new role. Schools and districts are increasingly employing coaches to assume some of the responsibilities related to implementation support as implementation support provides crucial knowledge about reform efforts (Knight, 2009).

Professional development in education is not just to guide the implementation of instructional innovations; its central function is to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change (Fullan, 2008). While the goal of coaching is to support professional development opportunities and to guide these learning experiences into

meaningful, contextually based instructional objectives and goals, coaching and professional development are about facilitating learning for individuals and groups/teams.

Stated differently, professional development in education is not just to guide the implementation of instructional innovations; its central function is to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change (Fullan, 2008). While the goal of coaching is to support professional development opportunities and to guide these learning experiences into meaningful, contextually based instructional objectives and goals, coaching and professional development are about facilitating learning for individuals and groups/teams.

Coaches use support strategies to learn about the practice or to improve teaching practices. Coaching strategies involve the sharing of knowledge and the use of problem-solving techniques to facilitate teachers' implementation of innovative instructional approaches and sustain changes in their practice. Sustainability ensures that evidence- and research-based practices are maintained to support teachers' continual professional learning and development. Change is complex and practitioners require ongoing high-quality professional development after the in-service component (Fullan, 2001). Coaching must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with students (Fullan, 2008). Coaches observe classroom practices and facilitations, support teachers in using assessment data to make instructional decisions, and utilize observation data and feedback to guide reflective discussions on the progression of children's learning and development.

Killion and Harrison (2006) state that coaches have ten roles. Some coaches serve in all ten roles while others maintain a narrower focus. By narrowing the focus, the work of the coach has the greatest potential for impact, therefore leading to greater student learning. A data coach assists individual teachers or teams of teachers in examining student achievement data and using

these data to design instruction that addresses student learning need. Teachers turn to their coaches as resource providers. Coaches offer resources to teachers that are not made immediately available to them. Coaches serve the needs of new teachers as mentors providing knowledge about stages of teacher development that are specific to novice teachers. Coaches serve as curriculum specialists focusing on the 'what' of teaching rather than the 'how.' The instructional specialist is another role of the coach. Once teachers know what to teach and what successful learning looks like, they turn their attention to how to teach it by choosing appropriate instructional methodologies and differentiation of instruction.

Performing as a classroom supporter is often the most important role for coaches. In this role, the coach works side by side the teacher inside the classroom engaged in modeling effective teaching practices, co-teaching, and observing following feedback. Coaches are learning facilitators. They organize, coordinate, support, design, or facilitate learning among adults with the school. This role can be considered professional development. As school leaders, coaches contribute to schoolwide reform initiatives. Coaches are perceived as leaders both by peers and school administrators because they lead task forces, facilitate school improvement teams, chair committees, and represent their schools on district committees. In the role of catalyst for change, coaches demonstrate dissatisfaction with the status quo and question routines with inquiry, their goal being to change for continuous improvement. A coach engages in his or her own continuous development, searching for ideas, resources, and strategies to strengthen coaching practices, and to reflect on his or her work as a coach.

The work of the coach can be challenging. The role the coach takes each day directly influences what teachers do and in turn influences what students learn and do. When coaches choose to allocate their time and services that hold the greatest potential for deep change in

teaching and student learning their schools, students, teachers, and principals all benefit. Those benefits include: (1) every student succeeding as a result of high quality instruction, (2) every teacher succeeding as a result of coaching, (3) no teacher facing instructional challenges alone, and (4) every school community engaging in ongoing, ruthless analysis of data, and continuous cycles of improvement that allow its members to measure results in a matter of weeks instead of months or years. Coaches support teachers as they work together to grapple the problem of practice and to make smarter, collaborative decisions that are enriched by the shared practice of the entire community. When coaches choose roles and allocate their time to those who have the greatest potential for impacting teaching and student achievement, the value and experience of coaching will be unquestioned, even when budgets are tight and other priorities begin to surface (Knight 2009).

Professional development has been essential in the field of education. Until recently (Knight, 2009), one of the most common forms of professional learning in schools was traditional one-shot workshops offered on professional development days. Unfortunately, traditional one-shot professional development sessions are not effective for fostering professional learning. When there is no follow-up to workshops, the best educational leaders can hope for is 10% implementation (Bush, 1984). Traditional one-shot training sessions involve complex interactions that can decrease teachers' interest in growth and development and increase a culture in schools that is hostile to professional learning (Knight, 2000). Once the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 became a law on January 8, 2002, educational leaders' questions about the effectiveness of traditional professional development became more frequent, and many came to see that moving schools forward requires a variety of approaches to professional development, the most promising and hopeful being coaching.

Aguilar (2013) states that coaching has proliferated because it is responsive to what we know what about adults need to learn. Essentially, adults need a nurturing structure, but also one with a subtle push for change. The structure grants space for emotions, but doesn't linger in feelings; our intention is to address them, process them, and move on. Coaches encourage us to explore our core values, behaviors, beliefs, and ways of being and compel us to venture into new behaviors, beliefs, and ways of being. It is this essential combination of safety, support, encouragement, and forward movement that makes coaching feels so satisfying, that allows us to make changes in what we do, and even transforms us. As Diane Ravitch cautions, "In education, there are no shortcuts, no utopias, and no silver bullets" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 3), but coaching is one piece —an essential piece — of the multilayered approach that will be necessary to transform schools. There is a strong need for high-quality professional development that takes many shapes and coaching is at the forefront. It is extremely important to allocate monies, time, and attention to improving the practice of the adults who work in the schools. Aguilar (2013) states that coaching offers a model of professional development that can support the teachers and principals in making immediate and long-term changes and becoming masters in their profession; these changes can lead to the transformation of the education system and the experiences and outcomes of the children it is meant to service.

Great leaders, Collins (2005) writes, "are ambitious first and foremost for the cause, the movement, the mission, the work — not themselves — and they have the will to do whatever it takes to make good on that ambition" (p. 11). These attributes that are found in fearless leaders are also identified in instructional coaches. If a coach is too self-centered or aggressive, there is a good chance the coach will push away the teachers. Collins (2001) describes as a "compelling combination of personal humility and professional will" (p. 13); coaches have to be humble,

respectful, relentless, and committed to significant improvement in both teaching and learning.

Factors that Influence the Work of Instructional Coaches

Successful instructional coaching is more likely to occur when coaches engage in these aforementioned areas (Knight, 2009). According to Knight (p. 50), instructional coaches need time. The simplest way to improve the effectiveness of a coaching program is to increase the amount of time coaches are actually coaching. Many instructional coaches are asked to complete non-instructional tasks and are left with little time to work with teachers. Having instructional coaches serve as substitutes, bind standards, and shop for math lab furniture is a poor way to utilize coaches and a poorer way to improve practices in schools. If instructional coaches are going to make a difference in the way teachers teach, they need to have scientifically proven practices to share (p. 51). This can be addressed by having a shared understanding of excellent instruction between the principal and coach. Once this is established, the team should decide collectively the tools to give the teachers to help them become high performing.

Protecting the coaching relationship is vital for success. Teachers see their profession as an integral part of their self-identity. If coaches or others are careless with their comments about teachers' practices, they run the risk of offending teachers, damaging relationships, or at the very least not being heard (Knight, 2013). The coaching relationship needs to be protected in order to build trusting relationships, and teachers the coaches serve should see them as resources, not evaluators alleviating worry and anxiety. Principals and coaches need to work together to achieve success. Instructional coaches need to clearly understand the vision that the administrator has with regard to school improvement because ultimately the loudest voice comes from the building principal. For this reason alone, coaches must fully understand what their interventions offer teachers, and one way to accomplish this is with proper training. Knight

(2013) suggests:

>That success will not be yielded if the wrong people are hired for coaching positions. The most critical factor related to success or failure of a coaching program may be the skills and attributes of the instructional coach. Instructional coaches must be excellent teachers, particularly because they will need to model lessons in teachers' classrooms. They also need to be flexible since their job requires them to change plans almost daily to meet the changing needs of teachers. Simply put, if teachers like a coach, they will usually try out what the coach suggests. If they don't like the coach, they will resist even good teaching practices. (p. 37)

Evaluation is a major component for the continuous evolution of a coaching program. This proves to be challenging because there aren't really guidelines set for coaching evaluations. One way to address this challenge is to involve coaches in the process of creating guidelines, standards, and tools to be used for their evaluation (Knight, 2013). Involving coaches in the process of writing their evaluation guidelines accomplishes three goals. First, it enables school districts to develop a rubric for evaluating coaches that is especially designed for coaches. Second, it increases coaches' buy-in to the guidelines and the process of being evaluated since they created them. Third, the dialogue coaches have while creating the guidelines is an excellent form of professional learning.

The Impact of Instructional Coaching

The value of instructional coaches has been studied extensively over the last several years. West (2012) claims that high-quality coaching can help develop coach-teacher partnerships and affect teaching practices in the classroom for ELLs. When teachers participate in traditional in-service programs, they apply less than 20% of their learning in the classroom.

Teachers are more likely to "buy into" and change their own instructional practices when coaches come into their classrooms and model instructional techniques (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). Teachers who experienced coaching are more willing to try new strategies (Taylor, 2008). An instructional coaching model offers support, feedback, and intensive, individualized professional learning which promises to be a better way to improve instruction in schools (Knight, 2006, 2009; Reeves, 2007). Ultimately, professional development results in the transfer of new instructional practices, and the coaching aspect facilitates the transfer of the training.

Johnson's (2009) study concludes that coaching may be a very valuable tool for increasing the instructional capacity of schools. In her study, 85 second-stage teachers who had four to ten years of teaching experience were interviewed; they commented that they welcomed the help of instructional coaches, because the instructional coaches, as skilled teachers, provided practice and in-class assistance, and helped them improve their current performance.

Carrera's (2010) study examines the use of instructional coaching in one urban school as a form of professional development for teachers of ELLs. The teachers of ELLs identified three challenges in teaching their students, including student stressors related to adapting to a new country, the wide range of literacy levels in the classroom, and teaching academic language. Based on the challenges teachers of ELLs faced in Carrera's (2010) study, the instructional coaches offered a professional development program in vocabulary, reading, writing, lesson planning, and cooperative learning strategies. Two types of coaching were implemented: (1) peer observations and group debriefing sessions in Teacher Learning Communities, and (2) individualized coaching sessions, which included a one-on-one pre-meeting, an observation, and a one-on-one debriefing session. The study concluded that the professional and personal qualities of the coaches and support from the principal became key factors in how coaching was

established at the school. These qualities of the coaches affected the ways in which coaches and

teachers of ELLs established trust, how coaches set the tone for their work at the school, how

coaches provided teachers feedback and opportunities for reflective dialogue, and how they

created a supportive and nurturing environment.

Gladwell (2008) calculates that it takes ten thousand hours of deliberate practice to

master a complex skill. This translates into about seven years of those working in a school. The

majority of teachers and principals want professional development; they want to improve their

craft, be more effective, implement new skills, and see students learn more. The *Elementary

School Journal* (2010) published a three-year study on literacy coaches working in grades K–2 in

seventeen schools. The findings were that student literacy had an increase of 16% in its first year,

28% in its second year, and 32% in the third year. Matsumura (2010) found that schools with

coaching programs saw increased improvement in measures of teacher practices and student

outcomes compared to schools without coaching programs. The findings suggest that new

teachers benefit from teaching in schools with strong coaching programs in place, and that

coaching programs could have an added benefit in high turnover urban schools.

The Annenberg Foundation for Education Reform (2004) reports a number of findings

that offer powerful validation for coaching. The report concludes that effective coaching

encourages collaborative and reflective practices. Coaching allows teachers to apply their

learning more deeply, frequently, and consistently than teachers working alone. Coaching

supports teachers to improve their capacity to reflect and apply their learning to their work with

students and also in their work with each other. A second finding from the Annenberg report is

that effective, embedded professional learning promotes positive cultural change. The

conditions, behaviors, and practices required by an effective coaching program can affect the

culture of a school or system, thus embedding instructional change within the broader efforts to improve school-based culture and conditions. Coaching programs guided by data helped create coherence within a school by focusing on strategic areas of need that were suggested by evidence rather than individual opinions. Coaching promotes the implementation of learning and reciprocal accountability. The likelihood of using new learning and sharing responsibility rises when colleagues, guided by a coach, work together and hold each other accountable for improved teaching and learning. Last, coaching supports collective leadership across a school system. Effective coaching distributes leadership and keeps the focus on teaching and learning. This focus promotes the development of leadership skills, professional learning, and support for teachers that target ways to improve student outcomes.

Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaching

Charner and Medrich (2016) state that schools make considerable investments in teacher professional development. Estimates run between two and five percent of school budgets. This translates into expenditures of thousands of dollars at the school level and in the aggregate, millions of dollars at the state level. Typically, most of these funds are spent on traditional "one and done" inservices that takes place at scheduled times of the year, with little preparation and little or no follow-up. There is almost no evidence that this kind of professional development helps teachers improve at their craft. The return on the investment is modest at best. Charner and Medrich (2016) found that the numbers of teachers choosing to work with an instructional coach has continued to climb in schools providing coaches. Coaches are connecting more with teachers. In addition, coaches are extending their research to more one-one-one coaching with teachers and more small-group and whole-school professional development. As school leaders recognized the contributions that coaches can make, many have invited coaches to lead the in-

school professional development team. Eighty-four percent of teachers who had been coached either one-on-one and/or in small-group professional development reported changes in their classroom practice. The changes that teachers reported included: willingness to try new instructional techniques; reflecting more effectively on practice; and assigning more writing and reading in content areas. Not only does coaching make a difference for teachers' instructional practice, but effective coaches also stimulate teachers' interests in other forms of professional development (Charner & Mean, 2017).

Resistance

Resistance is a factor among teachers when it comes to working with instructional coaches. Sometimes resistance is due to the way coaching is explained to the staff. If teachers have the misunderstanding that the coach is there to "fix" them, or if in the past they've only known coaches to work with struggling teachers assigned by the principal, then they are understandably resistant to working with the coach themselves (Knight, 2007). Working with the coach becomes an admission of incompetence.

Teaching is about thinking any unsolicited comment can become a judgment on the teacher's abilities. Even something as simple as beginning a "no fake reading" campaign in every classroom can become, to some teachers, a judgment on the worth of their prior instruction (Knight, 2007). Teachers are knowledge workers and have a deep-seated need for autonomy. Knight quotes Thomas Davenport, an expert on knowledge workers:

> One important aspect of knowledge workers is that they don't like to be told what to do. Thinking for a living engenders thinking for oneself. Knowledge workers are paid for their education, experience, and expertise, so it is not surprising they often take offense when someone rides roughshod over their intellectual territory (Knight, 2007, p. 15).

Causes of Resistance

According to Walker (2004), when teachers enter into the education profession, they

bring with them an embedded and largely unchallenged worldview of how things are. Such ideas

have already begun to shape their educational views and have provided the basis on which they

have made assumptions about students, learning, teachers, and most matters concerned with

education. One reason for teacher resistance (Knight 2007) to certain teaching initiatives is that

teachers may not believe the initiative is a powerful teaching tool or the changes involved will

not make a positive difference for student learning. Few teachers will be motivated to implement

a teaching practice if it does not increase student achievement, make content more accessible,

improve the quality of classroom conversation, increase love of learning, or have some other

significant positive impact.

Worldview is defined by Webster (2005) as the subjective reality of an identified group

of people as it relates to politics, economics, and government. A worldview is like a set of lenses

by which we perceive the world around us and it affects the way we view all of life. It is formed

by our education, our upbringing, and the culture we live in. A person's worldview provides the

window through which they view the world in which they live and interact. Another predominant

theme presented in the literature of resistance is that of conflict with a teacher's worldview

(Walker, 2004). Teachers often resist a new initiative or teaching practice for the simple reason it

has not been articulated or communicated effectively. If a teacher does not know the

perpetuating causes, reasons, or thinking behind the formulation of a new teaching practice, the

likelihood of resistance is high. A teacher may also resist because the value of the change has not

been clearly explicated (Douglas & Stone, 2010). Many teaching practices are sophisticated, and

teachers sometimes resist when they are expected to learn new initiatives without an opportunity

to watch model demonstration lessons, experience job-embedded support, and receive high-quality feedback. Without support, even a powerful practice, poorly implemented, is no better than one that is ineffective (Knight, 2007).

When teachers are asked to implement new programs, they may not have the energy needed to put that program into practice. Teachers may face what Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) have referred to as a "press of immediacy." In any given day, teachers create lesson plans, grade stacks of papers, complete reports, attend meetings, contact parents, stay at school for sporting events, do bus duty, supervise the cafeteria, attend IEP meetings, and are continuously responsible for a classroom of children to teach. The result is that even when teachers want to implement a new program, they may not have the energy needed to put an initiative into practice (Knight, 2007).

Professional learning that involves too many approaches can lack focus or overwhelm teachers (Davenport, 2005) as cited by Knight, but learning a few critical teaching practices to help teachers perfect their teaching can have a positive effect upon student learning. As teaching continues to progress, more and more curriculum, strategies, and processes are directed toward school systems and teachers. As school leaders jump to find quick answers, they sometimes overreact causing frustration and barriers to future change.

Throughout the literature (Douglas & Stone, 2010; Hjelle, 2001; Knight, 2007), two types of resistance were discovered; the first was a personal resistance by a teacher to a school's leadership or an IC (instructional coach), and the second was resistance to the actual new teaching practice or initiative brought forth by the school leaders or ICs. Personal resistance may stem from a variety of conflicts, personality differences, or dislikes of a leader or a facilitator. Although it might seem that in the education profession these issues would be minimal or

handled with maturity and professionalism, sometimes this is not the case. One type of personal resistance to an IC might appear when teachers feels their identity (their own sense of how good, competent, or talented they are) is under attack by an IC (Douglas & Stone, 2010). When feeling threatened, teachers' most frequent reaction is to resist the IC as well as his or her expertise.

Resistance occurs when the IC does not respect the teacher's knowledge, expertise, or professionalism. In a qualitative study by Hjelle (2001) that examined teachers' responses to reform, the study revealed that when teachers perceived that school administrators or policy makers expected teachers to blindly accept change with little or no regard for their expertise or professional opinions, resistance was much more likely. Ignoring teachers' autonomy makes it more likely they will resist the leadership of an IF. In addition, an attitude of superiority or control can undermine an IF's best intention to help a teacher (Knight, 2007).

