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TEACHER PERCEPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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TEACHER PERCEPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches, including math coaches, reading coaches, and instructional partners. It examines how these perceptions influence teachers' professional growth and instructional practices within a suburban school district in Alabama. Grounded in Adult Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Reflective Practice, the research seeks to understand the role and effectiveness of instructional coaching in enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes across the P-20 educational framework. The study employs a survey methodology, collecting data from 55 teachers across various schools, grade levels, and subject areas to analyze their experiences and the impact of coaching on their pedagogical practices. Key findings indicate that positive perceptions of instructional coaches significantly correlate with the adoption of new instructional strategies, highlighting the critical role of personalized and sustained support in professional development. The study also reveals that teachers' perceptions of coaching effectiveness vary based on the grade level they teach, emphasizing the importance of tailoring coaching methods to fit the specific needs of different teaching contexts. These insights contribute to the discussion on improving education, offering practical suggestions for enhancing instructional coaching programs to better support teachers and improve student learning outcomes.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The ever-changing education landscape constantly seeks innovative approaches to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Instructional coaching has become increasingly essential within the P-20 educational framework, representing a significant shift from conventional professional development methods. Initially rooted in the pioneering work of Joyce and Showers (1988), instructional coaching has evolved over time, drawing inspiration from contemporary researchers like Knight (2007) and Aguilar (2018). This evolution signifies a move towards personalized, ongoing support for educators, aligning with the broader trend of evidence-based and reflective practices in education. Consequently, there is a growing need to closely examine the role and impact of instructional coaching in this context.

Context

The context of this study is situated within this transformative era of education, where the roles and expectations of teachers are expanding, and the need for effective professional development strategies is more pronounced than ever. As schools and educational systems navigate the complexities of modern educational demands, such as technology integration, diverse student needs, and accountability standards, instructional coaching emerges as a promising avenue for supporting teachers in navigating this dynamic landscape.

Historically, the concept of instructional coaching has evolved from simple mentorship models to complex, multifaceted programs that encompass a range of specialized areas such as literacy, mathematics, and technology integration. This evolution shows that people now understand the detailed needs of both teachers and students to succeed in education. Contemporary models of instructional coaching, influenced significantly by the

work of scholars like Knight (2007) and Aguilar (2018), emphasize the importance of partnership, reflection, and tailored support in the professional growth of teachers. These models highlight the shift towards a more collaborative, learner-centered approach to professional development, where individual teachers' unique contexts and challenges are acknowledged and addressed.

Therefore, the setting for this study is an educational environment that increasingly recognizes the value of instructional coaching as a critical component of teacher development and student success. Within this context, the study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and its impact on their instructional practices. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for refining and enhancing the effectiveness of instructional coaching programs, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of educators and contribute to the overarching goal of improving educational outcomes across the P-20 continuum.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of instructional coaching as a catalyst for change and improvement becomes increasingly critical. This study seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on effective professional development strategies by offering insights into how instructional coaching can be leveraged to support teachers' professional growth and, ultimately, enhance students' learning experiences.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand how teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches, including math coaches, reading coaches, and instructional partners, in providing support and professional development, and the extent to which these perceptions influence teachers' professional growth and instructional practices. Given the significant investment in instructional coaching across educational levels, understanding these perceptions is critical for

optimizing the effectiveness of coaching programs and, ultimately, enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. This research seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of teachers' perspectives on instructional coaching and its influence on their pedagogical approaches and practices within the P-20 education system.

By investigating the perceptions of teachers towards instructional coaches and the subsequent impact on their instructional methods, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of teacher-coach interactions and the broader implications for professional development in education. The findings from this research will not only enrich the existing literature on instructional coaching but also offer practical guidance for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the education sector on leveraging instructional coaching to foster teacher development and improve student learning experiences.

Significance of the Study

The study's P-20 implications and practical impact can be significant, as it offers valuable insights that extend across the entire education continuum. Understanding teacher perceptions of instructional coaching can help identify areas where early support is needed. Insights from the study can aid instructional coaches in refining their coaching strategies to better support teachers. By identifying areas where teachers perceive coaching support to be effective or ineffective, instructional coaches can adjust their practices to align more closely with teachers' preferences and needs.

A clearer understanding can help tailor professional development initiatives that better meet teachers' needs and promote their professional growth. The study can also identify successful coaching practices that resonate with teachers and yield positive outcomes. Such practices can be scaled across schools and districts to enhance the effectiveness of

instructional coaching efforts on a larger scale. Evidence from the study can also support data-driven decision-making. Policymakers, school administrators, and educational leaders can use the findings to make informed decisions about resource allocation and program development to optimize instructional coaching practices.

The study can emphasize the importance of lifelong learning and professional growth for educators throughout their careers. Teachers may recognize the value of instructional coaching as a form of professional learning that fosters collaboration and continuous improvement among colleagues. This may promote the development of collaborative learning communities within schools. When teachers feel that instructional coaches provide valuable support and professional development, it can lead to a sense of unity and shared goals, ultimately benefiting the overall school culture.

The study's findings can show how instructional coaching impacts teachers' instructional practices. Effective instructional coaching has the potential to positively influence teaching practices, which, in turn, can lead to improved student learning outcomes. By identifying coaching practices associated with better teacher support and professional development, the study can indirectly contribute to student academic achievement.

Overall, the P-20 implications of the study highlight the significance of instructional coaching in supporting teacher growth and enhancing student learning outcomes throughout the educational journey. By recognizing the interconnectedness of educational experiences, the study contributes to creating a more seamless and supportive learning environment for students and educators across the entire P-20 continuum.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations of this research are grounded in Adult Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, and the principles of Reflective Practice. As Knowles (1984) expressed, Adult Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and the unique needs of adult learners, advocating for a facilitative rather than directive approach to education. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1961) underscores the significance of observational learning and the impact of social contexts on behavior, highlighting the role of modeling in instructional coaching. Reflective Practice, introduced by Schön (1983), promotes a reflective approach to professional activities, encouraging educators to analyze and adapt their teaching practices critically. Lewin's Change Theory (1947) offers a framework for understanding the change process, emphasizing the need to address resistance and support educators through transitions. These theories underscore the multifaceted nature of instructional coaching, emphasizing the need for a personalized, contextually relevant, and reflective approach to educational professional development. They offer a lens through which the dynamics of instructional coaching can be examined, particularly concerning teacher development, pedagogical change, and the broader educational landscape.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

This section outlines the research questions and hypotheses aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and their impact on pedagogical practices. The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. How do teachers perceive the role of instructional coaches, and how does this perception influence their pedagogical practices?

H_1: Teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective are more likely to implement new instructional strategies in their classrooms.

Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): There is no difference in the likelihood of implementing new instructional strategies between teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective and those who do not.

2. Do teachers' years of experience, grade level taught, or content area they teach impact their perception of instructional coaches and the support they provide?

   H_2: Teachers' years of experience will influence the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

   Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): There is no interaction effect between teachers' years of experience and their perception of instructional coaches on their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

   H_3: Teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness will differ significantly based on the grade level they teach. Specifically, elementary school teachers will rate instructional coaches as more effective than middle and high school teachers.

   Null Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}): There is no difference in teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness across different grade levels.

3. How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches in supporting professional development?

H_4: Teachers' content area will moderate the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities.

Null Hypothesis 4 (H_{04}): The relationship between teachers' perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities is not influenced by the content area they teach.

Limitations

Although this study thoroughly examines teachers' views on instructional coaches and their influence on pedagogical practices, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that it faces. Firstly, the reliance on self-reported data through surveys might introduce a degree of bias, as participants could present socially desirable responses, or their perceptions might not accurately reflect their practices. The subjective nature of perception-based research inherently limits the objectivity and reliability of the data collected.

Moreover, the study's design, primarily focusing on quantitative measures, may not capture the nuanced and complex dynamics of the coaching-teaching relationship. While qualitative components are included, they may not fully explore the depth of individual experiences, contextual factors, and the subtleties of interpersonal interactions that significantly impact the efficacy of instructional coaching.