Resistance can reveal itself as gossip. Grumbling and complaining are natural ways of airing discomfort and passing on information not known for sure to be true is a way, albeit negative, by which some individuals test an idea of change with others (Jones & Straker, 2006). This is an informal way to evaluate the collective opinion of others so that a decision can be weighed as good or bad toward the change. One of the biggest dangers of gossip occurs when discussions are allowed to continue in an information vacuum, which can easily turn gossip into dangerous discourse. Leaders can usually detect gossip by noting when individuals approach them with questions concerning the change with far-flung information. Responding to gossip with valid information that fills the information vacuum may help decrease the spread of gossip as information replaces speculation (Jones & Straker, 2006).

Types of Resistance

When resistance to change occurs, it can happen either individually or within a unified

group of concerned individuals. When an individual person resists, it is generally limited to the extent of that individual's own personal power (Jones & Straker, 2006). For those with more power, this can include open challenges and criticism of the change. For those with less power, it may include more passive disagreement and after-the-meeting types of digressions. The act of resistance can vary from a hidden act to a very noticeable dissension and can be classified as either covert or overt resistance (Jones & Straker, 2006). Covert resistance is a deliberate resistance to change, but is done in a manner that allows the person to appear as if resistance is not occurring. This may occur, for example, through disruptions of various kinds. When people do not necessarily take a specific action; for example, at meetings, they may sit quietly and appear to agree with the change. Their main motive is to refuse to collaborate with the change at a later time. In passive aggression, for example, they may agree outwardly, but then do nothing to fulfill their commitments. This can be very difficult to address, as resisters may not seem to have done anything wrong (Jones & Straker, 2006).

Schools face pressure to improve student achievement, leading to the adoption of coaching systems to improve teaching (Hezel Associates, 2007). The theory of change to support coaching argues that teachers who work with a coach will improve their teaching and student achievement more rapidly than the typical slope of teacher improvement over time (Kerry & Kohler, 1997, Marsh & Martorell, 2010, Ross, 1992). Researchers have identified a positive relationship between teacher coaching and changes in teacher behavior (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Kerry & Kohler, 1997; McCutchen et al., 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2003), as well as teacher coaching and improved student outcomes (Biancarosa, 2010).

Administrative duties (Carroll, 2006; Smith, 2007) and principal directives influence coaching practice (Matsumura, 2012). When coaches allocate more time to administrative tasks,

teachers notice the change in coaching practice (Bean et al., 2010). Through this misalignment of definition and practice, teachers notice a difference in the coaching they anticipated receiving and the coaching they are experiencing. By comparing their expectation for coaching and the coaching they experience, teachers develop perceptions of coaching and their coach. Teachers' perceptions of the coaching practice develop their emotional response to the coach and to the coaching practice.

The coaching model is intended to change teacher behavior; the power of emotions and their relationship to changing teacher behavior is essential to understanding the implementation and impact of coaching. The emotions felt after individuals choose a behavior tend to influence future actions by becoming anticipated emotional responses associated with similar behaviors (Mellers et al., 1999). These anticipated emotional responses can influence whether an individual seeks or avoids a behavior (Mellers et al., 1999). The emotions teachers associate with the coach and coaching practices may relate to teacher action or lack of action.

Factors shape the role of the coach (Bean et al., 2010), which leads to variance between coaching policy and coaching practice (Matsumura & Wang 2014). These changes are noticed by teachers and elicit a response, sometimes manifesting as teacher satisfaction with coaching or with the coach (Bean et al., 2010). Accordingly, to understand teacher perception of coaching and teacher emotional response to coaching, it is necessary to analyze the factors that shape coaching in practice. Through this analysis, it is possible to determine how coaching changed from vision to practice, how teachers conceptualize this change, and how teachers emotionally respond to this change.

Coaching practice is frequently influenced by managerial duties (e.g., copying assessment materials, substitute teaching, bus duty) (Smith, 2007; Carroll, 2006), teacher skill or

receptiveness to coaching, and principal expectations of the coach (Matsumura, 2012). Coaches

may also be involved in school-wide reform efforts, which may divert coaches' time away from

working with individual teachers (McLaughlin, 1990). These additional responsibilities impact

time coaching individual teachers and may relate to teachers' perspective of coaching.

Gap in the Literature

Research is sparse on early childhood coaching, and primarily focuses on small,

qualitative studies that are unable to be generalized to the larger populations (Darling-Hammond

et al., 2009). The research conducted in this subject area draws heavily on content-specific

coaching models (Neuman & Wright, 2010), with limited research on the instructional coaching

model (Ackerman, 2008). The commonalities found among this body of research are: the

importance of leadership (Ackerman, 2008), time spent with the teacher (Neuman & Wright,

2010), and the relationship between the teacher and the coach (Domitrovich et al., 2008) lead to

a successful coaching model, therefore increasing student achievement.

Research in early childhood coaching has been divided into small- and large-scaled

studies. In 2012, Polly conducted a small, qualitative study that focused on four teachers who

received coaching in the area of mathematics. This study sought to find the different levels of

support that teachers received from the mathematics coach, and the influence of said support on

their teaching practices (Polly, 2012). The results confirmed that all teachers sought out support

in their practices; however, the levels of support needed to be differentiated for each individual

teacher (Polly, 2012). In summary, all participants required assistance with mathematical

instructional practices needing differing levels of support (Polly, 2012).

Neuman and Wright (2010) conducted a large-scale mixed-methods study of early

childhood literacy coaching on 148 pre-kindergarten teachers. This study examined the effects of

two different forms of professional development on language and literacy instructional practices. Participants were divided into three groups: provided with one-on-one, on-site instructional coaching for 30 hours, a training course, or no professional development at all (Neuman & Wright, 2010). The first finding derived from surveys and teachers' logs determined that the on-site coaching made substantial improvement in environmental changes; however, no significant improvement was made on instructional practices (Neuman & Wright, 2010). The second finding determined that more coaching sessions focused on the classroom environment instead of instruction (Neuman & Wright, 2010). The third finding was that teachers had set too high instructional goals to be achieved within the 30-hour time allotment (Neuman & Wright, 2010). Therefore, the findings indicate that more time is needed with one-on-one coaching to see significant improvement in teachers' instructional practices (Neuman & Wright, 2010).

Research reveals that coaching offers the opportunity to improve the early childhood classroom experiences and outcomes of children through strengthening teachers' skills, pedagogy, and self-efficacy, though more research is needed to more deeply explore the forms, processes, and effects of coaching (Agnamba, 2016). However, there is a lack of literature that documents early childhood coaching and specifically early childhood teachers' perceptions of their instructional coaches. Given the significant gap documented in the literature between research and practice, particularly with early childhood teachers and coaches, additional research is needed to examine the coaching process. This study will narrow the gap in research by providing empirical evidence of how early childhood teachers think about, engage with, and describe their experiences with instructional coaches. To that end, training coupled with coaching and mentoring opportunities — which involve modeling positive instructional approaches and allow for feedback on implementation — have been found to be most effective

in supporting and reinforcing teaching and learning in the classroom (Agnamba, 2016).

Early childhood coaching is increasingly emerging as an evidence-based method for teacher professional learning and development. Programs across all funding types — Head Start, public pre-kindergarten, community-based childcare, and charter school settings — are including coaching as an investment to strengthen teacher practice and improve outcomes for children (Agnamba, 2016). However, even with widespread buy-in, districts and programs have met significant challenges in implementing and realizing impact as a result of coaching programs. Many have not developed a systematic way to select, prepare, or provide ongoing support to early childhood coaches and are often lacking adequate evaluation activities to ensure that the coaching program is being implemented effectively and with fidelity (Agnamba, 2016). Scaling an early childhood coaching program is an important investment that research demonstrates can be impactful for young children's outcomes. In order to ensure that the return on investment provides value, particularly in contexts with limited resources, districts and programs can be thoughtful about the cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation (Agnamba, 2016). With these structures in place, districts and programs can be confident that coaching programs will lead to significant impact and that their youngest learners will achieve the outcomes needed to succeed in school and beyond (Agnamba, 2016).

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of teachers who have worked with early childhood instructional coaches. The study also identified a better understanding of how early childhood instructional coaches engage with early childhood teachers, and the experiences and interactions that pre-K and kindergarten teachers have when working with the early childhood coaches. Finally, this inquiry study also aimed to understand how teachers describe the influence of their instructional practices, or pedagogy after working with instructional coaches. This study has opened up a much-needed dialogue between educational leaders to examine the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for early childhood teachers.

This study examined three main research questions: RQ 1. How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches? RQ 2. In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers? RQ 3. How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

Research Design

Qualitative research was the most appropriate method of inquiry used in order to capture teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches. Qualitative research design allowed the researcher to establish a relationship with the participants in the study within the environment (Creswell, 2013). According to Yin (2003, p. 545):

> … a case study design would be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are

relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between phenomenon and context.

An explanatory case study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches. This type of case study is used when you are seeking to answer a question sought to explain the presumed links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies (Yin, 2003). These explanations would link program implementation with program efforts (Yin, 2003). Case study methodology helped to answer the researcher's questions, while specifically using an explanatory case study methodology explained the relationship between teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches to the effectiveness of the coaching program.

The fundamental goal of case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue within its context with a view to understand the issue from the perspective of participants (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006, Yin, 2014). Like other forms of qualitative research, the researcher will seek to explore, understand, and present the participants' perspectives and get close to them in their natural setting (Creswell, 2013). Interaction between participants and the researcher is required to generate data, which is an indication of the researcher's level of connection to and being immersed in the field (Creswell, 2013). In this explanatory case study, the researcher sought out to understand teachers' perceptions and experiences interacting with early childhood instructional coaches. One of the distinguishing factors of case study research is the use of data triangulation. In this study, the researcher surveyed and interviewed participants and completed a document analysis to better understand how early childhood education teachers interact with instructional coaches.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define triangulation as many sources of data are better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena you were studying. Others expanded its use to include using multiple subjects, multiple researchers, and different theoretical approaches, in addition to different data-collecting techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In order to seek convergence and corroboration, qualitative researchers usually use at least two resources through different data sources and methods (Bowen, 2009). The purpose of triangulating is to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Bowen, 2009). Corroborating findings across data sets can reduce the impact of potential bias by examining information collected through different methods. Also, combining qualitative and quantitative data sometimes included in document analysis called mixed-methods studies (Bowen, 2009).

The goal of the data collection was to gain access to at least fourteen early childhood teachers in grades pre-kindergarten and kindergarten (defined as early childhood), and all three early childhood coaches in district. The participants are coded in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants

Participants' ID	Coach (C) or Teacher (T)	Years of Experience
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7	T	1
T8, T9, T10	T	2
T11, T13	T	5
T12, T14	T	7
T15	C	10
T16	C	16
T17	C	27

Understanding teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches is of great importance. Schools and districts invest a great deal of time and money in professional development for

teachers through the practice of instructional coaching. Many schools and districts have various subject coaches available for teachers to call upon. With this effort comes the responsibility to develop and implement coaching programs and models that have the greatest potential to improve classroom instruction with the outcome of increasing student achievement, especially on this early childhood level. For this reason, it would be helpful to understand teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches, how early childhood teachers describe their experiences with the instructional coaches, and how teachers describe the influence of their instructional practices (pedagogy) after working with instructional coaches.

Findings from this research are significant because they help determine the factors as to why some teachers utilize instructional coaches and why others resist the instructional coaching model. Providing educational leaders and districts this information could help implement a more effective coaching model for early childhood instructional coaches to utilize. The data generated from this study provided insight into more effective approaches that early childhood coaches could use while working with staff. Additionally, findings from this study help educational leadership understand the factors that contribute to teacher "buy in" and resistance. This study has opened up a much-needed dialogue between educational leaders to examine the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for teachers on the beginning levels of education.

Sampling and Participants

Early childhood teacher participants in year 1 and 2 of the instructional program cohort were recruited by the Director of Early Childhood Education in the Garden Green Public Schools District (this is a pseudonym). Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten early childhood teachers in the Garden Green Public Schools were digitally surveyed and interviewed to determine their

perceptions of early childhood coaches. The three early childhood coaches were digitally surveyed and interviewed so the researcher was able to gain access to the coaching model currently in place, along with their experiences from the teachers they serve. Additionally, a document analysis of the district's job description of early childhood instructional coaches was conducted by the researcher to determine if the job description was aligned with what the early childhood coaches actually do with the teachers they service.

Data Sources and Data Collection

"A major strength of using case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence" (Yin 2003, p. 97). According to Yin (2009), there are six sources of data that can be used in case studies. These include: (1) documentation, (2) archival records, (3) interviews, (4) direct observations, (5) participant observation, and (6) artifacts. In this study, data were collected through digital surveys and interviews and document analysis. Each source of evidence has unique strengths to the data collection process and a way to develop a convergence of evidence (Yin, 2003). All these means of data collection provided descriptive data of teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches and helped to answer the researcher's questions.

A total sample population of seventeen was drawn from early childhood teachers in the year one and two cohorts along with the early childhood coaches. Fourteen early childhood teachers and three early childhood coaches were recruited for this research study. Recruitment of the early childhood teachers and coaches was conducted by the Director of Early Childhood education in the Garden Green Public Schools District.

Participants engaged in this research study during the fall trimester of the 2020-2021 school year. Data were collected from the early childhood teachers and coaches using an online

survey created in Survey Monkey from August 25, 2020 through September 5, 2020. Interviews

for the early childhood teachers and coaches took place using the Cisco Webex Video

Conferencing platform from September 8, 2020 through October 5, 2020. At the conclusion of

the data collection period, all seventeen participants were surveyed and interviewed. Using data

derived from the early childhood coaches' interviews, a document analysis of the current

instructional coaches' job description used by the Garden Green Public Schools District was

conducted from October 26, 2020 through October 30, 2020. Ethical concerns related to this

qualitative research were addressed in the context of findings. Unusual circumstances or

deviation from the data collection did not occur. Table 2 illustrates the demographic data of

research participants who met the criteria to be included in this study. Data included research

participants' highest educational degree earned and the amount of years they have been

employed in the Garden Green Public Schools District.

Table 2

Demographic Data of Research Participants

Highest Degree		Years in District			
		0-5	6-15	16-30	31+
Bachelors	11	10	5	2	0
Masters	6	0	0	0	0
Masters + 30	0	0	0	0	0
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	10	5	2	0

Data Analysis and Results

Stake (1995) "contends that the qualitative researcher concentrates on an instance, trying

to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully — analysis and synthesis in

direct interpretation" (p. 75). The chapter began by using the survey data obtained by the early

childhood teachers and coaches to answer three research questions. In the second part of the

chapter, the interview data obtained by the early childhood teachers and coaches are used to

answer three research questions. In the final part of the chapter, the researcher completed a document analysis of the current instructional coaches' job description to see if the job description outlined as the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood coach directly aligned to the what the early childhood coaches actually did. The research design used a survey to gather data that included demographic, experiences, and research participants' descriptions of the phenomenon. Once the survey was completed, interviews were given to obtain a deeper understanding of participants' thoughts, influences, and attitudes over the phenomenon.

The problem is how teachers describe their engagement with early childhood coaches, interact with early childhood coaches, and describe the influences that instructional coaching has on their instructional pedagogy remains undetermined. The three research questions for this qualitative explanatory case study directly correlate to the research problem and were created to address the perceptions that teachers have on the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. Survey and interview questions were developed to align with the three research questions, and to give participants a forum to share their experiences when working with early childhood coaches.

Survey

Data collection involved early childhood teachers' and coaches' surveys, which accessed information regarding teachers' perceptions of the early childhood coaches. The survey for the early childhood teachers and coaches were different, was distributed electronically, and took approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The survey had two types of questions that used a Likert scale and open-ended responses. The survey questions were formulated and derived from the literature and past studies of the same problem. This provided an opportunity for both the early childhood teachers and coaches to provide commentaries and feedback from their coaching experiences with each other and the coaching model that was being used. The data collected

from the survey helped to generate the construct and framework of the interview questions for both the early childhood teachers and coaches.

Survey Data Analysis

Protocols for securing data collection and protecting participants' anonymity were outlined in the recruitment email and the consent form emailed by the researcher (See Appendix E). The surveys were created using Survey Monkey and exported into Microsoft Excel for coding and data analysis. The results were downloaded to both a hard drive and portable thumb drive. All documents and files were password protected and the thumb drive was securely locked in a safe space with limited access. All survey responses were anonymous and strictly confidential.

The survey questions for the early childhood teachers and coaches specifically targeted participants' demographics, experiences, attitudes, roles and responsibilities, perceptions and factors that influence instructional coaching. In addition, the researcher gathered information on three categories: a) engagement with the early childhood coaches, b) interactions with the early childhood coaches, and c) influence of instructional coaching on teachers' instructional pedagogy. The research participants were provided with statements within these categories using a 5-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree).

The open-ended questions on both the early childhood teachers' and coaches' surveys specifically targeted the impact of instructional coaching on teacher practices, beneficial components of the coaching model, areas of greatest and least successes, and ideas for additional supports to increase student achievement. In addition, information was gathered on these three categories: a) engagement with the early childhood coaches, b) interactions with the early

childhood coaches, and c) influence of instructional coaching on teachers' instructional pedagogy. The data from the open-ended questions were imported into Microsoft Excel for descriptive coding and thorough analysis. According to Manning (2017), in NVivo coding is a form of qualitative data analysis that places emphasis on the actual spoken words of the participants. "NVivo coding is championed by many for its usefulness in highlighting the voices of participants and for its reliance on the participants themselves for giving meaning to the data" (Manning & Sailors, 2019 p. 6).

Spreadsheet cells containing responses were highlighted using three colors which linked specific themes to research questions (See Appendices G, H, I, J). Key ideas were pulled for each open-ended question and the research participants' exact wording were recorded from the survey. Each column was then coded and organized by each of the three research questions (interaction = yellow, influence over pedagogy = green, engagement = blue). Data that did not align with any of the three research questions were removed and not coded. All the data collected from the survey results helped to generate and construct the framework of the interview questions for both the early childhood teachers and coaches.