The sample size and demographic distribution of participants, limited to a specific geographical location and educational context, may also restrict the generalizability of the findings. Variations in cultural norms, policies, and institutional environments across different regions could yield diverse experiences and perceptions of instructional coaching. Therefore, caution is warranted when extending these results to broader contexts.

Additionally, the evolving nature of educational standards, pedagogical innovations, and instructional coaching models implies that the findings might be contingent on the current educational climate. Rapid changes in educational policies, technologies, and teaching methodologies might limit the long-term applicability of the study's conclusions.

The study acknowledges these limitations and suggests they offer further research avenues. Future studies might consider employing mixed-method approaches, expanding the participant pool across diverse educational settings, and incorporating longitudinal designs to observe the sustained impact of instructional coaching over time. Addressing these limitations will enhance the understanding of instructional coaching's role in teacher development and pedagogical change, contributing to the refinement of coaching practices and educational policy.

Definition of Terms

Instructional Coach / Partner. In this study, the terms instructional coach and instructional partner will be used synonymously. An instructional coach/partner is a seasoned educator who provides targeted professional development to teachers. They collaborate closely with teachers in a peer-like relationship to co-plan, co-teach, and reflect on lessons. They use various strategies such as one-on-one mentoring, modeling, observation, and feedback to support teachers in refining their teaching practices, integrating new pedagogical methods, and enhancing student learning outcomes. Instructional coaches tailor their support to the specific needs and context of each teacher and classroom, making their role pivotal in the continuous professional development of educators (Knight, 2007).

Math Coach. A math coach specializes in enhancing mathematics instruction by providing teachers with strategies and support to deepen their content knowledge and improve their

pedagogical skills. The goal is to improve student outcomes in this critical subject area by aligning teaching practices with effective, evidence-based approaches in mathematics education (West & Staub, 2003).

Reading/Literacy Coach. A reading or literacy coach focuses on advancing reading and literacy skills across all learning areas. They offer expertise in reading strategies, comprehension skills, and the integration of literacy into various content areas. Their work fosters literacy development, which is crucial for student success across the curriculum (Bean et al., 2015).

Instructional Coaching. Instructional coaching is a personalized form of professional development in which experienced educators, known as coaches, provide support and guidance to teachers. This model is rooted in teachers' day-to-day experiences and involves tailored support, feedback, and collaboration within the classroom context. Instructional coaching is based on adult learning principles and aims to enhance teaching practices, pedagogical methods, and, ultimately, student learning outcomes (Knight, 2007; Joyce & Showers, 2002).

P-20 Education. P-20 education refers to a cohesive, integrated approach to education spanning from prekindergarten (P) through the 20th year (typically graduate school) (Smith, 2018). This framework emphasizes the continuity and alignment of educational practices and standards across all levels of education to ensure a seamless learning experience for students and prepare them for college and career readiness (Jones & Brown, 2019).

Pedagogical Practices. Pedagogical practices encompass the methods and strategies teachers use to facilitate learning (Johnson, 2017). Educational theories, research, and the specific needs of students inform these practices (Roberts et al., 2020). Effective pedagogical practices

engage students, foster a deep understanding of content, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Garcia & Martinez, 2018).

Quantitative Research. A systematic investigation typically involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, or effects (Taylor & White, 2016).

Summary

This dissertation investigates teachers' perceptions regarding instructional coaching and its impact on their teaching practices. Through the framework of established learning theories, this study explores how various factors, including experience and teaching context, shape these perceptions and the subsequent engagement with instructional coaches. The findings of this research are anticipated to provide valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of instructional coaching as a tool for professional development and educational improvement. By understanding how teachers perceive instructional coaching support and professional development, the study enhances coaching practices, teacher satisfaction, and, ultimately, student learning outcomes. These implications can create a positive ripple effect that extends throughout P-20 education.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Historical Evolution of Instructional Coaching

While no individual is credited with developing the instructional coaching theory, several researchers and educators have significantly contributed to the concept's evolution. The origins of instructional coaching can be traced back to the instructional leadership work of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers in the 1980s (Neumerski, 2013). They researched the apprenticeship of observation, highlighting the challenge of changing teachers' instructional practices even after traditional workshops or professional development sessions (Neumerski, 2013). This research laid the foundation for the idea that sustained support, and feedback is essential for teacher growth and improvement.

In the early 2000s, researchers like Jim Knight and Elena Aguilar made significant contributions to instructional coaching. Jim Knight, in particular, is often credited with popularizing the term "instructional coaching" through his research and writing on the topic (Frazier, 2021). His books, including *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*, helped bring the concept of instructional coaching to a broader audience (Knight, 2021).

While early instructional coaching models were innovative, they faced challenges such as resistance from educators who were more accustomed to traditional professional development methods. Critics argued that these models lacked flexibility and failed to address the diverse needs of teachers in different educational contexts. This criticism led to significant reforms in coaching practices, emphasizing a more personalized and context-sensitive approach (Knight, 2007).

Professional Development and the Role of Coaching

Over the past several decades, the field of professional development in education has seen considerable transformations, with instructional coaching emerging as a key component in this dynamic evolution. Traditionally, professional development in education was characterized by occasional workshops and seminars, often disconnected from the daily challenges and needs of teachers in the classroom (Guskey, 2000). These conventional models were critiqued for their limited impact on teacher practice and student learning outcomes, leading to a search for more effective methods of professional development (Desimone, 2009).

In this context, instructional coaching has gained prominence as a more personalized and sustainable approach to professional growth. Unlike traditional professional development, instructional coaching is rooted in the day-to-day experiences of teachers, offering tailored support and feedback within the context of their classrooms (Knight, 2007). This model is built on the principles of adult learning theory, which suggests that adults learn best when they are engaged in a process that is relevant, collaborative, and reflective of their professional context (Knowles, 1984). Instructional coaching embodies these principles by providing ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities directly linked to teachers' instructional practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

Furthermore, instructional coaching aligns with the emerging trends in educational reform, which emphasize teacher quality as a crucial factor in student achievement. Research has consistently shown that effective teaching is the most significant in-school factor affecting student learning (Hattie, 2009). Instructional coaching addresses this by focusing on

the development of high-impact teaching strategies, thus directly contributing to the improvement of classroom instruction and student outcomes (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018).

Purpose and Structure of the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is a comprehensive exploration and synthesis of existing research related to instructional coaching within the P-20 education framework. This exploration seeks to examine how instructional coaching impacts teacher development, pedagogical practices, and, consequently, student outcomes (Desimone & Pak, 2017). The review will also explore teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches and how these perceptions influence their professional growth and adoption of new teaching strategies (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015).

The chosen themes for this literature review, including the impact of coaching on teacher development and the role of teacher perceptions, were selected to address identified gaps in instructional coaching research (Gallucci et al., 2010). These themes are crucial for understanding the multifaceted nature of coaching and its varied impacts across different educational settings

The structure of the review is designed to provide a systematic exploration of these themes. This exploration begins by establishing the theoretical and conceptual foundations of instructional coaching in the context of P-20 education (Neumerski, 2013). Subsequently, it delves into specific areas, such as the influence of teacher characteristics (like experience and teaching level) on their perception of coaching, the effectiveness of instructional coaching in professional development, and the relationship between teachers' perceptions and their willingness to embrace new pedagogical methods. The review concludes by identifying gaps in current research and suggesting avenues for future studies.

The Emergence and Importance of Instructional Coaching

Evolution of Instructional Coaching: Key Figures and Contributions

The journey of instructional coaching in education took root with the revolutionary work of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers in the 1980s. Their influential model, combining theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching, revolutionized professional development in education. This approach emphasized experiential learning and continuous professional growth, setting the stage for what would become the modern practice of instructional coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Their work highlighted the importance of practical application and personalized feedback in teacher development, moving away from the traditional one-size-fits-all professional development sessions.