Prior to dissemination, the surveys for both groups of research participants were field tested by three educators who did not participate in this study to improve validity of the responses collected. The purpose of the field test was to check the survey questions for quality, clarification, and potential confusion before participants were asked to complete it. Feedback provided from the field test educators afforded the opportunity for revisions to be made to ensure the validity of the questions asked, in addition to alignment with the three overarching research questions.

Interviews

Data collection involved digital, focused interviews of the early childhood teachers and coaches to allow access of information regarding teachers' perceptions for the early childhood coaches. "A focused interview is open-ended and conversational in nature but follows a set of questions derived from case study protocol" (Yin, 2003, p. 67).

Interviews are one of the most important sources of information obtained in case study research (Yin, 2009). Interviews provide a way to pursue a more consistent and structured line of participant inquiry (Yin, 2003). Interviews lasted approximately thirty to forty-five minutes in length, were different for the coaches and teachers, focused on the coaching experience and the factors that influence instructional coaching. The questions for the interviews were developed from the data collected from the early childhood teachers' and coaches' surveys. The interview questions were field tested digitally by three educators who did not participate in this case study. Feedback from the educators focused on the length of time it took to answer the interview questions, the quality of the questions, and whether the responses appropriately answered the three research questions. Necessary revisions were made by the researcher to ensure the validity of the interview questions. After conducting the interview, verbatim transcripts were made by the researcher and each script was analyzed for common themes and patterns using a code book (Creswell, 2013). The responses obtained remained confidential and anonymous in the final published version of the study.

Interview Data Analysis

The initial recruitment email sent out to participants allowed those who were interested to volunteer to participate in this research study. Interviews for both the early childhood teachers and coaches were created in Microsoft Word. Protocols for maintaining research participants'

anonymity and securing data were in place and aligned with understanding teachers' perceptions

on the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. The Webex digital platform was used to meet

with and record the dialog exchange between the researcher and the participant. Recordings were

sent out for transcription to Landmarks Incorporated. Once a transcription was completed, it was

sent to the specific research participant for member checking on a secure server. Research

participants were able to edit the transcription by adding commentaries or making changes if

applicable. Once the transcription was approved by the research participant, it was sent back to

the researcher and downloaded using Microsoft Word.

Through the process of member checking, key ideas emerged and were recorded in a

Microsoft Excel spreadsheet categorized by research question themes. Each theme has been

color coded as follows: (interaction = yellow, influence over pedagogy = green, engagement =

blue).

Descriptive and NVivo coding published by QSR International was used to understand

teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of early childhood coaches from the point of view of

the research participants. The participants explained the engagement between the early childhood

teachers and coaches, the interactions and experiences that the early childhood teachers and

coaches have with one another, and the influences that the early childhood coaches have over

early childhood teachers changing their pedagogy and teaching practices. Collaboratively, these

procedures helped to answer the proposed research questions by triangulating the data.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted

by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009).

Analyzing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or

interview transcripts are analyzed (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is a social research method and is an important research tool in its own right, and is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation, the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Data collection involved the researcher conducting a document analysis of the current job description of instructional coaches from Garden Green Public Schools. This analysis helped answer the research questions. The analysis allowed the opportunity for the researcher to see if the job description aligned itself with the model and practices the early childhood coaches were implementing with the teachers they serviced. In addition, the researcher analyzed and cross-referenced participants' responses for themes, commonalities, and word patterns.

Bowen also notes thematic analysis, which can be considered a form of pattern recognition with the document's data (2009). This analysis takes emerging themes and makes them into categories used for further analysis, making it a useful practice for grounded theory. The practice includes careful, focused reading and re-reading of data, as well as coding and category construction (Bowen, 2009). The emerging codes and themes may also serve to "integrate data gathered by different methods" (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). Bowen sums up the overall concept of document analysis as a process of "evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed" (2009, p. 33). It is not just a process of lining up a collection of excerpts that convey whatever the researcher desires. The researcher must maintain a high level of objectivity and sensitivity in order for the document analysis results to be credible and valid (Bowen, 2009). Also, documents are stable, "non-reactive" data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher's influence or research process (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

Limitations

There were limitations to this explanatory case study research. The limitations to the

setting included timing, human participants, and the teachers' attendance. The limitation to the

population or sampling was getting participants to volunteer their time. A limitation to the data

instrument was not knowing if the participants would be honest with their answers. A limitation

to data collection in this research study was the difficulty in generalizing the results to a greater

population because it is unclear if there is honesty in the answers. A lack of generalizability is a

limitation because findings would not be generalized beyond this study.

Delimitations

The delimitations to this explanatory case study was being able to schedule an

appointment that was convenient to the participants being interviewed. The researcher was also

able to select the type of coaches being studied. In this case, only early childhood coaches were

selected rather than all elementary coaches. The researcher wrote the questions that were asked

in both surveys and interviews.

Validity/Creditability

Yin (2003) states that "any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much

more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following

a corroboratory mode" (p. 98). True data triangulation occurs when the events or facts in the

study are supported by multiple sources of information, providing higher construct validity (Yin,

2003). The use of triangulation in this case study added validity to the research findings. Member

checking was conducted after interviews to allow participants the opportunity to revise, confirm,

or clarify their statements or comments that were provided to the researcher. According to

Creswell (2007), member checking is an extremely powerful technique for establishing

creditability of analysis. Field tests were conducted on both the survey and interview questions. The field tests were given to three educators who did not participate in this study. Shortly after being interviewed, participants were allowed to review and revise transcripts to ensure that data were documented accurately by the researcher.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

"The priority is the teacher in the classroom. The most important things are building those relationships with the teachers, working with them, and providing them with what they need to help students." (Participant 16)

The purpose of this explanatory case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches, and to examine the work of instructional coaching through the lens and experiences of early childhood teachers. Chapter IV provides information regarding data collection, data analysis, and results from qualitative research. The findings include themes that emerged through surveys, interviews, and a document analysis conducted by the researcher. The following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches?

Research Question 2: In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers?

Research Question 3: How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

Chapter III discussed research protocols to gather and analyze data for this explanatory case study. The chapter began by using the survey data obtained by the early childhood teachers and coaches to answer three research questions. In the second part of the chapter, the interview data obtained by the early childhood teachers and coaches was used to answer three research questions. For the purpose and clarity of this study, the term 'interaction' in Research Question 2 is defined as the activities the early childhood teachers and coaches engaged in with one another.

In Research Question 1 the term 'engagement' is defined as the overall experience the early childhood teachers had when working with the instructional coaches. In the final part of the chapter, the researcher completed a document analysis of the current instructional coaches' job description to see if there was alignment between what the job description outlines as the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood coaches to what the early childhood coaches actually do.

A total sample population of seventeen was drawn from early childhood teachers in the year one and two cohorts along with the early childhood coaches. Fourteen early childhood teachers and three early childhood coaches were recruited for this research study. Data were collected from this population through an online survey and virtual interviews. Using data derived from the early childhood coaches' interviews, a document analysis of the current instructional coaches' job description used by the Garden Green Public Schools District was conducted. Collaboratively, these protocols helped to answer the proposed research questions by triangulating the data.

Research Question 1:

How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches?

This research question asked how early childhood teachers described their engagement with instructional coaches. Key areas identified in participants' responses included: respect, comfort levels, listening skills, and trust. Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey identified these above factors that led to the early child teachers engaging with the instructional coaches.

Question 1 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure One) stated, "The early childhood coach respects me as a professional." Of the 14 respondents, 64.29% cited they

strongly agreed (nine out of 14) with this statement while 35.71% cited (five out of 14) agreed

with the statement.

Figure 1

Teachers Describing their Engagement with Instructional Coaches

Q1. The early childhood coach respects me as a professional.

64.29%   35.71%

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree
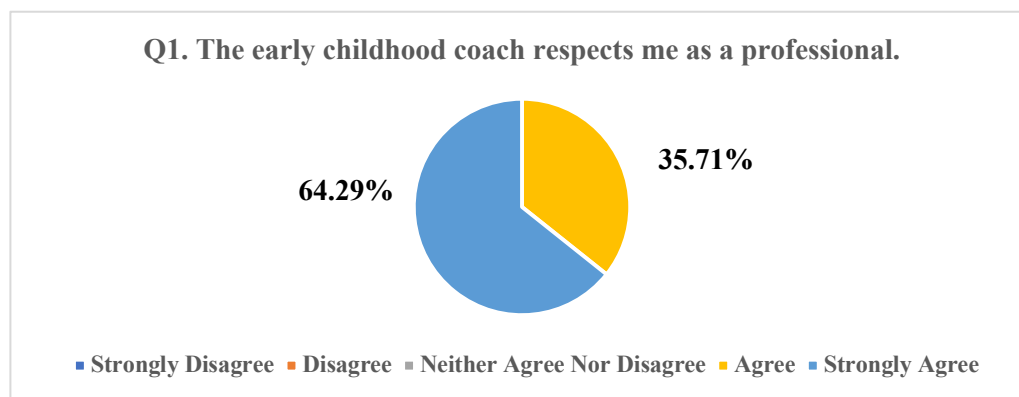
Question 2 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 2) stated, "I am

comfortable expressing my point of view to the early childhood coach." Of the 14 respondents,

64.29% cited they strongly agreed (nine out of 14) with this statement while 35.71% cited they

agreed with this statement.

Figure 2

Teachers Describing their Engagement with Instructional Coaches

Q2. I am comfortable expressing my point of view
to the early childhood coach.

64.29%   35.71%

■ Stongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■

Question 3 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 3) stated, "The early childhood coach listens to me when I speak." Of the 14 respondents, 71.43% cited they strongly agreed (ten out of 14) with this statement while 28.57% (four out of ten) cited they agreed with this statement.

Figure 3

Teachers Describing their Engagement with Instructional Coaches

Question 6 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 4) stated, "I trust the early childhood coaches." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of seven) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 50% cited they agree with this statement.

Figure 4

Teachers Describing their Engagement with Instructional Coaches
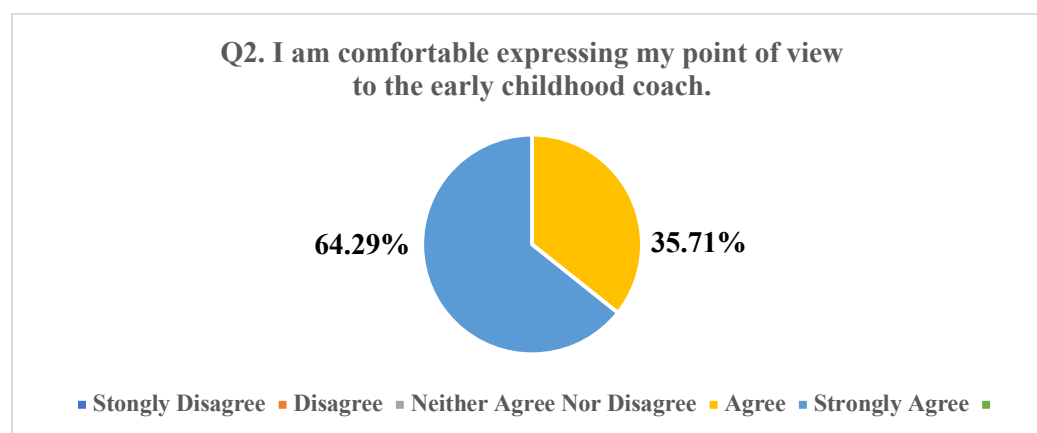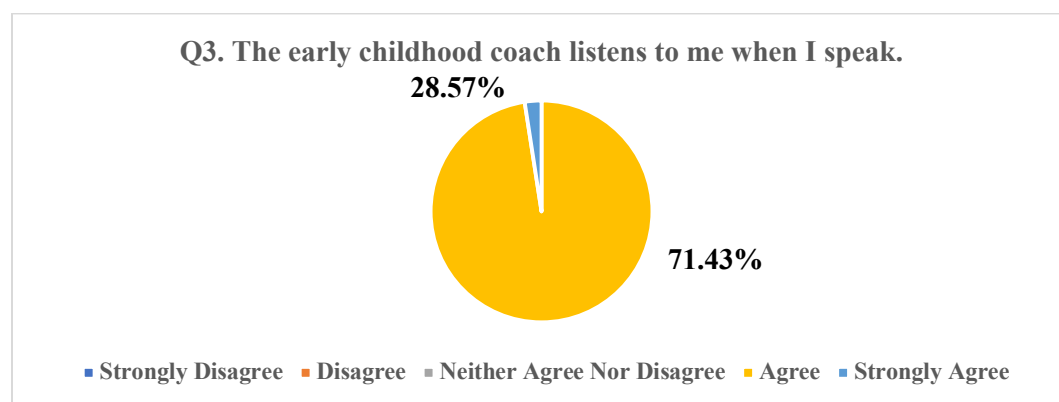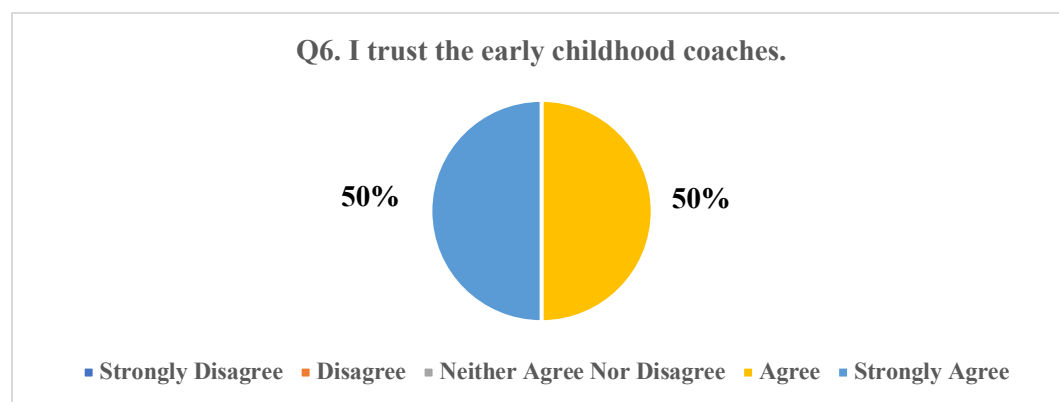

Question 23 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey addressed components of the

coaching model that early childhood teachers felt have been most beneficial to them. This open-ended question stated, "What components of the coaching model have been most beneficial to you?" Of the 14 respondents, 35.70% (five out of 14) referenced having positive experiences and trusting their coaches influenced their level of engagement with instructional coaches. Participant 5 noted, "I really enjoy having someone who has teaching experience in implementing the curriculum that I can trust. The fact that the early childhood coaches already have experience with many of my issues/questions is super beneficial and I know that they will not judge me for getting it wrong." According to Participant 5, the positive interactions with his/her coach has not only led this participant to engage with the coach, but to also foster trust with his/her coach; therefore, opening up professional dialogue without fear or judgment. Participant 10 noted, "I enjoy the fact that they listen to me and hear my concerns. It helps me to believe that my questions are valid, and they respect what I do even if it may not be right." According to Participant 10, the positive interactions with his/her coach have reinforced the intended coaching model that coaches are there to help build capacity respectfully and professionally. Participant 2 noted, "Having coaches who are so centered on helping and making sure new teachers understand what they are teaching and the why they are teaching it has motivated me to work with them and also inspired me to become a mentor when able to!" According to Participant 2, the positive interactions with his/her coaches were not only beneficial to his/her practice but were so beneficial that it led this individual wanting to become a mentor.

During virtual interviews, 92.86% of respondents (13 out of 14) described their engagement with early childhood coaches through identifying positive experiences. One respondent described her engagement through both a positive and negative lens. One participant noted, "I really lucked out this year with having such a great building coach. I felt very fortunate

that I had someone I really could depend on. She was immediate with her responses and it made me want to continue to ask for help." According to Participant 2, the positive interactions between them reinforced their professional relationship to be ongoing and embedded in trust. One participant admitted she was hesitant to ask for help because she was unclear of the coach's role. The participant stated, "I am a one hundred percent believer in the process now. She showed me how to plan and be prepared. I remember my opening group was too long and I needed a way to narrow it down. Within one session, it was fixed, and she made me feel comfortable to work with her over and over again." When asked if the respondent was ever hesitant about working with the early childhood coach, Participant 13 replied, "It's a little nerve-racking at first just because it's another person or more people in the room. Once I realized that she was not really there to watch and judge me, but rather there to help it calms you down. Now I want her there all the time." According to Participant 13, the positive interactions with his/her coach led the participant to shift his/her belief in the process of the coaching model while putting skepticism aside. Participant 13 let it be known that he/she will continue to ask for help moving forward because the process is safe.

Participant 7 replied to the interview question with both a positive and negative purview on his/her engagement with the early childhood coach. This participant stated, "They are great at saying if that strategy doesn't work try this or that. If the child doesn't respond to this, try this. This is all positive especially before a formal interview from an administrator. The negative experience I have had when working with early childhood coaches was when they gave us too much information at one time to take it. This is not their fault really because they are spread too thin. I need more face-to-face time or more hands-on experiences with them, but there are not enough of them to do so." According to Participant 7, the feedback received has been positive

and impactful to their instructional practices; however, more time with the coach is needed to give teachers the authentic experience that the coaching model is designed to do. Participant 7 acknowledges that more coaches are needed to provide much desired one-on-one time with teachers to meet their needs as adult learners.

The early childhood coaches were asked to describe their engagement when working with early childhood teachers. One hundred percent of respondents (three out of three) cited that building relationships first with the teachers they worked with led to an increase in engagement and positive experiences when working with the teachers. Participant 15 cited, "I think I have been most successful in building relationships with my teachers. I have taught for twenty-five years before becoming a coach, so I understand the needs. I want them to know I am a peer, a support, a liaison, an assistant. I am whatever they need. Most importantly, they need to trust me. That is what I strive to do, build trust." Participant 17 noted, "I am most successful with teacher engagement when we establish a working relationship first. Once the trust is there the teachers will come to me with anything and everything knowing it will not go any further." Participant 16 cited, "We started to develop a close relationship through the professional development days identified by the district. I tried to reach out to her to say hello at first and see how she was doing to build that relationship. Once I started to see her opening up and engaging with me, I was able to dive deeper into the instruction and explain why we do certain things. It's all about baby steps. It's all about building that trust." According to all three participants, establishing trust with the early childhood teacher has to happen first and remains paramount in their ongoing relationship. Building trust can be accomplished in many capacities; however, without trust the coaching relationship will not develop or prosper. These identified factors and experiences were believed to have contributed to how teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches.

Research Question 2:

In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers?

This question asks how instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers. Key areas in participants' responses included: communication, support, providing resources and materials, constructive and timely feedback, data analysis and review, reflection, attending and facilitating common planning, providing professional development and modeling. Questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 23 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey identified these above factors as ways instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers. Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 16 on the Early Childhood Coach Survey identified these factors as ways in which the instructional coaches interact with the early childhood teachers. Question 7 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 5) stated, "The early childhood coach responds to my requests for help in a timely manner." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 50% (seven out of 14) cited they agreed.

Figure 5

Teachers Describing their Interactions with the Instructional Coaches

Q7. The early childhood coach responds to my requests for help in a timely manner.

50%   50%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
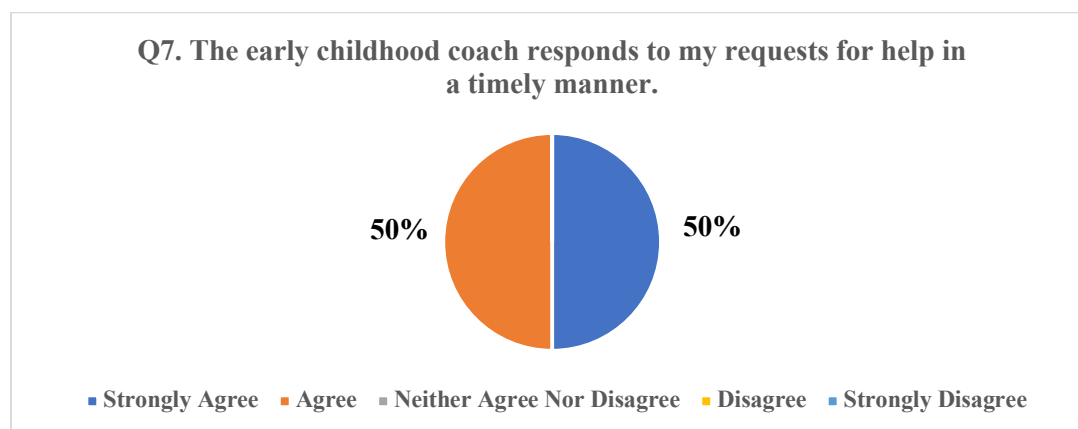
Question 2 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 6) stated, "I visit classrooms regularly." Of the three respondents, 100% (three out of three) cited they strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 6

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Question 8 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 7) stated, "It is helpful when the early childhood coach informally observes me and offers constructive feedback." Of the 14 respondents, 64. 29% (nine out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 28.57% (four out of 14) cited they agreed with this statement. One respondent cited neither agreement nor disagreement with this statement.

Figure 7

Teachers Describing their Interactions with Instructional Coaches

Q8. It is helpful when the early childhood coach informally observes me and offers constructive feedback.

7.14%

28.57%   64.29%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree or Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
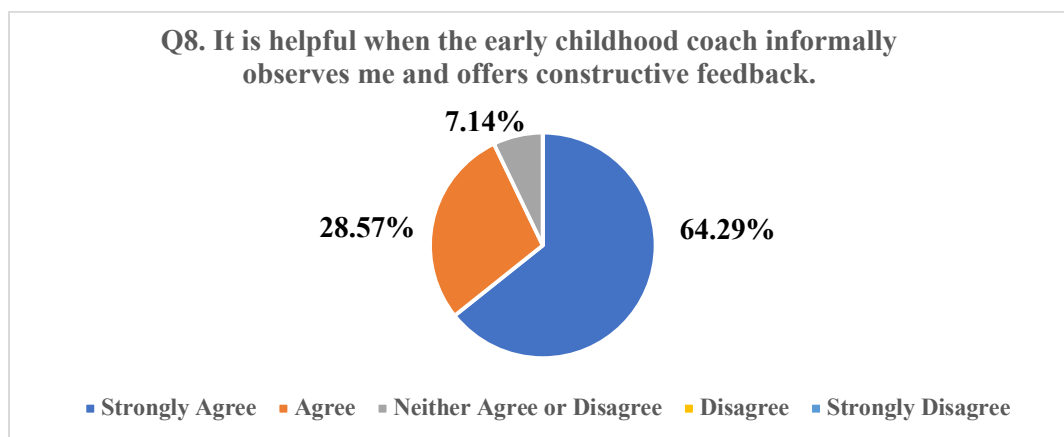
Question 3 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 8) stated, "I provide timely and effective feedback to teachers." Of the three respondents, 66.67% cited (two out of three) they strongly agreed with this statement while 33.3% (one out of three) cited agreement with this statement.

Figure 8

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Q3. I provide timely and effective feedback to teachers.

33.3%

66.67%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
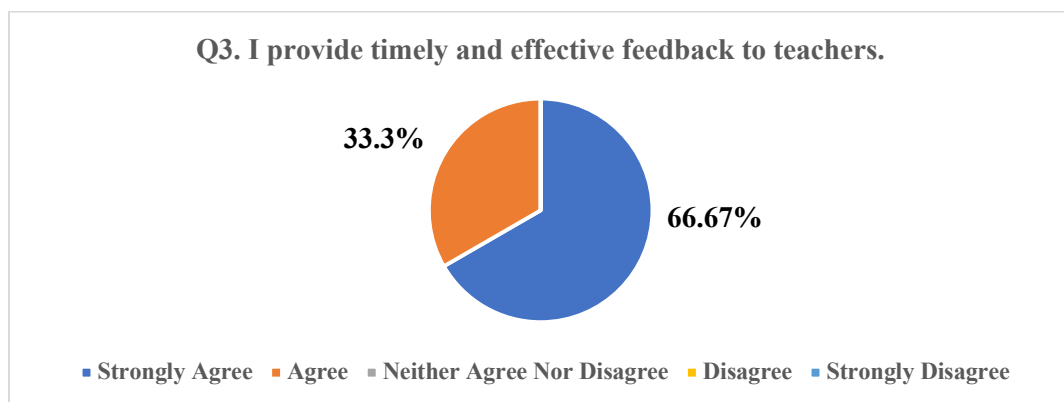
Question 9 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 9) stated, "The early childhood coach provides me with additional resources and materials when asked." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 50%

(seven out of 14) cited they agreed with this statement.
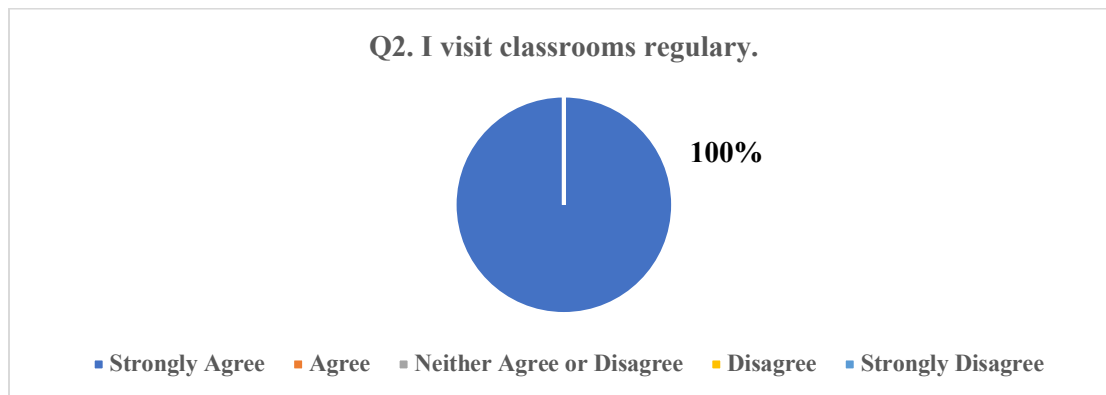
Figure 9

Teachers Describing their Interactions with the Instructional Coaches

Q9. The early childhood coach provides me with additional resources and materials when asked.

50%   50%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
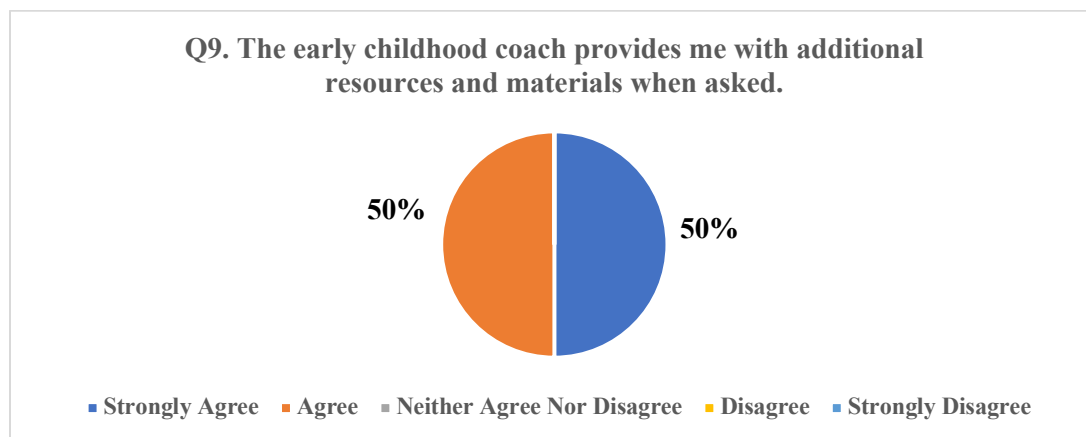
Question 4 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 10) stated, "I offer useful materials and resources to teachers to enhance instruction." Of the three respondents, 66.67% (two out of three) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 33.3% (one out of three) cited agreement with this statement.

Figure 10

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Q4. I offer useful materials and resources to teachers to enhance instruction.

33.3%   66.67%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

Questions 10 and 11 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey addressed the interactions between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers during common planning

sessions. Question 10 (see Figure 11) stated, "The early childhood coach attends common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning." Of the 14 respondents who answered Question 10, 42.68% (six out of 14) cited that they strongly agreed with this statement while 57.14% (eight out of 14) cited that they agreed with this statement.

Figure 11

Teachers Describing their Interactions with Instructional Coaches

Q10. The early childhood coach attends common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning.

57.14% 42.8%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Question 11 (see Figure 12) stated, "The early childhood coach facilitates common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning." Of the 14 respondents who answered Question 11, 35.71% (five out of 14) cited that they strongly agreed with this statement while 50% (seven out of 14) cited that they agreed with this statement. Of the respondents, 14.29% (two out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Figure 12

Teachers Describing their Interactions with Instructional Coaches

Q11. The early childhood coach facilitates common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning.

14.29%

35.71%

50%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

Question 8 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 13) stated, "I attend and facilitate common planning sessions." Of the three respondents, 33.3% (one out of three) strongly agreed with this statement while 66.7% (two out of three) cited that they agreed with this statement.

Figure 13

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Q8. I attend and facilitate common planning sessions.

33.3%

66.67%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

Question 12 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 14) stated, "The early childhood coach works with me on data analysis in order to plan and drive my instruction." Of the 14 respondents, 35.71% (five out of 14) cited that they strongly agreed with this statement

while 42.86% (six out of 14) cited that they agreed with the statement. Of the respondents,

14.29% (two out of 14) cited they did not agree nor disagree with this statement while 7.14%

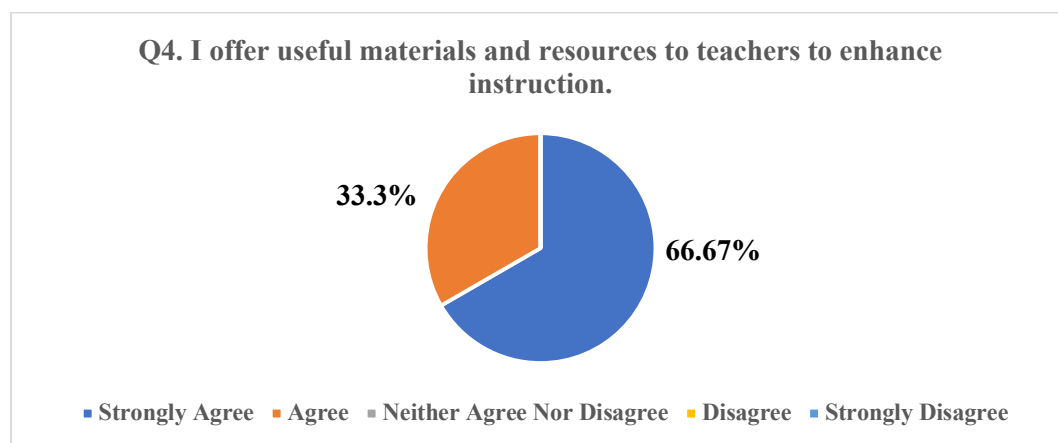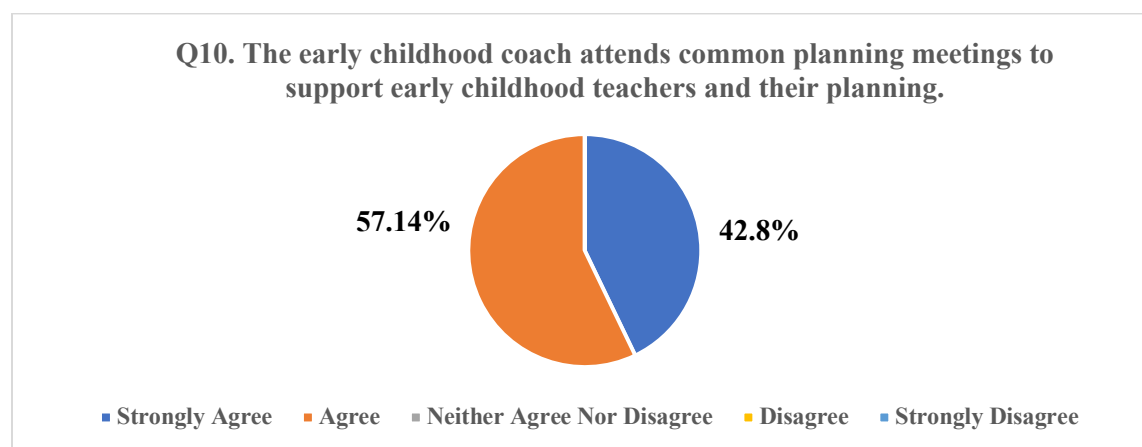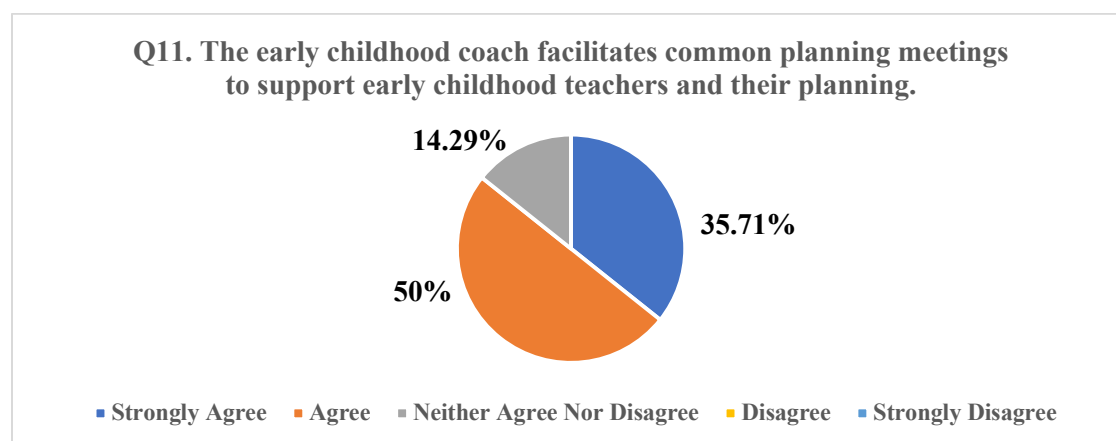(one out of 14) cited disagreement with this statement.

Figure 14

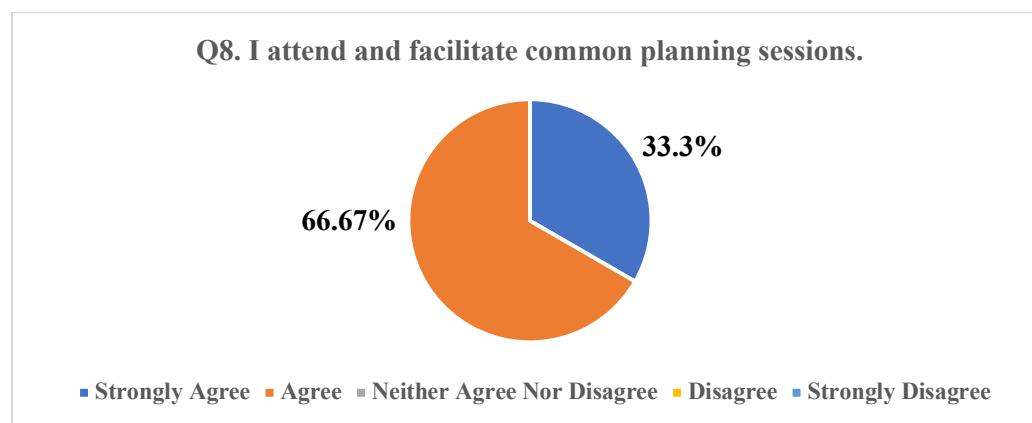*Teachers Describing their Interactions with the Instructional Coaches*

Question 14 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 15) stated, "I guide

teachers through a planning process that reviews common assessments and data." Of the three

respondents, 33.3% (one out of three) strongly agreed with this statement while 66.67% (two out

of three) cited that they agreed with this statement.

Figure 15

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Questions 13 and 17 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey addressed reflective

practices as an interaction between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers.

Question 13 stated, "The early childhood coach asks me reflective questions after working

together." Of the 14 respondents who answered Question 13 (see Figure 16), 42.86% (six out of

14) cited that they strongly agreed with the statement while 28.57% (four out of 14) cited that

they agreed with the statement. Of the respondents, 21.43% (three out of 14) neither agreed nor

disagreed with the statement while 7.14% (one out of 14) cited that they disagreed with the

statement.