The 1990s saw a significant shift with Carol Ann Tomlinson's advocacy for differentiated instruction. Tomlinson's framework for tailoring teaching to meet diverse student needs became a cornerstone in instructional coaching. Her approach broadened the scope of instructional coaching to include strategies for addressing individual student differences within the classroom setting, thereby enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of teaching practices (Tomlinson, 1999).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the field of literacy saw transformative advancements with the work of Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. Their guided reading framework became a foundational strategy for literacy coaches, promoting reading instruction tailored to student reading levels and needs. This period also marked significant contributions from Sharon Walpole and Michael C. McKenna, whose comprehensive guide, "The Literacy Coach's Handbook," detailed the roles and effective practices of literacy coaches, enriching the toolkit available for instructional partnerships in literacy (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001;

Walpole & McKenna, 2006). Concurrently, the science of reading movement emerged, emphasizing evidence-based reading instruction and foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). This movement further informed and refined literacy coaching practices, ensuring that instructional strategies were grounded in robust scientific research.

Simultaneously, the realm of mathematics education was reshaped by the work of Marilyn Burns. Burns' emphasis on understanding students' mathematical thinking catalyzed the development of math coaching practices, which focused on deepening teachers' understanding of how students learn mathematics. This evolution continued in the 2000s with contributions from Maggie McGatha and Jennifer Bay-Williams, whose book *Coaching Matters* highlighted the pivotal role of coaching in mathematics instruction and its impact on student learning (Burns, 1992; McGatha & Bay-Williams, 2008).

The 2000s also witnessed the influential work of Richard DuFour on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). DuFour's research emphasized the power of collaborative teaching and learning processes, aligning closely with the collaborative nature of instructional coaching. His work highlighted the importance of creating a community of practice among educators, where instructional coaching becomes a key component of a school's culture of continuous improvement (DuFour, 2004).

In the 2000s and 2010s, figures like Stephanie Hirsh and Elena Aguilar have brought new dimensions to instructional coaching. Hirsh's emphasis on effective professional development and continuous learning intersected with the evolving role of instructional partners, advocating for ongoing, reflective, and research-based professional growth (Hirsh, 2009). Aguilar, on the other hand, focused on transformational coaching, a model that

supports both the professional and personal growth of educators, emphasizing the holistic nature of instructional coaching (Aguilar, 2013).

The explosion of digital technologies in the 2010s brought new challenges and opportunities to literacy coaching. Kathy A. Mills and Amy Seely Flint contributed significantly to this field by exploring literacy coaching in diverse and digital learning environments. Their research sheds light on the evolving nature of literacy in the digital age and how instructional coaching can adapt to these changes, ensuring that literacy instruction remains relevant and effective in a rapidly changing educational landscape (Mills & Flint, 2014).

Globally, instructional coaching practices reflect the diversity of educational systems and cultural contexts. For example, in Scandinavian countries, coaching is often an integral part of teacher education programs, emphasizing reflective practice and collaborative learning (van Nieuwerburgh, 2017). In contrast, in many Asian educational systems, coaching might focus more on subject-specific expertise and mastery (Zhao, 2020). These international variations in coaching practices provide valuable insights into the adaptability and application of coaching models in different cultural and educational contexts.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced instructional coaching, necessitating adaptations and highlighting its versatility. With schools transitioning to remote or hybrid learning, instructional coaches had to rapidly pivot to virtual coaching. This shift, while challenging, enabled continued teacher support using digital communication tools (Green et al., 2021). Coaches played a vital role in aiding teachers with technology integration

for remote learning, focusing on platforms and digital tools to enhance student engagement (Knight, 2021).

The pandemic also heightened the need for addressing teacher well-being. Coaches provided crucial emotional support, helping educators navigate increased stress and adapt to new teaching environments (Aguilar, 2018). Professional development tailored to remote teaching became a priority, focusing on online student engagement and assessment strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Furthermore, COVID-19 exposed and intensified equity issues in education. Instructional coaches faced the challenge of supporting teachers to mitigate these disparities, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students, particularly in remote settings (Zhao, 2020).

Overall, the pandemic expanded the role of instructional coaches beyond traditional pedagogy to encompass emotional support, technical assistance, and guidance through an unprecedented educational landscape. This experience has not only demonstrated the adaptability of instructional coaching but also potentially reshaped its future direction (van Nieuwerburgh, 2017).

Impact of Technology on Instructional Coaching

The integration of technology and digital transformation has fundamentally altered the domain of instructional coaching, introducing innovative delivery methods and broadening both its impact and accessibility. This digital shift has been instrumental in transcending traditional barriers, offering instructional coaches and educators alike unprecedented opportunities for professional development and collaboration.

The rise of online learning platforms has been pivotal in this transformation. Digital platforms like Coursera and EdX offer professional development courses that instructional

coaches can use for their own training or recommend to teachers. These platforms provide access to a wealth of resources that were previously inaccessible to many educators due to geographical or financial constraints (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Moreover, the rise of virtual coaching through video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet has gained prominence, especially highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic's challenges. This virtual shift has ensured the continuity of instructional coaching practices during times of disruption, allowing coaches to offer uninterrupted support to educators, irrespective of physical location. This accessibility has been pivotal in maintaining the momentum of professional development initiatives during unforeseen circumstances, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of virtual coaching methodologies (Green et al., 2021).

Further enhancing the efficacy of instructional coaching are various digital tools that enable a more personalized and data-driven coaching approach. Educational technologies can provide coaches real-time data on teacher performance and student outcomes, allowing for more targeted and effective coaching interventions (Knight, 2021). For example, platforms like Teachscape allow coaches to record and analyze classroom teaching, offering concrete data points for discussion and improvement.

The technological evolution has also fostered greater collaboration among instructional coaches and educators. Online communities and networks, such as the Instructional Coaching Group on social media platforms, provide spaces to share resources, exchange ideas, and collectively address educational challenges. This not only enriches the coaching experience but also promotes a culture of shared learning and professional unity (van Nieuwerburgh, 2017).

Despite these advancements, there are challenges. The digital divide remains a significant barrier, as not all educators have equal access to the necessary technology or internet connectivity (Zhao, 2020). Additionally, the effectiveness of virtual coaching compared to face-to-face interactions is an area of ongoing research and debate, necessitating further research to fully understand the implications and best practices of virtual coaching environments (Green et al., 2021).

Technology and digital transformation have undeniably expanded and enhanced the scope of instructional coaching. While challenges persist, the opportunities presented by digital transformation promise a more inclusive, effective, interconnected, personalized, and data-driven coaching landscape (Green et al., 2021).

Conceptual Framework of Instructional Coaching

Definition and Evolution of Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching can be defined as a personalized, collective approach where experienced educators provide guidance and support to fellow teachers to enhance teaching practices and improve student learning outcomes. This concept evolved from the traditional model of professional development, which often involved one-time workshops or seminars. The shift towards instructional coaching reflects a more collaborative, ongoing, and reflective approach to professional development, acknowledging the complexity of teaching and the need for sustained support (Neumerski, 2013).

The concept of instructional coaching has evolved substantially over the years. Initially focusing on general pedagogical strategies, it has expanded to include specialized areas such as literacy, mathematics, and technology integration in aims to address the increasing complexity and diversity of educational needs. This evolution reflects a response to

the dynamic landscape of education, where new challenges and opportunities constantly emerge (Knight, 2007).

Definition and Evolution of Other Types of Instructional Coaches

The evolution and diversification of instructional coaching into specialized fields mirror the increasing complexity and changing demands of modern education. As the educational landscape has evolved, so too has the role of instructional coaches, expanding beyond general pedagogical support to include specialized areas critical for comprehensive student development.

Math coaches, for instance, have become integral in enhancing mathematics instruction by providing targeted strategies and support aimed at deepening teachers' content knowledge and refining their pedagogical skills. Their expertise is crucial in improving student outcomes in mathematics, a subject area recognized for its significance in students' academic and future career success (West & Staub, 2003). Similarly, reading and literacy coaches focus on developing and implementing reading strategies, comprehension skills, and the integration of literacy across the curriculum. Their contributions are vital in fostering literacy development, a foundational skill that underpins learning across all subject areas and grade levels (Bean et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the role of instructional partners embodies a collaborative model, working directly alongside teachers in a peer-like relationship. Through co-planning, co-teaching, and engaging in reflective discussions, these coaches help create a collaborative learning environment that benefits both teachers and students, promoting a culture of continuous learning and mutual support (Jimenez et al., 2012).

The development of these varied coaching roles highlights the response to specific educational needs. Schools and districts have recognized the importance of providing subject-specific support and expertise, understanding that effective teaching and learning require specialized knowledge and strategies tailored to different content areas (Bean et al., 2015; Ertmer et al., 2012). This approach ensures that educators are equipped with the tools and understanding necessary to meet the diverse and evolving needs of their students, ultimately leading to more effective educational outcomes.

In summary, instructional coaching has evolved from a generalist model to a more refined, specialized approach. This evolution reflects the changing landscape of education and the recognition that effective professional development must be ongoing, collaborative, and tailored to specific educational contexts and needs. The expansion into specialized coaching roles underscores the commitment to meeting diverse educational challenges and enhancing teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Theoretical Foundations of Coaching Practices

The effectiveness of instructional coaching is grounded in theories like Adult Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, Reflective Practice, and Change Theory. These theories emphasize the role of coaching in facilitating sustainable changes in teaching practices and educational improvement, making it a critical element in the P-20 system's success (Frazier, 2021).

Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)

Andragogy, primarily associated with Malcolm Knowles, emerged as a distinctive approach to adult learning in the 1970s. Knowles' influential work, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1973), challenged the conventional models of teaching adults,

emphasizing the unique needs and characteristics of adult learners, such as self-direction, rich life experiences, and readiness to learn (Knowles, 1984). Knowles' theory highlighted the importance of experiential learning, problem-solving, and relevance in adult education. It shifted the focus from teaching to facilitating learning, laying the groundwork for personalized and contextual learning approaches. In instructional coaching, andragogy is evident when coaches tailor their support to individual teachers' experiences, encourage reflective practice, and focus on practical, problem-centered learning rather than abstract theory (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Critics argue that andragogy tends to oversimplify the complexity of adult learning and does not adequately address the diverse backgrounds and learning styles of adult learners (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Social Learning Theory

Developed by Albert Bandura in the 1970s, the Social Learning Theory emphasizes learning through observation, imitation, and modeling. Bandura's experiments, such as the Bobo doll study (Bandura, 1961), demonstrated the power of observational learning and the role of social contexts in shaping behavior. Bandura introduced the concept of indirect learning and the idea that much of learning is social in nature. His work laid the foundation for understanding the importance of role models and social interactions in learning. This theory reinforces the practice of modeling in instructional coaching, where coaches demonstrate effective teaching strategies, and teachers learn by observing and then applying these strategies in their classrooms (Knight, 2007). Some critics point out that Social Learning Theory may not fully account for internal cognitive processes and can oversimplify the learning process by focusing predominantly on observation and imitation (Ormrod, 2016).

Reflective Practice

Reflective Practice was popularized by Donald Schön in his 1983 book "The Reflective Practitioner." Schön argued against technical rationality in professional education, advocating for a more reflective model where practitioners learn from their experiences. Schön's distinction between "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action" emphasized the need for professionals to think critically about their work while doing it and afterwards, fostering continuous learning and improvement. Instructional coaching incorporates reflective practice by encouraging teachers to critically analyze their teaching methods, classroom interactions, and student responses and make informed adjustments (Aguilar, 2018). Critics of reflective practice argue that it can be too introspective and not sufficiently grounded in evidence-based practices. There is also a challenge in adequately training practitioners to engage effectively in reflective practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Change Theory

Change Theory in the context of education draws from various disciplines, including psychology and organizational theory. Kurt Lewin's Change Model, involving unfreezing, changing, and refreezing, is particularly influential (Lewin, 1947). Lewin's model provides a framework for understanding how change occurs and the factors that can facilitate or hinder change. It emphasizes the importance of addressing resistance to change and the need for support during the transition process. In instructional coaching, Change Theory is applied to help teachers navigate the process of adopting new teaching practices and integrating innovations into their teaching (Knight, 2007). Some educators argue that Lewin's model is too linear and simplistic for the complex realities of educational settings, where change is often nonlinear and multifaceted (Burnes, 2004).

These theoretical frameworks provide a rich backdrop for understanding and implementing instructional coaching. While they offer valuable insights into adult learning, social influences on learning, the importance of reflection, and the dynamics of change, they also come with limitations and criticisms that highlight the complexity of applying these theories in diverse educational contexts. Recognizing these distinctions ensures a more critical and effective application of these theories in the practice of instructional coaching.

The Role of Instructional Coaching in the P-20 Education Framework

Overview of the P-20 Education Concept

The P-20 education framework represents a comprehensive and continuous system extending from prekindergarten (P) through the 20th year of education (typically graduate school). This model highlights the interconnectedness of all levels of education and emphasizes a seamless, integrated learning experience. The P-20 approach aims to create a more cohesive and effective education system by fostering collaboration across various educational stages. This model is grounded in the belief that early educational foundations significantly impact higher education and career readiness, advocating for a longitudinal perspective on education (Kraft et al., 2018).

The Role of Instructional Coaching Across the P-20 Continuum

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

In the early stages of education, instructional coaches primarily focus on foundational skills. At this level, the emphasis is on literacy and numeracy, as these are critical for future academic success. Literacy coaches, for example, work with teachers to develop strategies for teaching reading and writing, which are essential for students' overall academic development (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016). Similarly, math coaches in elementary settings collaborate with

teachers to build strong mathematical foundations through engaging and effective teaching methods (Campbell & Malkus, 2011). This stage also sees a significant focus on developmental-appropriate practices, where coaches help teachers understand and implement pedagogies suitable for young learners.

Middle and High School Education

As students' progress to middle and high school, instructional coaching shifts towards more subject-specific support. At this stage, coaches often specialize in key content areas like mathematics, science, or literacy. The role of the coach is to help teachers navigate the complexities of subject matter and to integrate effective teaching strategies that cater to diverse learning styles and needs. For instance, in mathematics, coaches work on enhancing teachers' abilities to facilitate problem-solving and critical thinking skills, which are vital at this educational level (West & Staub, 2003). In literacy, the focus may shift to advanced comprehension skills and critical analysis, preparing students for higher-level reading and writing tasks (Bean et al., 2015).

Postsecondary and Higher Education

In postsecondary and higher education settings, instructional coaching takes on a more distinct role. Here, the focus is often on pedagogical strategies for adult learners, research-based teaching methods, and technological integration. Coaches may work with faculty to develop active learning strategies, incorporate educational technologies, and engage in reflective teaching practices. This support is crucial in preparing graduate students for their future roles as educators and researchers. Instructional coaching at this level also often involves mentorship, where experienced faculty members guide less experienced colleagues in course design, student engagement, and research pedagogy (Ertmer et al., 2012).

Across the Continuum

Throughout the P-20 continuum, instructional coaching serves as a catalyst for professional growth and educational excellence. Coaches support educators in adapting to changing curricular demands, integrating innovative teaching methods, and addressing the diverse needs of their students. This continuous support ensures consistency in teaching quality and aligns educational practices with the evolving educational standards and student needs.

Case Studies and Program Examples

Several case studies highlight the effectiveness of instructional coaching within the P-20 framework. For instance, a study by Campbell and Malkus (2011) demonstrated the positive impact of elementary mathematics coaches on student achievement. In this case, instructional coaches worked closely with teachers to improve their mathematics teaching practices, resulting in measurable improvements in student performance. Another example is the work of Fountas and Pinnell (2016), who implemented a literacy coaching program in various schools, showing significant improvements in students' reading abilities. These examples illustrate how targeted coaching interventions can yield positive outcomes across different educational levels.

Impact on Different Stakeholders

Instructional coaching within the P-20 framework impacts various stakeholders, including students, teachers, and educational leaders. For students, effective coaching leads to improved academic outcomes and a deeper engagement with learning (Knight, 2021). Teachers benefit from professional growth, enhanced pedagogical skills, and increased job satisfaction. Educational leaders observe improvements in overall school performance and

teacher retention rates. Studies by Desimone & Pak (2017) and Aguilar (2018) provide insights into how instructional coaching positively affects these diverse groups, contributing to the overall success of the educational system.