Figure 16

Teachers Describing their Interactions with Instructional Coaches

Q13. The early childhood coach asks me reflective questions after working together.

7.14%

14.29%

42.86%

35.71%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
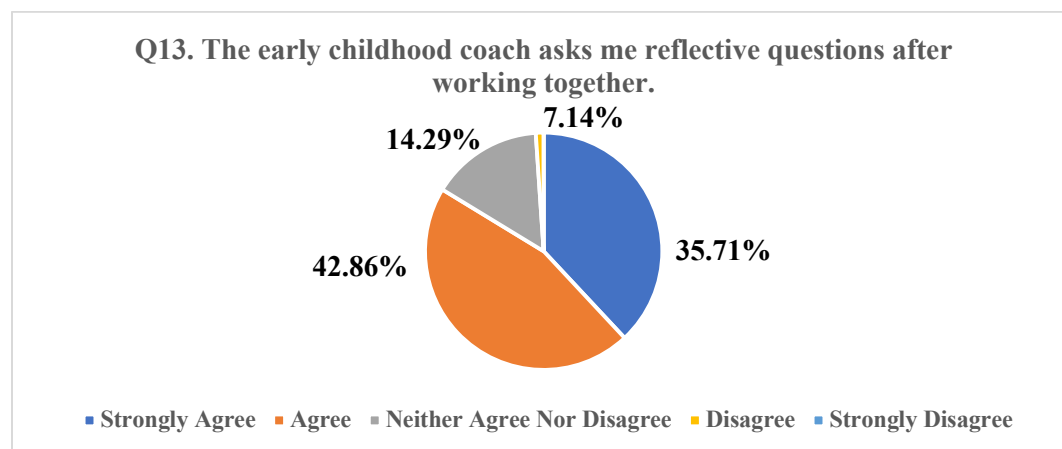
Question 17 (see Figure 17) stated, "The early childhood coach encourages me to be reflective on my teaching practices." Of the 14 respondents, 42.86% (six out of 14) strongly agreed with the statement while 28.57% agreed with the statement. Of the respondents, 21.43% (three out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while 7.14% (one out of 14) disagreed with the statement.

Figure 17

Teachers Describing their Interactions with the Instructional Coaches

Q17. The early childhood coach encourages me to be reflective on my teaching practices.

7.14%

21.43%

42.86%

28.57%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Question 13 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey (see Figure 18) stated, "I ask teachers reflective questions after working together." Of the three respondents, 33.3% (one out of three) strongly agreed with this statement while 66.67% (two out of three) cited they agreed with this statement.

Figure 18

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

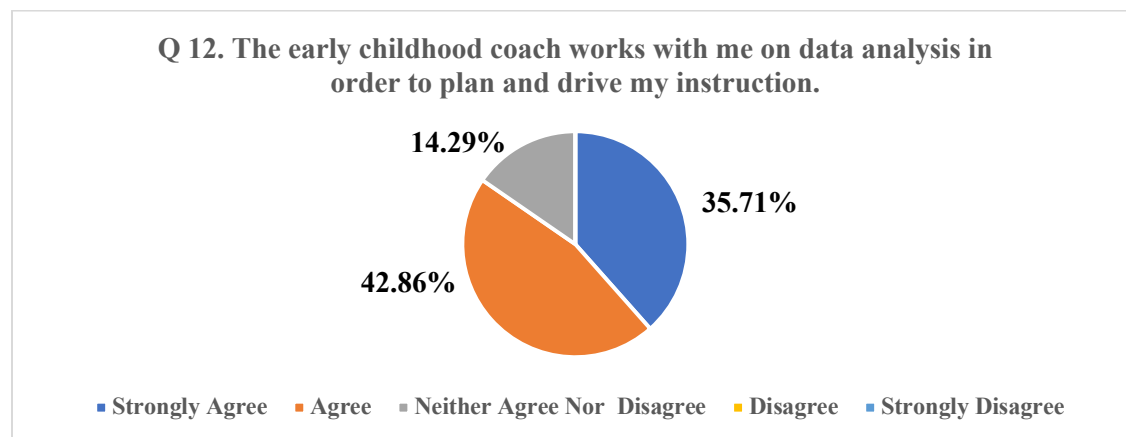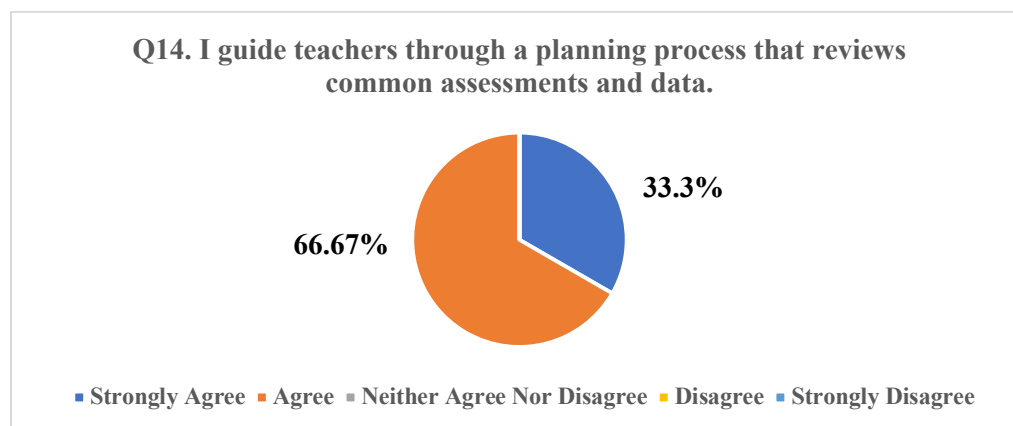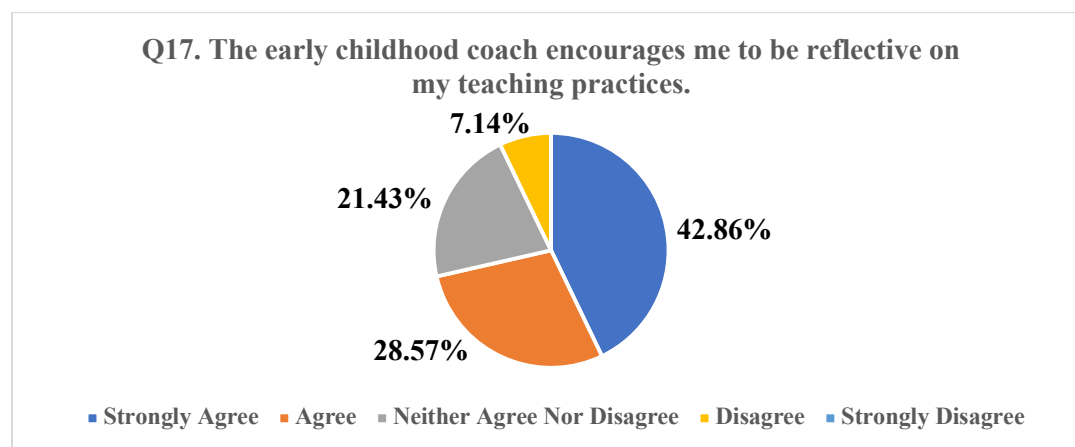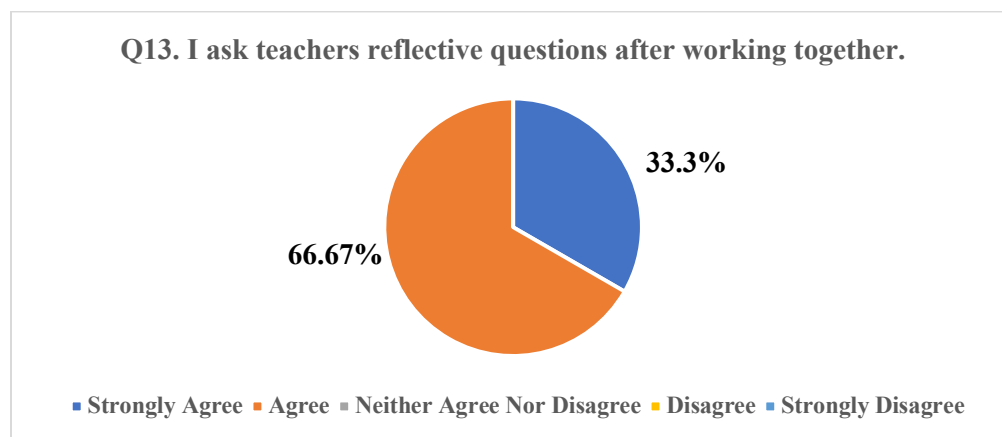

Open-ended questions 15 and 23 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey addressed modeling as an interaction between instructional coaches and early childhood teachers. Question 15 stated, "The early childhood coach models effective instructional practices for me in my classroom." Question 23 stated, "Which components of the coaching model have been most beneficial to you?" Of the 14 respondents who answered Question 15, 50% (seven out of 14) cited that they agreed with this statement while 35.71% (five out of 14) cited that they agreed with this statement. 14.29% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Of the 14 respondents who answered question 23, 57.14% (eight out of 14) cited modeling as the most beneficial component of the coaching model. Participant 4 stated, "I find it beneficial when the coaches come in and model a lesson for me and then watch me do it." Participant 6 stated, "The coaches provide constructive and informal feedback, but what I find most helpful is when

they modeled my opening group for me. I saw how I was trying to cram too much in that instructional space and needed to condense the activities." Participant 10 stated, "When the coach models different activities and lessons for me I see it first-hand making it very effective to me as an educator." According to Participants 4, 6, and 10, not only did the positive interactions between the coach and teacher have an effect on their instructional practices, but early childhood teachers were able to specifically identify modeling as the interaction within the coaching model to have the greatest impact on instruction.

Questions 5 and 15 of the Early Childhood Coach Survey addressed modeling as an interaction between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Question 5 (see Figure 19) stated, "I model lessons and provide feedback for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers." Of the three respondents who answered question 5, 66.7% (two out of three) cited that they strongly agreed with that statement while 33.3% (one out of three) agreed with that statement.
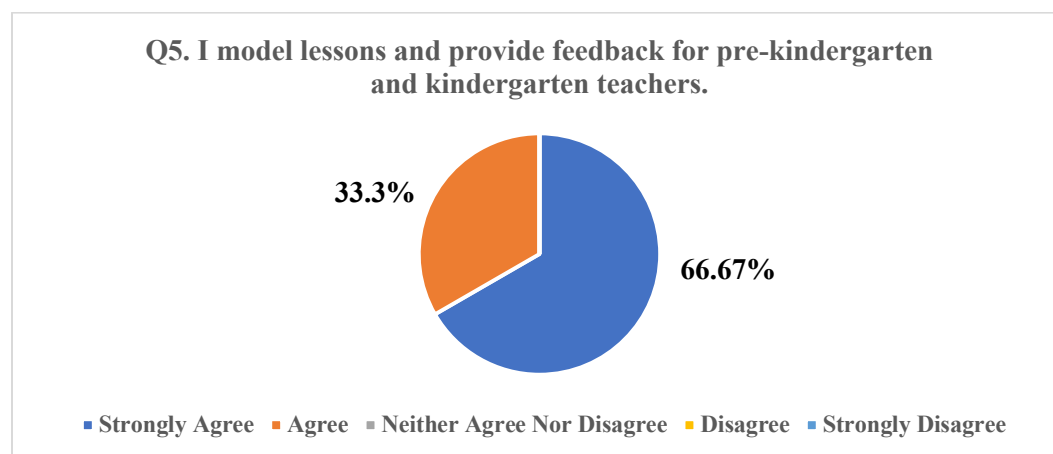
Figure 19

Instructional Coaches Describing their Interactions with Teachers

Question 15 (see Figure 20) stated, "The early childhood coach models effective instructional practices for me in my classroom." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14)

strongly agreed, 35.71% (five out of 14) agreed and 14.29% (two out of 14) neither agreed nor

disagreed with the statement.

Figure 20

Teachers Describing their Interactions with the Instructional Coaches
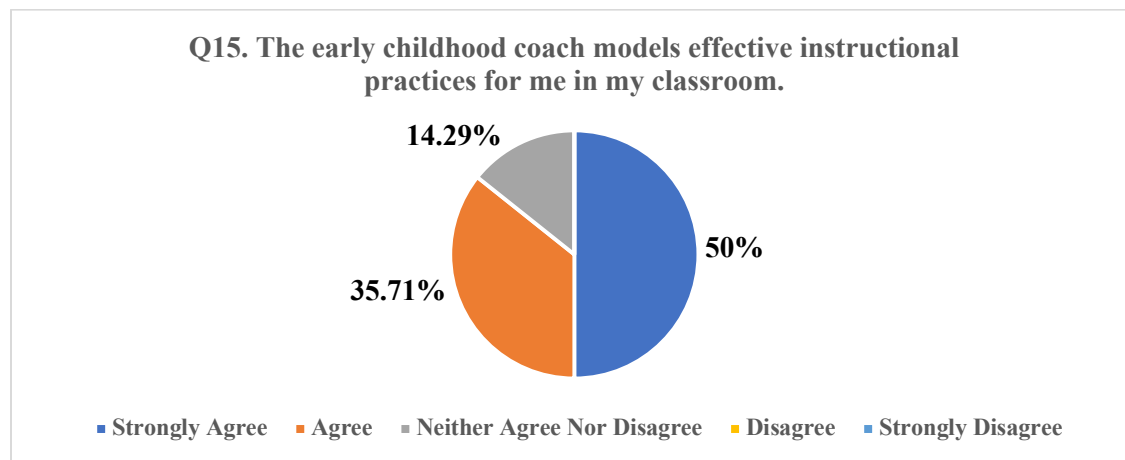
Question 16 stated, "In what areas do you think you have been most successful?" Of the

three respondents who answered Question 16, 66.7% (two out of three) stated that modeling for

early childhood teachers has been the most successful component of the coaching model.

Participant 16 stated, "I have modeled many lessons for teachers in different subject areas to

assist with their teaching. This has brought much success." Participant 17 stated, "I feel I have

been most successful in modeling for our teachers to further support our program and students'

learning." According to Participants 16 and 17, modeling has been the most effective interaction

between the coach and teacher and has had the greatest impact on instructional practices. This is

consistent with the feedback from the early childhood teachers.

"I think that's the point of PD. It's not just to know what to do, it's to understand why

you are doing it. Otherwise there really isn't a point to being out of the classroom." (Participant

7) Of the respondents 100% (14 out of 14) cited that the instructional coaches offered

professional development as a form of interacting with the teachers during the interview

sessions. Early childhood teachers noted that they received professional development in the following ways: individually, through district designated days, Monday meetings, common planning, and data analysis meetings. Of the respondents, 64.28% (nine out of 14) cited that the district-based professional development which occurred every two to three months had the largest impact on teachers' instructional practices and understanding of the Tools of the Mind curriculum.

Participant 1 noted, "The Tools program is confusing. You have to really read it thoroughly, but when you see it hands-on it just clicks. That's the way I learn best." According to Participant 1, professional development has been an effective interaction between teachers and coaches with regard to understanding curriculum especially when the facilitator models the activities. Participant 3 stated, "The professional development is very organized and occurs before the shifts in the curriculum. It extends to activities, centers, really anything that we do. The pd sessions are well thought out and thorough." According to Participant 3, not only is professional development a positive interaction between the teaches and the coaches but it set the stage for building teachers' capacity with upcoming curriculum expectations. Of the respondents, 66.6% (two out of three) of early childhood coaches cited that they plan professional development for early childhood teachers to improve identified areas of weakness plan building and district wide professional development for early childhood teachers.

During virtual interviews, participants were asked what they thought the roles and responsibilities were of the early childhood coaches. The following themes emerged: (1) modeling, (2) mentoring, (3) implementing curriculum, (4) providing professional development, and (5) assisting with tasks. Participants were then asked to identify the role that was most meaningful to them. Of the respondents, 64.28% (nine out of 14) identified modeling as the most

important interaction that occurred between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Of the respondents, 14.28% (two out of 14) identified mentoring as the most important interaction between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Of the respondents, 7.14% (one out of 14) identified implementing curriculum, providing professional development and assisting with tasks as the most important interaction that occurred between the instructional coaches and early childhood teachers.

The Tools of the Mind curriculum is dense in content and can be overwhelming upon first glance leaving early childhood teachers dependent on the instructional coaches to help dissect the content and pull the most important concepts. Participant 6 commented, "You get a box of tools that you do not know how to use. You have never seen it before or have had training. You become completely dependent on the coach for help that is why modeling lessons is the most beneficial role that coaches play." According to Participant 6, the most important interaction that the coach has with teachers is modeling. Modeling gives all the components of the curriculum meaning and purpose to the teachers. Participant 8 stated, "Everything is very specific on how it should be done. Seeing someone do it first actually makes sense. The whole impact of modeling helped to build my confidence as a teacher." According to Participant 8, modeling is the most important interaction that occurs between the coaches and the teachers. It is so important because it builds teachers' confidence levels within their instructional practices. Participant 10 cited, "I am a visual learner. You can explain things over and over again and that won't help me. Being able to have someone physically show you how it is done is most valuable to me." According to Participant 10, modeling is the most impactful interaction between coaches and teachers because it brings learning to life and provides deeper meaning of content. These

identified factors and experiences were believed to have contributed to how teachers describe their interactions with instructional coaches.

Research Question 3:

How do early childhood teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

This question asked about the influence that early childhood coaches had on the early childhood teachers' instructional pedagogy. Question 21 (see Figure 21) stated, "What impact have the early childhood coaches had on your instructional practices?" Of the 14 respondents, 42.85% (six out of 14) cited a positive influence over their instructional pedagogy after working with the instructional coaches while 28.57% (four out of 14) of respondents cited that a huge impact was made on their instructional pedagogy after working with the instructional coaches.