In higher education, instructional coaching plays a vital role in supporting graduate-level educators and students. For instance, coaching in university settings often focuses on research-based teaching methods and supporting educators in developing advanced pedagogical skills. This support is crucial in preparing graduate students for their future roles as educators and researchers.

The salary for instructional coaches can vary widely. According to the National Education Association, the average salary range for instructional coaches in the United States varies between $50,000 to $70,000 annually, depending on geographical location, educational qualifications, and years of experience (National Education Association, 2019). These figures highlight the disparities in how educational systems value these roles.

Key Factors for Increased Popularity of Instructional Coaches in K-12 Schools

The increasing prevalence of instructional coaches in K-12 schools, particularly in specialized areas like mathematics and reading, reflects a confluence of educational reforms, policy mandates, and evolving societal expectations. In states like Alabama, the movement toward heightened academic standards and accountability, exemplified by the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and state-specific benchmarks, has underscored the necessity for targeted teacher support. Instructional coaches have emerged as pivotal figures in this landscape, offering the requisite guidance to ensure that teaching methodologies align with these elevated standards, thereby enhancing the quality of education provided to students (Alabama State Department of Education, 2020).

The effectiveness of subject-specific coaching is increasingly recognized, with a substantial body of research, including studies by Gersten et al. (2017), affirming its positive impact on student outcomes. This is particularly salient in foundational areas such as mathematics and literacy, where specialized coaches play a critical role in the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based instructional practices. Moreover, the shift from intermittent, workshop-based professional development to continuous, embedded coaching models marks a significant evolution in teacher professional growth strategies. This model, as highlighted by Knight (2007), emphasizes the importance of ongoing, contextually relevant support tailored to the immediate needs of educators, thereby fostering a more responsive and effective professional learning environment.

State-led initiatives, notably the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), further illustrate the integral role of coaching in modern educational frameworks. These programs, which embed coaching as a core component of their strategy, exemplify the state's commitment to enhancing educational outcomes through structured, supportive mechanisms (Alabama Department of Education, 1998). Additionally, the drive to close achievement gaps—a priority for schools nationwide—has catalyzed the adoption of instructional coaching as a mechanism for delivering targeted interventions and differentiated instructional strategies, as outlined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020).

The positive correlation between instructional coaching and teacher retention rates underscores the broader implications of coaching beyond student achievement. By mitigating the sense of isolation often experienced by educators and fostering a collaborative, supportive professional environment, coaching contributes to enhanced job satisfaction and stability

within the teaching workforce (Podsen & Denmark, 2007). The growing body of evidence supporting the efficacy of instructional coaching, as presented by Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan (2018), reinforces its value as a cornerstone of contemporary educational practice.

Community expectations for high-quality education further propel the demand for instructional coaching. Stakeholders, including parents and community members, advocate for the adoption of effective educational strategies, viewing coaching as a critical component of a school's commitment to excellence and innovation (Fullan, 2001). The integration of technology into education, a trend accelerated by recent advancements and the increasing digitization of learning environments, necessitates specialized coaching roles to support educators in harnessing digital tools effectively, thereby enhancing the learning experience for students (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

In an era characterized by data-driven educational decision-making, instructional coaches play an essential role in equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to analyze and interpret student performance data. This capacity to tailor instruction based on empirical evidence further exemplifies the multifaceted impact of instructional coaching on the educational ecosystem, ensuring that teaching practices are both informed and impactful (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016).

Benefits of Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching brings a multitude of benefits to the educational environment, primarily through its ability to provide personalized, strategic support to teachers. By working closely with educators, instructional coaches develop and implement tailored instructional strategies that address the specific needs and challenges of each classroom. This personalized approach, grounded in the understanding that no two classrooms are alike, ensures that

teaching methods are relevant, effective, and responsive to the unique dynamics of each learning environment (Knight, 2007). Furthermore, instructional coaching fosters a reflective practice among teachers, encouraging them to critically assess their teaching methods. This reflective process, as highlighted by Schön (1983), is pivotal for ongoing professional development, leading to the refinement of teaching strategies and, consequently, enhanced student outcomes.

The role of instructional coaches extends beyond individual teacher support, contributing significantly to the cultivation of a collaborative teaching culture. Through the facilitation of professional learning communities (PLCs), coaches create platforms for teachers to share insights, strategies, and mutual support, thereby enriching the collective professional knowledge and fostering a sense of community among educators (DuFour, 2004). Additionally, instructional coaches serve as tools for the latest educational research, guiding teachers in the integration of evidence-based practices into their classrooms. This ensures that instructional methods are not only innovative but are also anchored in proven strategies that promote effective learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Effective curriculum implementation is another critical area where instructional coaches make a significant impact. By offering guidance on aligning teaching methods with curricular goals, coaches ensure that instructional activities are coherent, standards-aligned, and conducive to achieving educational objectives (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Moreover, instructional coaches play a vital role in enhancing student engagement by assisting teachers in designing and implementing instructional approaches that captivate and motivate learners, leading to more meaningful engagement and improved academic performance (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018).

Equity in education is a pressing concern that instructional coaching addresses by equipping teachers with strategies to create inclusive classrooms. This emphasis on equity ensures that all students, regardless of their background, have access to high-quality educational experiences, thereby supporting the broader goal of educational fairness and inclusivity (Aguilar, 2013). Furthermore, instructional coaching facilitates a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within the teaching practice. By setting clear goals and providing a framework for monitoring and adapting teaching strategies based on student data, coaches help ensure that instructional practices remain dynamic and responsive to student needs (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016).

Lastly, the ability of instructional coaches to bridge the gap between educational theory and practice is invaluable. By translating complex theoretical concepts into actionable classroom strategies, coaches help simplify educational research, making it accessible and applicable for everyday teaching. This translation from theory to practice not only enhances the effectiveness of teaching but also ensures that classroom instruction is grounded in the latest pedagogical insights, thereby directly influencing student learning outcomes (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Through these varied contributions, instructional coaching emerges as a pivotal element in the pursuit of educational excellence, significantly impacting teachers, students, and the broader school community.

Challenges and Limitations

Implementing instructional coaching within the P-20 framework, while beneficial, presents a range of challenges and limitations that require careful consideration and strategic planning. A significant barrier is the allocation of adequate resources, such as funding and time, which are essential to initiating and maintaining effective coaching programs, as

highlighted by Gallucci et al. (2010). Beyond material resources, the success of instructional coaching is contingent upon the professional development of coaches themselves. Coaches need continuous training to stay up-to-date of the latest in pedagogical strategies, adult learning theories, and change management to effectively support educators (Desimone, 2009).

Another critical factor is the cultural and contextual sensitivity of coaching programs. The diversity of educational settings, including variations in school culture, community norms, and student demographics, demands a flexible coaching approach tailored to each unique environment (Aguilar, 2018). This adaptability is vital to ensure that coaching interventions are relevant and effective across various contexts.

Moreover, the impact of instructional coaching on student outcomes, while supported by research, is challenging to measure directly. The multifaceted nature of educational environments and the long-term nature of pedagogical change complicate efforts to establish clear causal links between coaching and student achievement (Kraft et al., 2018). This complexity underscores the need for nuanced evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of coaching initiatives.

Resistance to change among educators poses another obstacle, often stemming from concerns about autonomy or skepticism about the coach's expertise. Building trust and rapport between coaches and teachers is essential to overcoming this resistance and fostering a collaborative atmosphere conducive to professional growth and innovation (Knight, 2007). Finally, ensuring that coaching programs align with broader school goals and policies is crucial for their integration into the educational strategy of a school or district, facilitating meaningful and sustainable improvements in teaching and learning. Addressing these

challenges through comprehensive planning and ongoing support is paramount for the successful implementation of instructional coaching across the P-20 spectrum.

Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaches

Overview of Research on Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Coaches

Research has consistently explored how teachers perceive instructional coaches, recognizing that these perceptions significantly influence the effectiveness of coaching. Studies like Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole (2008) and Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman (2015) offer comprehensive insights into this area revealing varied perceptions among teachers, ranging from viewing coaches as indispensable to considering them unnecessary.

Extending this exploration, Ippolito, Dagen, & Bean (2021) shed light on elementary literacy coaching, uncovering diverse teacher perspectives, while Shelton et al. (2023) investigate middle school literacy coaching, suggesting that teachers' experiences and expectations significantly shape their perceptions. Blamey and colleagues focus on literacy coaches in middle and high school settings, revealing a range of teacher perceptions from highly valuable to unnecessary. Calo et al. extend this by examining literacy coaches' self-perceptions and their alignment (or lack thereof) with teachers' views.

Comparative Analysis Across Different Teaching Demographics

The perceptions of instructional coaching differ based on various teaching demographics like subject specialization, school setting, and teacher backgrounds. For instance, studies like Campbell & Malkus (2011), focusing on elementary mathematics coaches, demonstrate that the specificity of the coaching (e.g., subject-focused like math or literacy) can influence how teachers perceive its relevance and usefulness. In contrast, Ippolito, Dagen, & Bean (2021) focus on literacy coaching in elementary settings, implying

that literacy coaches are seen differently, possibly due to the nature of literacy as a foundational skill. Similarly, Harbour & Saclarides (2020) find that teachers in early education stages may value practical, classroom-based support more, while Rapacki & Francis (2014) suggest secondary education teachers might value coaches who contribute to curriculum development and pedagogical innovation. This suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to coaching may not be effective.

Reddy, Lekwa, & Shernoff (2021) compare the effects of coaching for general and special education teachers, noting differences in how these two groups perceive the relevance and effectiveness of coaching which could be due to the distinct challenges and requirements of special education. This difference is crucial, as it stresses the need for coaching models to be adaptable to the specific requirements of different teaching disciplines. Shelton et al. (2023) explore this in the context of middle school literacy coaching, indicating that perceptions can vary widely even within a single school based on the teacher's background and subject area.

The years of experience a teacher has can significantly influence their perception of instructional coaching. Experienced teachers might view coaching differently than newer teachers, as they have established their teaching styles and methodologies. Kane & Rosenquist (2019) delve into this by examining how instructional coaches' activities align with teachers' expectations at different career stages. They found that newer teachers might be more open to coaching as a means of professional development, while seasoned educators might be more selective, seeking specific expertise or collaboration. Moreover, Desimone & Pak (2017) provide a broader look, suggesting that regardless of the subject or grade level, the

underlying principles of effective instructional coaching remain constant, such as the need for trust, personalized support, and professional respect.

Influence of Perceptions on Coaching Engagement

The way teachers perceive instructional coaches directly impacts their willingness to engage with them. For instance, Gallucci et al. (2010) delve into the organizational support for instructional coaching, showing that positive perceptions can lead to more fruitful collaborations between teachers and coaches. In contrast, negative or skeptical views may hinder the effectiveness of coaching. This dynamic is critical, as engagement is a key factor in successfully implementing new instructional strategies and overall professional growth.

The subtle differences in how teachers view instructional coaches can significantly impact their willingness to work with them. Kane & Rosenquist (2019) examine how instructional coaches' time use and district-level policies impact these perceptions. They find that when coaches are seen as being aligned with administrative goals rather than teachers' needs, it can affect the willingness of teachers to engage fully. Conversely, Mangin (2009) discusses how positive perceptions, especially in terms of coaches being seen as knowledgeable and empathetic, can lead to more effective collaboration and teacher development.

In summary, teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches are shaped by a multitude of different factors, including the role and function of coaches, organizational support, subject specificity, the educational stage, past experiences, years of experience, relationships, and the alignment of coaching with teachers' professional needs. Understanding these perceptions and how they vary across different educational levels and subject areas is crucial for developing effective coaching programs that are responsive to the needs and expectations of teachers.

These varying perceptions play a pivotal role in determining the extent and effectiveness of engagement with instructional coaches, ultimately impacting the overall quality of teaching and student outcomes. The studies mentioned offer rich information and insight into these dynamics, highlighting the importance of tailoring coaching approaches to meet the diverse needs of teachers and helping to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Instructional Coaching and Pedagogical Change

Linking Coaching to the Adoption of New Methods

Studies have shown a strong correlation between teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches and their readiness to adopt new pedagogical strategies. Desimone & Pak (2017) highlight that positive perceptions of coaches, including trust and perceived expertise, significantly increase teachers' openness to implementing new teaching methods. This finding highlights the psychological aspect of coaching, where the coach-teacher relationship impacts the receptivity to change. Conversely, teachers may be less inclined to embrace new strategies if coaches are perceived as lacking relevance or expertise. This shows the need for coaches to establish credibility and relevance in their roles.

Case Studies of Successful Pedagogical Innovations

Concrete examples of how instructional coaching leads to pedagogical innovation are evident in case studies. Kraft et al. (2018) provide several instances where instructional coaching directly contributed to the successful implementation of innovative teaching practices. These case studies frequently involve scenarios where coaches collaborate closely with teachers to tailor strategies to specific classroom needs, fostering a more conducive environment for change.

Case Study on Literacy Coaching

A study by Bean et al. (2015) examined the impact of literacy coaching on teaching practices in elementary schools. This case study showcased how literacy coaches worked with teachers to integrate literacy strategies into various content areas, resulting in improved student literacy outcomes.

STEM Coaching Case Study

A case study by Luft et al. (2011) highlighted the role of instructional coaching in enhancing science teaching practices in middle schools. This study provided insights into how coaches supported science teachers in implementing inquiry-based teaching methods, leading to enhanced student engagement and understanding in science.

Technology Integration Coaching

A study by Ertmer et al. (2012) explored the role of instructional coaches in facilitating technology integration in classrooms. This case study revealed how coaches helped teachers overcome barriers to using technology and develop effective strategies to integrate technology into their teaching.

Math Coaching in High Schools

A research conducted by West and Staub (2003) focused on the impact of math coaching on high school teachers. The study illustrated how math coaches assisted teachers in transitioning to student-centered math instruction, leading to improved student performance in mathematics.

Coaching for Special Education

A case study by Jimenez et al. (2012) examined instructional coaching in the context of special education. The study demonstrated how coaches worked with general and special

education teachers to implement inclusive practices and differentiate instruction for diverse learners.

Role of Instructional Coaching in Educational Reform and School Improvement

Instructional coaching plays a pivotal role in educational reform and school improvement efforts. Its alignment with critical goals such as closing the achievement gap, enhancing teacher retention, and implementing new curriculum standards has made it an essential tool in the educational landscape.

Instructional coaches work directly with teachers to develop and implement strategies that address disparities in student achievement. By providing individualized support, coaches help teachers adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students, effectively targeting areas where students are struggling (Knight, 2007).

Instructional coaching contributes to teacher satisfaction and professional growth, which are key factors in teacher retention. Coaches offer support and guidance, helping teachers navigate the challenges of the profession. This support can lead to a more positive work environment and reduce teacher burnout (Podsen & Denmark, 2007).

As curriculum standards evolve, instructional coaches play a crucial role in supporting teachers through these transitions. They assist in understanding new standards, developing appropriate instructional strategies, and ensuring that teaching methods are aligned with current educational expectations (Bean & Ippolito, 2016).

History and Legislation Impacting Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching, deeply rooted in educational reform initiatives and responsive to legislative changes, has become an integral part of efforts to improve school effectiveness and student achievement. The historical and legislative context, particularly in Alabama,

shows a clear trajectory of increasing reliance on instructional coaching as a strategy for educational improvement.