Figure 21

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy
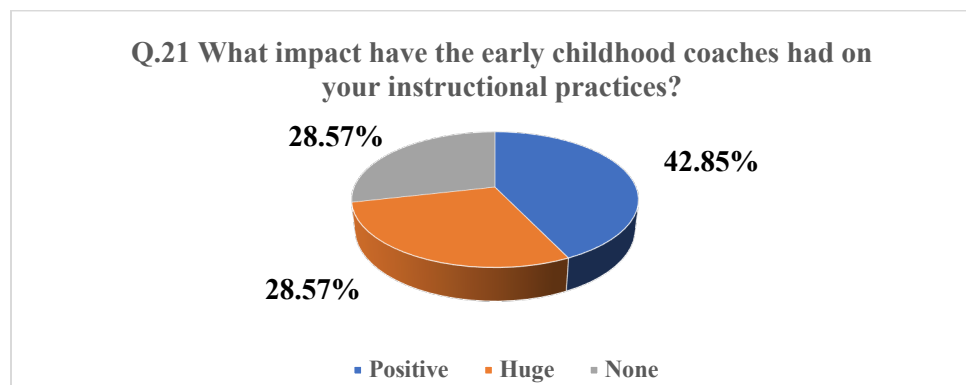
Key areas identified in participants' responses for question 21 included: reflection, deeper understanding of the content, collecting data, and using various instructional strategies within the classroom. Participant 1 noted, "I have become more reflective instead of defensive after working with the coaches. I have learned to step back and observe learning as a whole with interchangeable parts. It's kind of funny we make our kids better when we show them their

potential." Participant 4 admitted being uncomfortable using data stated, "The impact that the coaches have had on my pedagogy has been huge. They have guided me to use data as a means to drive instruction. I have learned to not fear data but to embrace its truth to help my students." According to both participants, they have shifted their pedagogies after working with the instructional coaches. They have turned fear and defensiveness into reflective practices ultimately leading to an increase in student achievement.

Question 22 (see Figure 22) stated, "Have you changed your practices after working with the early childhood coaches?" Of the 14 respondents, 85.71% (12 out of 14) cited they changed their instructional practices after working with the early childhood coaches. Key areas identified in participants' responses for Question 22 included: (1) focusing on pacing and structure, (2) effective strategies, (3) useful tips and tools, (4) helpful examples, (5) beneficial feedback, and (6) suggestions and implementation of curriculum. One participant noted, "When the coaches popped into my class and then saw something being done inefficiently, they would never tell me to change it. Rather, they would help me to realize the benefits of doing something a different way." According to this participant, the coaches guided the teacher in the right direction allowing for pedagogical changes to occur with the teacher being in control the whole time.

Figure 22

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Q.22 Have you changed your practices after working with the early childhood coaches?

14.28%

85.71%

■ Yes   ■ No
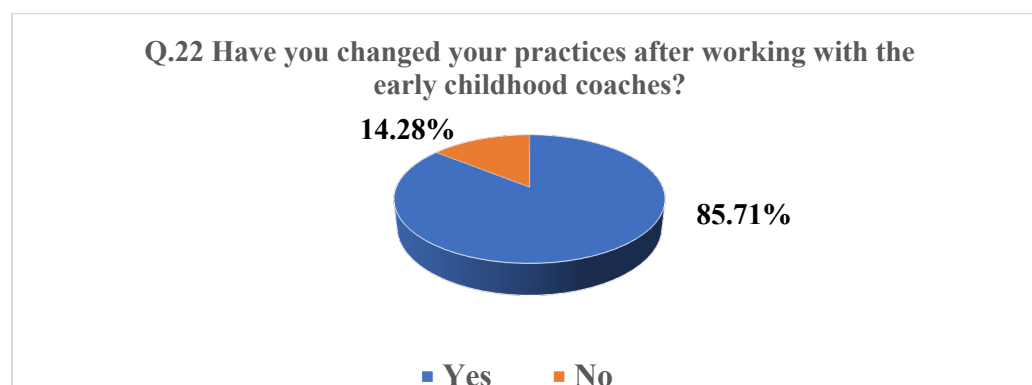
Questions 4, 14, 18, 19 and 20 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey identified factors that led to teachers describing the influences that instructional coaches had over their instructional pedagogies. Question 4 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 23) stated, "The early childhood coach helps me to improve my teaching pedagogy." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 42.82% (six out of 14) of respondents agreed with this statement. Of the respondents, 7.14% (one out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Figure 23

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Question 14 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 24) stated, "The questions asked by the early childhood coach helps me to reflect on my professional learning and growth as an educator." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agree with this statement while 35.71% (five out of 14) agreed with this statement. 14.29% of respondents (two out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Figure 24

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Q14. The questions asked by the early childhood coach helps me to reflect on my professional learning and growth as an educator.

14.29%

50%

35.71%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Question 18 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 25) stated, "The early childhood coach recommends I change my instructional teaching strategy after having a non-effective lesson." Of the 14 respondents, 35.71% (five out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 57.14% agreed (eight out of 14) with this statement. Of the respondents, 7.14% (one out of 14) disagreed with this statement.

Figure 25

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Q18. The early childhood coach recommends I change my instructional teaching strategy after having a non-effective lesson.

7.14%

35.71%

57.14%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
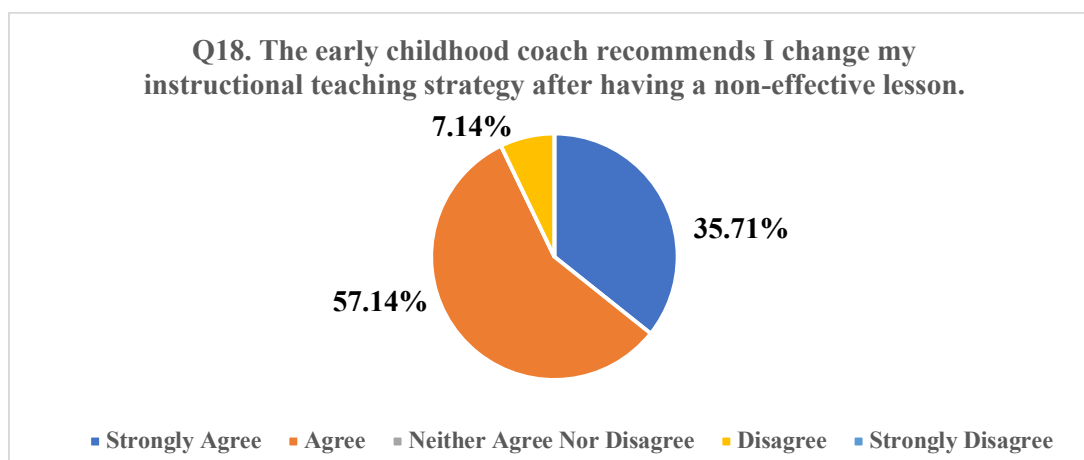
Question 19 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 26) stated, "The early childhood coach helps me focus on how to use best practices in my classroom to increase student achievement." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 35.71% (five out of 14) agreed with this statement. Of the respondents, 14.29% (two out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.
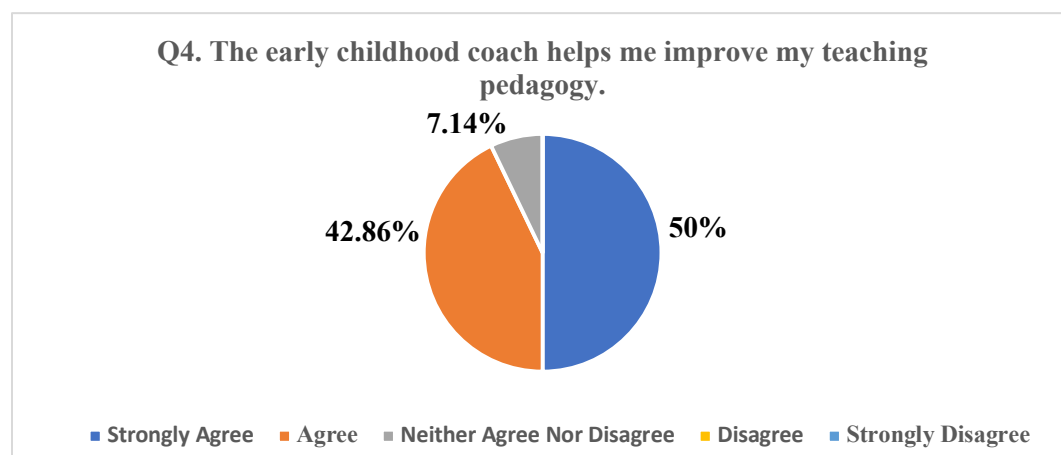
Figure 26

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Q19. The early childhood coach helps me focus on how to use best practices in my classroom to increase student achievement.
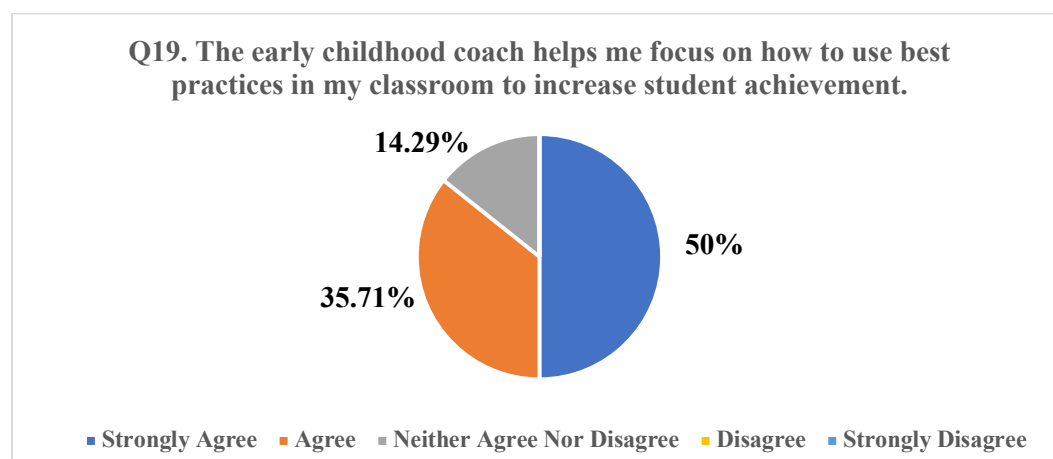
Question 20 of the Early Childhood Teacher Survey (see Figure 27) stated, "The early childhood coach has helped me improve my teaching practice." Of the 14 respondents, 50% (seven out of 14) cited they strongly agreed with this statement while 42.68% (six out of 14) of respondents cited, they agreed with this statement. Of the respondents, 7.14% (one out of 14) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.
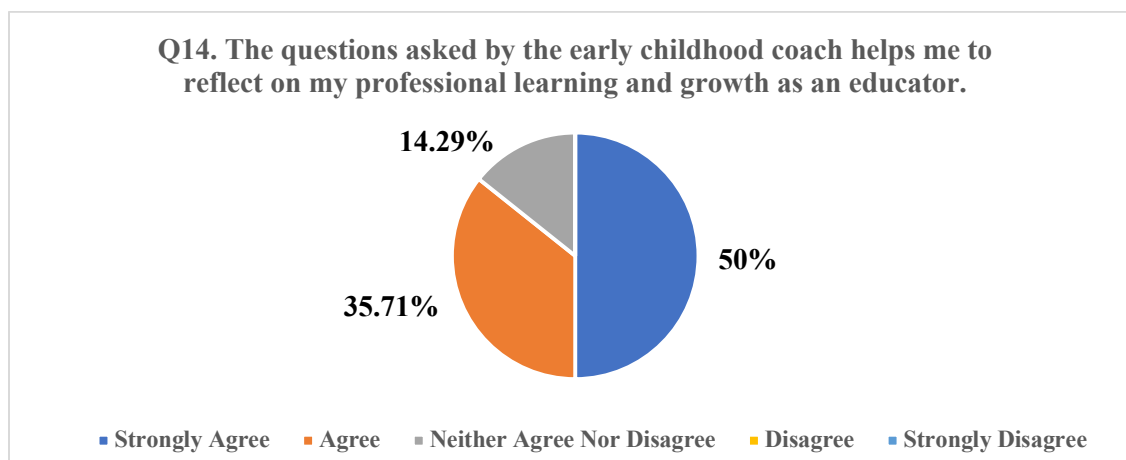
Figure 27

Teachers Describing the Influences that Instructional Coaches have on their Pedagogy

Q20. The early childhood coach has helped me improve my teaching practice.

7.14%

42.86%

50%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
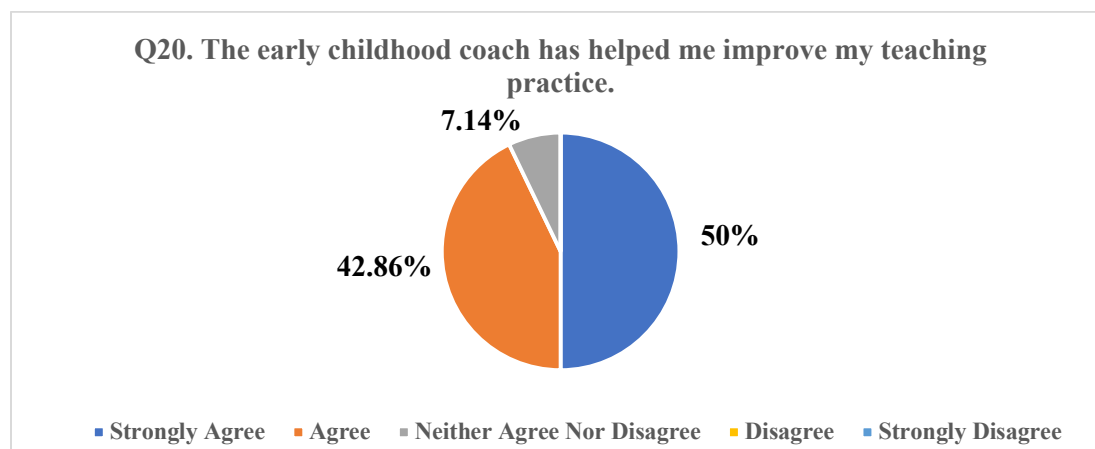
During virtual interviews, Question 11 on the Early Childhood Interview protocol addressed the influence that working with early childhood coaches had over teachers' pedagogy. Of the respondents, 78.57% (11 out of 14) changed their instructional pedagogy after working with the instructional coaches. One participant noted, "My pedagogy changed in the sense where I feel that if you provide kids all of the correct tools with this curriculum, with the right teaching, it could be very effective. I didn't really have faith in this curriculum at the beginning, but my philosophy has changed to believe that if it's done the right way, it can be effective." According to this participant, his/her pedagogy shifted after working with the early childhood coach because the instructional coach brought meaning to instruction. Participant 10 noted, "My philosophy was always that I had to everything alone. After working with the coaches, I shifted to wanting kids, parents, teachers, and educators all connected and involved. Having the coaches there just really enhanced that." According to Participant 10, his/her pedagogy shifted by realizing it was safe to allow all stakeholders to be part of the educational process. His/her desire to want others involved was a direct correlation to the trust that was built on the onset of the professional relationship between the teacher and the coach.

"I was very teacher centered in the beginning. Then I became more child centered once you go through all the information and all the research behind the curriculum. It definitely changes you. I think that's due to the coaches because they really taught me to dig deep." According to Participant 5, his/her pedagogy shifted because the coaches took this teacher from surface level instruction into deep, meaningful instruction directly causing the focus to be redirected onto children having ownership over their learning.

"I would say they definitely helped me learn to be more flexible in my teaching practices and to also not be so hard on myself. Pedagogy-wise, I think that they really made me focus on how the kids perceive what I do. When I'm like, 'The kids aren't getting this, what's the mental block? Why isn't it getting through?' They're the ones that make me look back, and they're like, 'Well, if you phrase it this way, it'll make better sense to the kids because this is where their ZPD is.'" According to Participant 8, his/her pedagogical shift occurred after the deep discussions with the coaches on how to reach the needs of all of the students. It was through professional conversations and deep reflections that this educator became more child focused instead of adult centered when providing instruction.

The early childhood coaches were asked to describe their impact on instructional pedagogy when working with early childhood teachers. Open-Ended Question 15 on the Early Childhood Coaches Survey stated, "What impact have you had on your teachers' instructional practices?" Of the respondents, 100% (three out of three) cited that they have had a positive impact over teachers' instructional practices. Key areas identified included: (1) facilitating professional development, (2) creating pacing guides, (3) implementing curriculum, (4) addressing behavioral concerns, (5) modeling lessons, and (6) identifying areas in need of improvement. All respondents noted that the greatest impact over teachers' instructional

practices was the building of positive, trustworthy relationships with their early childhood teachers. One respondent noted, "I believe I have built very positive working relationships with the teachers. I am welcomed into classrooms to model lessons and offer feedback. If they didn't trust me none of this would occur." According to this respondent, trust remains the most important attribute in the coach/teacher relationship which builds a solid foundation once it is achieved over time. These identified factors and experiences were believed to have contributed to how teachers described the influence of the instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy.

Document Analysis

The three early childhood coaches were asked to read the school district's instructional coach's job description. Upon the completion of this task, participants were asked if the job description outlining their roles and responsibilities as an instructional coach was accurate. Of the respondents, 100% (three out of three) stated they agreed that the job description accurately depicted their roles and responsibilities as an instructional coach. The coaches responded with the following reasons for their agreeance:

(1) Coaches improve the instructional skills of teachers, aides, and other support staff.

(2) Coaches consistently work on professional development in the areas that are needed in supporting teachers. Training teachers and aides are a vital component to the coaching model.

(3) Coaches work with teachers and cooperate with all staff members.

(4) Coaches attend child study team meetings, reach out to the social worker, and work with administration and families.

(5) Coaches meet regularly with teachers to help analyze data to drive instruction.

(6) Coaches have consistent conversations within the department to evaluate their

   effectiveness.

(7) Coaches communicate with the building principal, secretary, and other content-

   specific coaches.

(8) Coaches build relationships with teachers and all staff.

(9) Coaches turnkey professional development trainings to teachers to implement

   curriculum effectively.

(10) Coaches model lessons for teachers.

Key themes emerged from the participants' suggestions for making the current coaching

model more effective. (1) The coaches want the teachers they serve to understand that they are

their peers and are there to fully support them. (2) The early childhood program needs to be

prioritized within the district at large as it sets the foundation of learning. (3) More early

childhood coaches are needed so more time can be spent in individual schools. The coaches want

to be more visible in the classrooms with the teachers and children every day. (4) Removal of

secretarial duties to focus on instruction, and (5) The coaches would like to have specific staff to

work with the bilingual and special education students and families. According to the

respondents, if these suggestions were implemented, they would positively impact the coaching

model. Figure 28 highlights the significant interview responses.