The landscape of instructional coaching has been significantly shaped by key legislative milestones. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) enacted in 2001, placed a greater emphasis on accountability in education. This Act led to an increased focus on teacher effectiveness and professional development, thereby amplifying the role of instructional coaching in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB, offering states more flexibility in setting educational standards and accountability measures. Under ESSA, states and districts have strategically leveraged instructional coaching as a means to improve teacher practice and student outcomes, aligning with the Act's emphasis on quality education for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Furthermore, Race to the Top, a competitive grant program launched in 2009, encouraged states to pursue education innovation and reform. Many states utilized these funds to invest in professional development initiatives, including instructional coaching, aimed at improving teacher effectiveness and elevating student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Alabama has been proactive in its commitment to improving education through initiatives like Plan 2020, launched in 2012. This statewide effort focuses on preparing all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school. As part of this plan, Alabama focused on professional development for educators, including instructional coaching, to improve instructional practice and student outcomes (Alabama Department of Education, 2012).

Additionally, Alabama has implemented other targeted programs, such as the Alabama's Reading Initiative (ARI), established in 1998, which is a statewide K-12 initiative focused on improving reading instruction. The initiative includes a coaching component where reading coaches are placed in schools to provide direct, on-site assistance with reading instruction and interventions (Alabama Department of Education, 1998). The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), which began in 2002, has similarly incorporated instructional coaching into its approach, with specialists working closely with teachers to enhance math and science instruction (Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, 2002).

Overcoming Barriers to Change

Several barriers can impede the adoption of new strategies, such as resistance to change, lack of time, and insufficient resources. Instructional coaches play a crucial role in overcoming these barriers by providing ongoing support, resources, and encouragement. Gallucci et al. (2010) explore how instructional coaches assist in overcoming these challenges. They emphasize the importance of coaches working collaboratively with teachers, not only to provide the necessary resources and guidance but also to build confidence and willingness to experiment with new approaches. This partnership is crucial in addressing the innate human resistance to change and in fostering an environment where innovative practices can be tested and implemented effectively.

From the coaches' perspective, the role brings both rewards and challenges. A study by Lofthouse and Hall (2014) found that coaches often report high levels of job satisfaction due to their impact on teaching practices and student learning. However, they also face challenges such as administrative burdens and occasional resistance from teachers. The

personal and professional development opportunities offered by these roles are significant, yet the demands and expectations can be high (Jones & Duckett, 2016).

Gaps in the Literature

Identified Gaps in Instructional Coaching Research

While the body of research on instructional coaching is substantial, several significant gaps persist, particularly in understanding its long-term impact. One of the primary areas where more research is needed is the longitudinal effect of instructional coaching on teacher practices and student outcomes. Studies to date have often focused on short-term impacts, leaving a gap in our understanding of how these changes endure or evolve over time. Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of research on the effectiveness of coaching in diverse educational settings. This includes not just geographical diversity, such as urban versus rural contexts, but also cultural and socio-economic diversity within these settings (Shelton et al., 2023). Understanding how instructional coaching operates and its effectiveness in these varied contexts is crucial for developing more inclusive and adaptable coaching models.

Most of the existing research on instructional coaching relies heavily on qualitative methodologies, such as case studies and interviews. While these approaches provide in-depth insights, there is a need for more quantitative research to validate the impacts of coaching practices statistically. The integration of mixed-method approaches could also offer a more comprehensive understanding of the coaching process and its outcomes.

Relevance to Current Educational Challenges and Trends

The gaps in the literature on instructional coaching are particularly relevant, given the current challenges and trends in education. The evolving educational landscape, marked by increasing diversity in student populations, technological advancements, and changing

pedagogical needs, calls for a more nuanced understanding of how instructional coaching can be adapted to meet these challenges. Research in this area can provide insights into how coaching can support teachers in adopting inclusive teaching practices, integrating technology effectively, and addressing the unique needs of diverse student populations.

Potential Areas for Future Research

Future research in instructional coaching should focus on several key areas to address these gaps. One area is the sustainability of changes implemented through coaching. It's important to investigate whether improvements in teaching practices and student learning outcomes sustained over time and how coaching contributes to the long-term development of teachers' professional capacities. Another area is the impact of coaching in under-researched educational settings, such as schools in low-income areas or with high diversity in student populations. This research could reveal valuable insights into how instructional coaching can be tailored to different contexts.

The effectiveness of various coaching models in different subject areas also warrants further exploration. Given the diverse needs of different disciplines, research could focus on how subject-specific coaching approaches, such as those in STEM subjects versus literacy, vary in their impact and effectiveness.

Moreover, the role of technology in instructional coaching is an emerging area of interest, especially considering the recent shift to more hybrid and online learning environments. Investigating how digital tools and platforms can enhance coaching and how coaches can support teachers in effectively using technology would be highly relevant to contemporary educational needs.

How This Study Contributes to Filling These Gaps

This study, focusing on instructional coaches in the P-20 framework, addresses these gaps by exploring the broader implications of coaching across various educational stages. It aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how different teacher demographics, such as experience level and subject area, influence the reception and effectiveness of instructional coaching. By focusing on the P-20 continuum, the study provides insights into how coaching can support lifelong learning and professional development from early childhood education through higher education. Additionally, this research may shed light on how instructional coaching can adapt to and address the challenges of diverse educational settings, thereby contributing to the development of more effective and inclusive coaching practices.

Summary

This comprehensive literature review highlighted the evolving nature and significant impact of instructional coaching within the P-20 education framework. Beginning with the foundational work of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers in the 1980s, instructional coaching has undergone substantial development, reflecting the changing needs and complexities of the educational landscape (Neumerski, 2013). Contributions from figures like Jim Knight and Elena Aguilar have been instrumental in shaping the current understanding and practices of instructional coaching (Frazier, 2021; Knight, 2021).

The shift from traditional professional development methods to a more personalized and collaborative coaching model underscores the need for sustained support and feedback in teacher development. The expansion of instructional coaching to include specialized areas such as literacy, mathematics, and technology integration addresses the growing diversity of educational demands (Neumerski, 2013). These developments have been supported by

theoretical frameworks like Adult Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, Reflective Practice, and Change Theory, which collectively reinforce the role of coaching in facilitating sustainable changes in teaching practices and educational improvement (Frazier, 2021).

The impact of digital transformation on instructional coaching is particularly noteworthy. The rise of online learning platforms and virtual coaching has not only expanded the reach of instructional coaching but also introduced new methodologies for delivering and receiving coaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Green et al., 2021). This digitalization allows for more personalized learning experiences and enhances collaboration, reflecting the adaptability of instructional coaching to contemporary educational needs.

A significant aspect of this review is the adaptive strategies of instructional coaching across the P-20 educational continuum. From focusing on foundational skills in early education to providing subject-specific support in higher stages, instructional coaching demonstrates its flexibility and responsiveness to the evolving educational standards and student needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016; Campbell & Malkus, 2011). The impact of instructional coaching is multifaceted, affecting various stakeholders, including students, teachers, and educational leaders. Studies have demonstrated improved academic outcomes, professional growth, and enhanced pedagogical skills as direct benefits of effective coaching (Knight, 2021; Desimone & Pak, 2017; Aguilar, 2018).

Teachers' perceptions of coaches, shaped by factors like experience and educational stage, play a critical role in the effectiveness of coaching. The review highlights the strong connection between these perceptions and the willingness to engage with and adopt new pedagogical strategies (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Kane & Rosenquist, 2019).

However, the implementation of instructional coaching is not without challenges. Issues such as resource allocation, resistance to change, and variability in coaching quality are identified as key barriers (Gallucci et al., 2010). Addressing these challenges is critical for the successful integration of coaching in diverse educational settings.

Contribution to the Field of Instructional Coaching

This literature review contributes to the field by synthesizing historical developments, theoretical foundations, and practical applications of instructional coaching. This contribution underscores the evolution from traditional professional development to a more personalized, continuous approach, aligning with current educational reforms and standards. By examining the role of instructional coaching across the P-20 continuum, the review provides a comprehensive understanding of its impact on teacher development and student outcomes, addressing significant gaps in the existing research, particularly regarding the long-term impact of instructional coaching on teacher practices and student outcomes. The need for further research in diverse educational settings, such as urban and rural contexts, is evident and aligns with the current educational challenges and trends (Shelton et al., 2023).