Figure 28

Document Analysis

Description of Participants' Role	Responses from Participants
• Improving instructional skills of teachers, aides and other support staff is a duty. • Consistently working on professional development in the areas that are needed in support teachers. Training teachers and aides are a vital component to the coaching model. • Working collectively and collaborate with teachers is a duty. • Attending child study team meetings, reaching out to social worker, working with administration, and families is a duty. • Analyzing and sharing data with teachers to help drive instruction is a duty. • Meeting on a regular basis with teachers is a duty. • Consistent conversations within the department to evaluate what we are doing, and feeling has been effective. • Cooperating with other staff members. • Communicating with the principals, secretaries, and ELA coaches. If I've had any questions about the language arts part of something, I've gone to them and asked them questions and asked them for help. The communication piece is very important because you're working with so many different people. It's a lot of responsibility. • Being able to build relationships. • Turnkey the trainings to our teachers so that they knew how to implement the curriculum in the classroom. • Modeling lessons for teachers.	• I think that an instructional coach needs to support our bilingual families. Last year I was given directions for the ESI screenings in Spanish before the child began it in English so that they would feel comfortable. We have to look at our data and assessments with an ESL lens for those children. • We all want more hours in the day. We need more coaches, so we have more time in individual schools with our teachers. Maybe more days at a particular school at a time versus multiple schools throughout the week. • We could have more staffing that could focus on specific needs. We have early childhood classes that are working with special-ed students, and they are in a separate department. • I would like to be more visible in the classrooms all day, every day, and other responsibilities don't allow for that. We want to be with the teachers and kids. • We're our own secretaries. We're doing everything in terms of the planning, training, preparing of materials and the delivering of materials. These are some of those things that take away from our duties. • I want time to really sit and observe a child. You can't go in for half an hour on one day. You need a full week to sit and take really good anecdotal notes and get to know the child and see how they interact in small group and large group. • It would be ideal if we could really focus on instructional pieces. That's where I get frustrated because we can't do everything 100 percent. • We need to prioritize early childhood as the foundation. • I want teachers to understand that I'm there as their peer and their support.

Note: Figure 28 created by author.

Chapter Summary

The findings from this explanatory case study were used to inform the school district of teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood coaches since a great deal of time and money is invested in professional development through the practice of instructional coaching. Throughout this chapter, the researcher argued that instructional coaching is an essential, ongoing means of professional development provided to teachers to increase student achievement. As themes emerged from surveys and interviews, the researcher was able to clearly articulate answers to three research questions.

In summary, the early childhood teachers described their engagement when working with the early childhood coaches through positive experiences. The early childhood coaches echoed that sentiment. In addition, the coaches identified that establishing trust with the early childhood teachers has led to an increase in engagement and overall positive experiences. Early childhood teachers identified modeling lessons as the most important and impactful interaction that occurred between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Mentorship between the instructional coaches and early childhood teachers was the second most important and impactful interaction that occurred between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Early childhood teachers (78.57%) changed their instructional pedagogy after working with the instructional coaches. The early childhood coaches (100%) stated that they have had a positive and impactful influence over the teachers' instructional practices. Both the teachers and coaches stated that the greatest influence over the teachers' pedagogy was the building of positive, trustworthy relationships with one another. Trust remained the most important attribute in the coach/teacher relationship. Chapter V investigates the findings of the surveys and interviews data in relation to the literature to consider what they suggest for policy and practice.

Chapter V

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the explanatory case study was to understand the experiences of teachers who have worked with early childhood instructional coaches. The research study also identified a better understanding of how early childhood instructional coaches engage with early childhood teachers, and the experiences and interactions that pre-K and kindergarten teachers have when working with the early childhood coaches. Finally, this inquiry study also aimed to understand how teachers describe the influence of their instructional practices or pedagogy after working with instructional coaches.

Qualitative research was the most appropriate method of inquiry used in order to capture teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches. An explanatory case study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions, interactions, and experiences when working with the early childhood coaches. The sample size consisted of fourteen pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers (defined as early childhood) and three early childhood coaches in the Garden Green Public Schools District. One of the distinguishing factors of case study research is the use of data triangulation. In this study, the researcher surveyed and interviewed participants and completed a document analysis to better understand how early childhood education teachers interact with instructional coaches.

The motivation for conducting this research study was to open up a much-needed dialogue between educational leaders to examine the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing and embedded professional development for early childhood on the beginning levels of education. Understanding of teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches is of great significance. Schools and districts invest a great deal of time and

money in professional development for teachers through the practice of ongoing instructional coaching. Many schools and districts have a variety of content specific coaches available for teachers to call upon. With this effort comes the responsibility to develop and implement coaching programs and models that have the greatest potential to improve classroom instruction with the outcome of increasing student achievement especially on the early childhood level. For this reason, understanding teachers' perceptions of early childhood instructional coaches, how early childhood teachers describe their experiences with the instructional coaches, and how teachers describe the influence of their instructional practices (pedagogy) after working with instructional coaches would be beneficial.

The findings from this research will help determine the factors as to why some teachers utilize instructional coaches and why others resist the instructional coaching model. Providing educational leaders and districts with this information will also help to implement a more effective coaching model for early childhood instructional coaches to utilize. The data generated from this study will be used to provide insight into more effective approaches that early childhood coaches can use while working with staff. Additionally, findings from this study will be used to help educational leaders understand the factors that contribute to teacher "buy in" and resistance to working with the instructional coaches.

As revealed by the literature in Chapter II, research is sparse on early childhood coaching, and primarily focuses on small, qualitative studies that are unable to be generalized to the larger populations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The research conducted in this subject area draws heavily on content-specific coaching models (Neuman & Wright, 2010) with limited research on the instructional coaching model (Ackerman, 2008). Chapter III outlined the research design and methods used to answer three research questions. The research design was an

explanatory case study using qualitative data to provide understanding to the phenomena and detail teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches. The study focused on teachers' engagement, interaction and shifting of pedagogy when working with the early childhood coaches. The data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV provided information about the sample population and the data collection protocols. Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings of the explanatory case study inclusive of conclusions and interpretations, limitations, implications for leadership, and recommendations for future research studies.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

The results of the data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV provided the necessary information to answer the three research questions. This study was guided by three main research questions:

Research Question 1:

How do early childhood teachers describe their engagement with instructional coaches?

Research Question 2:

In what ways do instructional coaches interact with early childhood teachers?

Research Question 3:

How do teachers describe the influence of instructional coaching on their instructional pedagogy?

Findings Related to the Research Questions

To address the three qualitative research questions regarding early childhood teachers' engagement, interaction and influence over pedagogy, the use of surveys, open-ended questions, and interviews allowed early childhood teachers to share their perceptions and experiences when working with the instructional coaches.

For Research Question 1, data revealed that 92.86% of respondents described their engagement with the early childhood coaches through identifying positive experiences. The positive experiences between the early childhood teachers and coaches reinforced their professional relationships to be ongoing and embedded in trust. The early childhood coaches echoed this sentiment. Of the respondents, 100% (three out of three) stated that building relationships first with the early childhood teachers led to an increase in overall positive experiences when working with the teachers. Data revealed that establishing trust over time with the early childhood teachers has to happen first in the coaching model. Without establishing or maintaining trust, the coaching relationship will not develop or prosper.

For Research Question 2, participants were asked what they thought the roles and responsibilities were of the early childhood coaches. The following themes emerged: (1) modeling, (2) mentoring, (3) implementing curriculum, (4) providing professional development, and (5) assisting with tasks. Participants were then asked to identify the role that was most meaningful to them. Of the respondents, 64.28% identified modeling as the most important interaction that occurred between the instructional coaches and the early childhood teachers. Data revealed that modeling is the most impactful interaction between coaches and teachers because it brings learning to life and provides deeper meaning of content while building teachers' confidence levels within their instructional practices.

Research Question 3 data revealed that 78.57% of respondents changed their instructional pedagogy after working with the instructional coaches. Research indicated that this influence over pedagogy occurred because the instructional coaches brought meaning and importance to teachers' instruction. The coaches were able to move their instruction from surface level to deep, meaningful instruction causing the focus to be redirected onto children having ownership over

their learning. The early childhood coaches echoed this sentiment. Of the respondents, 100% (three out of three) stated that they have had a positive impact over teachers' instructional pedagogies once they were able to build positive, trustworthy relationships with their early childhood teachers over time.

Interpretations of Findings

This research study builds upon the literature and expands the understanding of teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches. The research in the area of early childhood coaching has been limited, and primarily focused on small, qualitative studies that are unable to be generalized to the larger populations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The research conducted in this subject area drew heavily on content-specific coaching models (Neuman & Wright, 2010) with limited research on the instructional coaching model (Ackerman, 2008). The study supported previous literature regarding the factors needed in order for early childhood teachers to engage and interact with instructional coaches. The findings from the study revealed that early childhood teachers positively engage and interact with the instructional coaches when trustworthy relationships have been established. Data also revealed that teachers shifted their instructional pedagogies leading to higher student achievement after working with instructional coaches they trusted. Both the instructional coaches and early childhood teachers cited in their responses that they need and want more time together. This supports the data that modeling has the greatest impact among the interactions in the coaching model.

The common themes found among the existing body of research are: (1) the importance of leadership (Ackerman, 2008), (2) time spent with the teacher (Neuman & Wright, 2010), and (3) the relationship between the teacher and the coach (Domitrovich et al., 2008). These three themes lead to a successful coaching model, therefore increasing the likelihood of increasing

student achievement. Research reveals that coaching offers the opportunity to improve the early childhood classroom experiences and outcomes of children through strengthening teachers' skills, pedagogy, and self-efficacy. The findings from this study support the literature with regard to time spent with the teacher (Neuman & Wright, 2010), the relationship between the teacher and the coach (Domitrovich et al., 2008), and strengthening teachers' pedagogy leading to a successful coaching model. In addition, the findings of this study complement research related to adult learning theory specifically focusing on how adults best learn and retain information presented to them. The findings of this study confirm the "do this" model of professional development is ineffective for adult learners. Instead, collaborative, sustained, and interactive professional development is best suited for teachers' growth and development. It is important to understand how adults best learn when districts are revising or implementing a coaching model as a means of ongoing professional development.

As with any research, findings can sometimes offer a surprise. Supporting literature on instructional coaching models highlighted the importance of leadership (Ackerman, 2008) as a factor within a successful coaching model, therefore leading to an increase in student achievement. However, nowhere in the survey or interview data results with either early childhood teachers or coaches did leadership emerge as a significant factor with regards to teachers' perceptions with early childhood coaches. This finding is significant and points to a disconnect between the early childhood coaches and their building principals. One reason for this finding could be attributed to the fact that early childhood coaches service the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in all eight elementary schools leaving little time to no time to build deep, meaningful relationships with their many building principals. All of their time is devoted to working and supporting the early childhood teachers and students. The importance of effective

communication between the coaches and the building principals was stated as necessary for scheduling and organizational purposes, since coaches serve many schools per week and stay in one location for a limited amount of time. A second reason for this finding could be that early childhood coaches fall under the umbrella of the early childhood department which operates independently from the rest of the elementary school. The early childhood coaches report directly to and are under the direct supervision of the Director of Early Childhood Education. This leaves a narrow window of opportunity for the coaches to plan and work in conjunction with their building principals, since the coaches are already overextended with the amount of schools they are responsible for servicing each week.

Conclusions

Three research questions comprised the basis for the explanatory case study. The qualitative questions allowed teachers to share their perceptions of early childhood coaches. Data analyzed in this study indicated that relationship building, time spent with teachers, and trust led to early childhood teachers having positive experiences and interactions when working with early childhood coaches. Modeling had the greatest impact as an interaction between teachers and the coaches. Early childhood teachers changed their instructional pedagogies and practices leading to overall higher student achievement when trust with the coaches has been established. The study contributed additional data to the research examining the factors needed in order for early childhood teachers to engage and interact with instructional coaches.

Limitations and Future Research

There is a lack of literature that documents early childhood coaching and specifically early childhood teachers' perceptions of their instructional coaches. Given the significant gap documented in the literature between research and practice, particularly with early childhood

teachers and coaches, additional research is needed to deeply examine the coaching process, forms, and effects.

Because of virtual learning, the research study was limited to surveys and interviews of the early childhood teachers and coaches. It is suggested that future research be conducted using observations to triangulate the data to capture the instructional coaching model in action over a longer period of time. The researcher was only able to catch a snapshot of teachers engaging and interacting with the instructional coaches. Another limitation was the desired number of participants who voluntarily completed the survey and interview process. While the early childhood teachers were properly informed their responses would be kept private and confidential from the Garden Green Public Schools District, teachers may have assumed otherwise. The case study was also limited to one school district focusing on a specific cohort of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in the year one and two cohorts. Further research should be conducted with a larger, more diverse sampling to improve the generalizability of the results. Understanding how trust is developed between the coaches and teachers is significant. Trust emerged as a reoccurring theme in the research findings; however; the ways in which trust was established did not. Future research should explore and expand on how trust is established between coaches and teachers in order to design or implement an effective coaching model allowing for trust to be established.

Despite these limitations, this study has helped to narrow the gap in research by providing empirical evidence of how early childhood teachers think about, interact, and engage with, and describe their experiences when working with the instructional coaches. This study also provides a broader picture of the variations and factors that contribute to early childhood teachers working with instructional coaches.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study suggest several implications for those who employ or work with early childhood coaches in the school setting. The literature in Chapter II exposed the need for further research regarding the perceptions of teachers on instructional coaches, especially in early childhood where research is limited. As instructional coaching remains the professional development of choice districts use to build teachers' capacity, the cost of implementing this model continues to be a financial challenge. Upon completing the data analysis and discussing the findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

(1) Early childhood coaches should be responsible for administering and scoring all district benchmarks for the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students as a role and responsibility. This will provide more time for the early childhood teachers to focus on instruction while eliminating subjectivity and inconsistency with benchmark scoring.

(2) Hire more early childhood coaches so every elementary school can be assigned one. This will provide an opportunity for the coaches to develop meaningful relationships with the early childhood teachers and principals, offer consistent and immediate assistance to those in need, and allow for ample time for the coaches to model and mentor their teachers.

(3) Hire one early childhood coach who has a special education background and one early childhood coach who has ELL background. These coaches will support and assist the students and families of these very specific populations in any and all capacities. These coaches will service all the elementary schools allowing for the assigned building coach to spend his or her time focusing on other areas of the coaching model.

(4) Implement and conduct paid curriculum professional development in the summer so the early childhood teachers can be well prepared for the upcoming year without being removed

from the classroom. Holding paid curriculum professional development in the summer will allow the early childhood teachers to focus solely on the curriculum, be prepared in advance, and eliminate the learn-as-you-go model which often leads to stress and upset.

(5) Plan for vertical articulation in grades pre-kindergarten and kindergarten regularly. In addition, plan for grade levels to meet monthly with their grade level colleagues from all elementary schools. Teachers need to the opportunity to learn from each other as they are an invaluable resource to each other. If teachers meet with their grade level colleagues from across the district, effective and best practices can be shared ultimately leading to student achievement. Vertical articulation is paramount for filling in the missing pieces of curriculum while aligning proper structure and pacing of the program. Allowing teachers this time to work together will help them gain a deeper understanding of where more attention should be given to better prepare the students for success.

(6) Hold open sessions after school hours or during Monday meetings where pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers could meet with the coaches to ask questions, voice concerns, and share best practices. This will serve as another support to our early childhood teachers. It will allow a safe space for teachers of all levels of experience to work together or directly with the coaches in any capacity that is needed.

(7) Request that coaches teach a full block in all of the early childhood classrooms per semester to keep the coaches current and to unify the coaches and teachers. It is often easy to forget the many tasks that teachers are expected to do each day. By requesting that the coaches teach a full block each semester will allow for trust building between the teachers and coaches in addition to serving as a reminder of all the other facets that occur within a classroom at any given moment.

(8) Implement reflective cycles routinely and with fidelity. Reflective cycles allow for the early childhood teachers to learn and grow from their teaching experiences while opening up dialogue with the coaches in a non-evaluative way. Teachers are given an opportunity to reflect on their lesson and discuss what they could have been done differently if they were to do that task again. This is a time-consuming process between the coach and the teacher but has the potential to impact instruction.

These implications for practice could attribute to a more comprehensive, effective coaching model for the early childhood coaches to implement when working with the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers. An effective coaching model has the potential to lead to an increase in student achievement when teachers are afforded with support and guidance. Effective teaching and increased student achievement substantiates the cost that districts spending on instructional coaching as an ongoing, embedded professional development model.

Implications for Leadership/Policy

Future studies may prove valuable to the discussion of educational leaders examining the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for early childhood teachers. Starting an early childhood coaching program is an important investment that research demonstrates can be impactful for young children's outcomes. This study is significant to educational leaders because it can provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the coaching model as ongoing professional development. From the research perspective, previous literature suggests in order to ensure that the return on investment provides value, particularly in contexts with limited resources, districts and programs can be thoughtful about the cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation (Agnamba, 2016). With these structures in place, districts and programs can be confident that

coaching programs will lead to significant impact and that their youngest learners will achieve the outcomes needed to succeed in school and beyond (Agnamba, 2016). The findings of the study provide a further understanding of the previous literature.

The data analyzed in this study can be used to make improvements and revisions in the current coaching model by administration. The findings of this study demonstrated that teachers perceived their experiences, engagement, and interactions with early childhood through a positive lens. One of the key findings in this study was the effectiveness of modeling as an interaction between coaches and teachers. Early childhood teachers stated that the use of modeling promoted and fostered growth over their instructional practices once trust was established. These findings demonstrate that early childhood teachers feel the coaching model is meaningful and positively influences their instructional pedagogy.

Understanding teachers' perceptions of early childhood coaches greatly impacts student achievement. Findings from this research are significant because they will help determine the factors as to why some teachers utilize instructional coaches and why others resist the coaching model. By providing educational leaders and districts this information could help implement a more effective coaching model for early childhood instructional coaches to utilize. The data generated from this study could also provide insight into more effective approaches that early childhood coaches can use while working with staff. Additionally, findings from this study will help educational leadership understand the factors that contribute to teacher agreement and/or resistance. The findings from this study are not able to transcend early childhood coaches because of the specificity of the cohort studied. This study may impact research-based decisions for educational leaders regarding the coaching model as ongoing professional development to continue and/or expand within the district.

Conclusions

Chapter V presented an overview of the study, discussed limitations, implications, and recommendations for future studies. These findings are a small step to gaining a better understanding of teachers' perception of early childhood coaches. Coaching is a form of professional development that requires the instructional coach to be a master teacher in content and curriculum along with being able to relate and connect with a variety of adult learners.

The more school districts can understand and identify the factors for why some teachers work with coaches while others are resistant can lead to school districts implementing a more effective coaching model inclusive of all stakeholders leading to an increase in student achievement. This study helps to contribute to the overall body of knowledge of early childhood coaches and their role in coaching as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development.

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Appendix A

Early Childhood Coach Interview

Introductory comments: Thank you so much for taking the time today for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. My questions are aimed at gathering specific information on the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood coaches when working with the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers. Please know there are no right or wrong answers, and I ask that you be as detailed and descriptive as possible. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes, and will be recorded so I may transcribe the information at a later date. I will provide you with a transcription shortly after the interview so you can make any necessary adjustments or additional comments. Are there any questions?

<u>Teaching History</u>

- How many years have you been teaching?
- How long have you been employed by the Garden Green Public Schools district?
- How long have you been an early childhood coach?
- Briefly describe your education and experience.
- What motivated you to become an early childhood coach?

<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>

- As an early childhood coach, you have many roles and responsibilities. Please describe in detail all of the responsibilities that you have in this role.
- Which role do you feel is the most important? Why?
- Are there any other tasks that you engage in that are not part of your responsibilities? Please provide detailed examples.
- What is a typical day like in the life of an early childhood instructional coach?

<u>Successes and Challenges</u>

- Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, tell me about a teacher that you had great success with. Describe the situation in detail. (What made it a success? What strategies did you use? What interactions occurred between you and the teacher?)
- Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, tell me about a teacher that you found challenging to work with. Describe the situation in detail. (What made it challenging? What strategies did you use? What interactions occurred between you and the teacher?)
- What do you feel are the biggest challenges in your position as an early childhood coach?
- Who do you go to when you are faced with challenges?

Changes

- What changes would you make to your position as an early childhood coach?
- Would you add or delete any of the responsibilities? If so, which ones and why?

Job Description

*Provide the job description to the participant to review.

- How do you feel after reading the job description of your role?
- Is the job description accurate to the roles and responsibilities that you perform?

This concludes the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add to this discussion? Thank you for taking the time for this interview. It is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B

Early Childhood Teacher Interview

Introductory comments: Thank you so much for taking the time today for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. My questions are aimed at gathering specific information on the experiences that pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers have when working with the early childhood coaches, and the factors that impact these experiences. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers, and I ask that you be as detailed and descriptive as possible. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes and will be recorded so I may transcribe the information at a later date. I will provide you with a transcription shortly after the interview so you can make any adjustments necessary or additional comments. Are there any questions?

Interview Questions:

Background History

- How many years have you been teaching?
- How long have you worked for the Garden Green Public Schools district?
- What grades level are you currently teaching?
- What grade levels have you taught?
- Why did you become a teacher?
- Briefly describe your education and background.

Questions

1. As an early child teacher, can you name or list the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood coaches?
2. Which role is the most important to you? Please explain.
3. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, describe your experiences when working with the early childhood coaches. Please provide examples.
4. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, how do the early childhood coaches support you as an early childhood educator? Please provide examples.
5. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, describe the impact that working with the early childhood coaches has on your teaching practices (instructional approach).
6. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, how has the early childhood coach provided professional development to you?
7. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, how does the early childhood coach assist you with increasing academic achievement of your students?
8. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, how has the early childhood coach changed your role as a teacher?

9. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, why do you think that some teachers are hesitant or resist working with the early childhood coaches?

10. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, explain how things would be different if there wasn't an early childhood coach at your school?

11. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, how has your pedagogy (philosophy) changed since working with the early childhood coach? Please provide examples.

12. Without using names of specific individuals or any other identifying information, is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experiences when working with the early childhood coaches?

This concludes the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add to this discussion?

Thank you for taking the time for this interview. It is greatly appreciated.

Appendix C

Early Childhood Coach Survey

Hi! My name is Laura Scamardella and I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D program at Seton Hall University. My dissertation research focuses on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. One part of my data collection is to survey early childhood coaches. This information will provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood coaching model. Your participation is greatly appreciated. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and can be accessed by clicking on the below link. By clicking on the link to complete the survey, you are authorizing that you are a willing participant, and giving consent for me to collect this data. Please note that all data collected is confidential and all participants are anonymous.

The scale should be identified as:
1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

1. I work with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers.
2. I visit classrooms regularly.
3. I provide timely and effective feedback to teachers.
4. I offer useful materials and resources to teachers to enhance instruction.
5. I model lessons and provide feedback for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers.
6. I provide differentiated support for teacher's individual skill levels.
7. I administer and train teachers in the structured program evaluation instruments (e.g., ECERS).
8. I attend and facilitate common planning sessions.
9. I plan professional development opportunities for early childhood teachers to improve identified areas of weakness.
10. I plan building and district-wide professional development for early childhood teachers.
11. I implement specific goals for teachers in need of improvement.
12. I collaborate with early childhood teachers on effective instructional strategies.
13. I ask teachers reflective questions after working together.
14. I guide teachers through a planning process that reviews common assessments and data.
15. I assist teachers through data analysis to help plan and adapt their instruction.

Open-Ended Questions

1. What impact have you had on your teachers' instructional practices?
2. In what areas do you think you have been most successful?
3. In what areas do you think you have been least successful?
4. Do you have additional feedback you would like to share?

Appendix D

Early Childhood Teacher Survey

Hi! My name is Laura Scamardella and I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D program at Seton Hall University. My dissertation research focuses on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of early childhood coaches. One part of my data collection is to survey pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in their first- and second-year cohort program. This information will provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences early childhood teachers have when working with the coaches, and the factors that affect these experiences. Your participation is greatly appreciated. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and can be accessed by clicking on the below link. By clicking on the link to complete the survey, you are authorizing that you are a willing participant, and giving consent for me to collect this data. Please note that all data collected is confidential and all participants are anonymous.

The scale should be identified as:
1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

1. The early childhood coach respects me as a professional.
2. I am comfortable expressing my point of view to the early childhood coach.
3. The early childhood coach listens to me when I speak.
4. The early childhood coach helps me to improve my teaching pedagogy.
5. The early childhood coach assists me with progressing toward my professional learning goals.
6. I trust the early childhood coaches.
7. The early childhood coach responds to my requests for help in a timely manner.
8. It is helpful when the early childhood coach informally observes me and offers constructive feedback.
9. The early childhood coach provides me with additional resources and materials when asked.
10. The early childhood coach attends common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning.
11. The early childhood coach facilitates common planning meetings to support early childhood teachers and their planning.
12. The early childhood coach works with me on data analysis in order to plan and drive my instruction.
13. The early childhood coach asks me reflective questions after working together.
14. The questions asked by the early childhood coach helps me to reflect on my professional learning and growth as an educator.
15. The early childhood coach models effective instructional practices for me in my classroom.

16. The early childhood coach allows me to decide which instructional strategies to implement in my classroom.
17. The early childhood coach encourages me to be reflective on my teaching practices.
18. The early childhood coach recommends I change my instructional teaching strategy after having a non-effective lesson.
19. The early childhood coach helps me focus on how to use best practices in my classroom to increase student achievement.
20. The early childhood coach has helped me improve my teaching practice.

Open-Ended Questions
1. What impact have the early childhood coaches had on your instructional practices?
2. Have you changed your practices after working with the early childhood coaches?
3. What components of the coaching model have been most beneficial to you?
4. What additional support would you like from the early childhood coaches?
5. Do you have any suggestions or additional feedback to share?

Appendix E

Solicitation/Recruitment Letter

To: Pre-Kindergarten / Kindergarten Teacher/ Early Childhood Coach
Subject Line: Participants being sought for an Early Childhood research study

I am looking for participants for a research study. You are receiving this email because you are a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten teacher in the first- or second-year cohort, or an early childhood coach in the Garden Green Public Schools district. This study focuses on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the early childhood coaches. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of teachers who have worked with early childhood instructional coaches. The study is aiming to better understand the factors in the educational environment that contribute to teachers' experiences of early childhood instructional coaching and examining the effectiveness of early childhood instructional coaches as a means of ongoing, embedded professional development for teachers.

If you take part in this study, you would be asked to take a brief survey that is approximately 15 minutes long and participate in one virtual interview that is approximately 45 minutes long. The survey and interviews will ask questions including, but not limited to, specifically targeting perceptions and factors that influence instructional coaching, and the responsibilities of the coaching program as effective professional development. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and the participant may withdraw his or her consent to participate at any time. Refusal to participate or discontinuing participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. The privacy of the research participant and his/her school will be protected throughout the entire research study.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, or have questions about the study, please email or call: ███████████████████████

Gratefully,
Laura Scamardella

Appendix F

Instruction Coach Job Description

PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITION

TITLE: Instructional Coach

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Valid New Jersey Instructional Certificate
2. Demonstrated knowledge of superlative teaching methods and a mastery of subject area
3. Ability to maintain a positive learning environment
4. Strong interpersonal and communication skills
5. Required criminal history background check and proof of U.S. citizenship or legal resident alien status

REPORTS TO: Designated Administrator

JOB FUNCTION: The Instructional Coach reports to and assists the designated administrator relative to staff development and instructional needs. The primary areas of responsibility include but are not limited to the development and implementation of activities aimed at improving the instructional skills of teachers, aides, and other support staff. The coach analyzes data, student performance, knows standards, and uses this analysis and knowledge to help drive instruction.

DUTIES:

1. Cooperates with other professional staff members in assessing and resolving learning problems.

2. Under the direction of the assigned administrator, works to achieve district educational goals and objectives by promoting active learning in the classroom using board-adopted curriculum and other appropriate learning activities.

3. Works cooperatively and collectively with administrators to ensure that instructional programs and services are administered uniformly and equitably.

4. Provides leadership in the achievement of core standards and district goals and objectives.

5. Assists in the implementation of the district's and school's professional development programs for staff.

6. Provides support in coaching and modeling effective teaching strategies within the classroom by planning and executing well-designed lessons.

7. Participates in grade level, faculty and other meetings in order to maintain horizontal and vertical continuity and articulation of the instructional program.

8. Keeps abreast of and interprets to the staff current research in the area of curriculum development, teaching and learning.

9. Meets on a regular basis with teachers for the purpose of implementing curriculum through effective instruction.

10. Contributes to an effective mentoring program for new staff.

11. Assumes appropriate responsibility for student assessment in collaboration with administrators.

12. Assumes a leadership role in technology usage as applied to curriculum and assessment.

13. Demonstrates leadership in communicating with the school community and provides professional development for staff.

14. Analyzes data and shares analysis to help drive instruction.

15. Performs other duties as may be assigned by the designated administrator and/or the Superintendent of Schools.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: Salary in accordance with Garden Green Education Association negotiated agreement

EVALUATION: Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with provisions of Board of Education policy.

The list of duties above does not constitute an exclusive listing of functions but merely sets forth by way of guidance some of the duties of the position.

Appendix G

Initial coding of open-ended questions from the early childhood teachers' survey

What impact have the early childhood coaches had on your instructional practices? Question 21	Please explain your response to question 21.	Have you changed your practices after working with the early childhood coaches? Question 22	Please explain your response to question 22.	What components of the coaching model have been most beneficial to you? Question 23
I believe the coaches have had a huge impact on my instruction.	I would seek them out to pick their brain. I have learned so many ways to apply the same skill in activities. The coaches have made me a better teacher because they help me see the potential in various instructional practices. The early childhood coaches provide different strategies and approaches I can take during a lesson.	Yes	Some strategies they have suggested made the lesson more effective and run smoothly for my students.	Constructive feedback as well as in person modeling of lessons.The coaches' constructive feedback has been most beneficial to me. The feedback has allowed me to be reflective on my practice and improve different teaching methods. I
The early childhood coaches have had a huge impact on my instructional practices.	Early childhood coaches have greatly helped me strengthen my instructional practices. The early childhood coaches have helped me learn the Tools of the Mind, FUNdations, and GO Math Curriculums.	Yes	I have changed my practices after working with my coach. I use the examples she gives me and implement any suggestions because they are always helpful.	Providing resources and teaching materials was very helpful.
It has been a positive impact.	They often assist me with different strategies that I can use for students who need additional scaffolding and support.	Yes	Many times, I have called a coach in to observe me with a lesson and they have suggested doing something different like using different body language or explanations. Also, after all the Tools of the Mind trainings I often feel very prepared and ready to implement the things they discuss like center games and whole group organizational strategies.	"Make and take" workshops that help enhance the Tools of the Mind games and themes for our centers. The review PD we had was also nice to go over the everyday Tools of the Mind activities. It was nice to get a little refresher on everything. Also, assisting in curriculum pacing and instructional practices during common planning meetings.

Appendix H

Initial coding of open-ended questions from the early childhood coaches' survey

What impact have you had on your teachers' instructional practices? Question 15	Please explain your response to question 15.	In what areas do you think you have been most successful? Question 16	In what areas do you think you have been least succesful? Question 17
Positive	I use the Tools of the Mind reflection forms to help teacher's with their instructional practices. I do this by modeling lessons for teachers as they observe me and take notes. I return in a week and observe them, using the reflection forms. After, we go over the notes and discuss the areas they were strong in and how they can improve their instruction in the classroom.	Also, I am a peer - I am a support, a liaison, an assistant - whatever the teachers need, I am happy to help with.	I also would like to continue to help teachers realize that anecdotal notes are just as important as giving an assessment and can tell you a lot about the whole child.
Positive	I have been welcomed into classrooms to model lessons and offer feedback regarding our Tools of the Mind curriculum, room arrangement/centers (best use of space and materials needed in centers).	Most of the assessments that we give are one on one and take time. Especially when teachers have large class sizes, this takes some stress from them and they really appreciate it.	We spend a lot of time re-coaching and training teachers on the curriculum (which is very necessary). As teachers become more comfortable with the program, we are able to dig deeper.
Honest and Colloborative	I have been able to plan and provide PD and CP on curriculum activities, as well as follow up with model lessons to facilitate accuracy of instruction and fidelity to the program. I have also supported teachers understanding of our Early Childhood assessments and how to best break down the data to guide our next instructional steps.	These PD sessions allow us to follow up with class visits to see how new strategies are being implemented and how we can model and further support our program.	It can also be tough to follow up with every teacher in a reflective cycle as each building has its own set of needs, and some teachers require more time than others.

Appendix I

Snapshot of data collection from early childhood teachers' surveys

Engagement	Interaction	Influence over Pedagogy
I felt very fortunate that I had someone that I really could depend on, and I really reached out to a lot. I felt that she was in weekly and would stay all day, which was really important because I wanted to make sure I nailed this new curriculum	Modeling, structure—setting structure—and observing	I didn't really have faith in this curriculum at the beginning, but my philosophy has changed that if it's donethe right way, it can be. The kids can learn the self-regulation that they need to make this curriculum successful.
It was all so positive. Early childhood coaches would come in, they would show me where everything was, taught me how to play the games, they sat down. A lot of times it was even after school, time that they didn't have to spend with me, to show me the games and teach me the curriculum, and to explain the "why" behind it.	I think they're there for guidance and direction. I think they're there to help model and help just the students get the best instruction that they can.	Using data to drive your instruction, I guess it does fall into pedagogy—I guess that would be what would really have changed in my philosophy.
Probably the best experience I've had is this past last year. I felt like that was such a good example to see how they would handle things, and to see their feedback on what I was doing if there was anything I could do better.	I see them as a mentor, where they're able to guide and facilitate anything that I may need help in, especially with the curriculum.	My philosophy was always that, for myself, I always want kids, parents, teachers, educators all connected and involved. Having the coaches just really enhanced that, especially for early childhood, because we do early childhood events, like the fall festival and things like that.

Appendix J

Snapshot of data collection from early childhood coaches' surveys

Engagement	Interaction	Influence over Pedagogy
First and foremost, is to develop a collaborative and honest relationship with the teachers.	I feel the most important role is to help the teachers to go in, model lessons—to really work with the teachers in any capacity. That's the most important. I feel that because I can help them learn new ways to teach, to help their students.	It wasn't just kind of just laying it out for her, it was more the why behind we do it. I always try to explain that to all my teachers, why you're doing this particular activity. That's something that I always did in my classroom. I needed to know the why behind every piece of curriculum because it motivated me to get it done and to do it the right way.
New teachers or even veteran teachers—going in modeling lessons for them using the reflective process, the reflection forms through Tools and going in modeling a lesson for a teacher.Then letting them watch me, letting them try it out, coming back, watching them, giving them, "This is what you did great, maybe you're missing these pieces." "Let's try to add them in, let's try it again,"	Building those relationships and letting—the parents when they know that you sincerely feel that way and you are there for them and working for them and their children, then you have them with you. When you have them with you, then you can work as a team and work with the children. That's key.	We're not teaching the curriculum, we're teaching standards. I looked at a standard with her and kind of just break it down and look at our objectives and what our goals are for that standard and look at the curriculum and say, oh wait, that reminds me of that activity.
Being that support, that trusted collegue so we can sit with them for the reflection pieces. It's a team effort. I'm there to support. I'm there as a peer. I'm a teacher too. I can offer my experience. I can offer guidance.	Then it would be based on data. Seeing where the data is, where we need to support students a little bit more.	There needs to be steps to curriculum. If I'm not having fidelity to this particular activity and assessing it while I'm doing it, then there's gonna be a pocket later on that's gonna show in my data. Teachers should get in front of that.

Appendix K

IRB Approval Letter

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
1 8 5 6

July 21, 2020

Laura Scamardella

Re: Study ID# 2020-113

Dear Ms. Scamardella,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your research proposal entitled, "Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Early Childhood Coaches" as resubmitted. This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned study's approval as exempt. If your study has a consent form or letter of solicitation, they are included in this mailing for your use.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol, informed consent form or study team must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to your expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research form to close the study. In all future correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, please reference the ID# listed above.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mara Podvey

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Institutional Review Board
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W H A T   G R E A T   M I N D S   C A N   D O