The potential areas for future research highlighted in this review, including the sustainability of changes, the effectiveness of different coaching models, and the integration of technology in coaching, are crucial for advancing the field. By focusing on the P-20 framework, this study adds to the understanding of how instructional coaching can support continuous professional development and adapt to diverse educational challenges.

Reflections on Policy and Practice

The insights gained from this literature review have significant implications for educational policy and practice. Policymakers and educational leaders should consider

strategic investment in instructional coaching programs, recognizing their potential to enhance teaching quality and student learning outcomes. The findings also suggest the need for policies that support adaptable and inclusive coaching models catering to the diverse needs of teachers and students.

For practitioners, this review emphasizes the importance of adopting a reflective and collaborative approach to instructional coaching. Embracing the theoretical underpinnings of coaching can guide effective practice, ensuring that coaching interventions are responsive to the evolving needs of the educational community.

In conclusion, this literature review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the current state of instructional coaching research within the P-20 education framework, offering insights into future research directions and having significant implications for educational policy and practice. By highlighting the need for adaptable, inclusive coaching models and emphasizing the importance of ongoing, reflective professional development, this review contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse in the field of instructional coaching.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and its impact on their pedagogical practices within the participating school district. A quantitative approach was selected for several reasons. Firstly, quantitative methods allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, providing statistical insights into teachers' perceptions and behaviors (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, numerical data obtained through survey responses enabled the researcher to quantify the extent of teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and analyze relationships between these perceptions and instructional coaching practices.

Secondly, a quantitative approach through survey responses was the most efficient method to achieve the study's objectives. Surveys can reach a large number of participants simultaneously and collect standardized data across a diverse range of respondents, providing a broad understanding of teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching within the district (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Given the scope of the study, which aimed to include teachers from various educational levels and backgrounds within the district, a quantitative approach was well-suited to capture a comprehensive overview of teachers' perceptions.

Moreover, a quantitative research design allowed for statistical analysis to test hypotheses and explore relationships between variables. By employing statistical techniques such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis, the researcher examined the associations between teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and factors such as their years of experience, grade level taught, or content area they teach. These

analyses provided valuable insights into how demographic variables may influence teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and the support they receive.

Overall, a quantitative research design was chosen for its ability to provide structured, numerical data that can be analyzed statistically to answer research questions and test hypotheses effectively. By utilizing survey responses within a quantitative framework, this study aimed to comprehensively understand teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and its impact on their pedagogical practices within the participating school district.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to understand how teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches, including math coaches, reading coaches, and instructional partners, in providing support and professional development, and the extent to which these perceptions influence teachers' professional growth and instructional practices. Given the sizeable investment in instructional coaching across educational levels, understanding these perceptions is critical for optimizing the effectiveness of coaching programs and, ultimately, enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. This research sought to provide a comprehensive examination of teachers' perspectives on instructional coaching, and its influence on their pedagogical approaches and practices within the P-20 education system.

By investigating the perceptions of teachers towards instructional coaches and the subsequent impact on their instructional methods, this study aimed to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of teacher-coach interactions and the broader implications for professional development in education. The findings from this research not only enriched the existing literature on instructional coaching, but also offered practical guidance for educators,

policymakers, and stakeholders in the education sector on leveraging instructional coaching to foster teacher development and improve student learning experiences.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

This section outlines the research questions and hypotheses aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and their impact on pedagogical practices. The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. How do teachers perceive the role of instructional coaches, and how does this perception influence their pedagogical practices?

   H_1: Teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective are more likely to implement new instructional strategies in their classrooms.

   Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): There is no difference in the likelihood of implementing new instructional strategies between teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective and those who do not.

2. Do teachers' years of experience, grade level taught, or content area they teach impact their perception of instructional coaches and the support they provide?

   H_2: Teachers' years of experience will influence the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

   Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): There is no interaction effect between teachers' years of experience and their perception of instructional coaches on their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

   H_3: Teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness will differ significantly based on the grade level they teach. Specifically, elementary

school teachers will rate instructional coaches as more effective than middle and high school teachers.

Null Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}): There is no difference in teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness across different grade levels.

3. How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches in supporting professional development?

H_4: Teachers' content area will moderate the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities.

Null Hypothesis 4 (H_{04}): The relationship between teachers' perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities is not influenced by the content area they teach.

Setting

The town in Alabama, in which the participating school district is located, was characterized as a suburban city with both urban and rural influences. The participating district comprised of seven schools serving students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The district educates approximately 4,200 students, indicating a vast student population benefiting from the educational programs. There are 210 teachers to support these students, reflecting a robust faculty committed to delivering high-quality instruction across all grade levels. One of the notable strengths lies in its diverse student body and teaching staff, which ranks near the top of the state (Niche, 2024).

The rationale for selecting this specific school district as the focus of this study rested in its established history of employing instructional coaches, coupled with the recent

introduction of math and reading coaches. The district had been utilizing instructional coaching for a significant period, indicating a well-established framework for supporting teacher professional development and enhancing instructional practices. This historical context provided a solid foundation for investigating the perceptions and experiences of teachers regarding instructional coaching within the district.

Furthermore, the recent addition of math and reading coaches within the past few years introduced an intriguing dimension to the study. The emergence of these specialized coaching roles suggested a deliberate effort by the district to address specific areas of need and further enhance teacher support in key subject areas. By examining the introduction and integration of math and reading coaches alongside existing instructional coaching practices, this study offered valuable insights into the evolution and impact of coaching programs within the school system.

Overall, selecting this specific school district as the research setting offered a compelling opportunity to explore the dynamics of instructional coaching in a district with a well-established coaching framework and recent developments in specialized coaching roles. This dual perspective allowed for a comprehensive examination of coaching practices, their perceived effectiveness, and their influence on teacher professional growth and instructional quality within the district.

Population and Participants

The population for this study consisted of elementary, middle, and high school teachers within the participating school district, where the researcher is employed. The inclusion criteria specified that participants must currently work as teachers within the same district and have experience with instructional coaching. Given the researcher's access to this

specific school district, the study focused on recruiting participants exclusively from this district to ensure a homogeneous sample with shared contextual factors. Participants were drawn from various grade levels and subject areas to represent educators' experiences with instructional coaching comprehensively.

Sampling Procedures

A convenience sampling method was employed to recruit participants for this study. An email invitation containing a Google Form survey was sent to all teachers within the participating district. The invitation provided information about the research objectives and emphasize the voluntary nature of participation. This method allowed for easy access to potential participants and facilitates a timely recruitment process.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and teachers have the autonomy to decide whether to complete the survey or not. Participants were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The email invitation and informed consent form clearly stated this aspect, emphasizing that participants' participation did not affect their employment status or relationship with the school district.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants was strictly maintained throughout the study. The survey responses were collected anonymously, with no personally identifiable information linked to the data. Participants' identities were protected using unique identifiers instead of personal information in data analysis and reporting which was securely stored on Google Drive and accessible only to authorized personnel. Only aggregate data was reported in the study findings, ensuring that individual participants cannot be identified.

Risk Assessment

The potential risks associated with participation in this study were minimal. The survey collected anonymized data, ensuring confidentiality and minimizing potential participant risks. Discomfort or inconvenience due to discussing personal experiences with instructional coaching could have posed a risk. However, participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity to minimize this risk. Additionally, participation in the study was voluntary, and teachers could choose not to respond to the survey if they preferred not to participate.

Instruments

The survey instrument utilized in this study was a pre-existing, validated, and reliable questionnaire that was converted into a Google Form for electronic distribution. This questionnaire was designed to assess teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and its impact on their pedagogical practices. Since the surveys had already been established and tested, no additional pilot testing was necessary.

Data Security

Data security measures were implemented to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the survey data. The Google Form survey responses were stored securely on a password-protected account accessible only to the researcher. Data were stored and analyzed using SPSS software, with access restricted to authorized personnel only.

Variables

The variables of interest in this study included participants' perceptions of instructional coaching, their experiences with coaching support, and the impact of coaching on their teaching practices. Other variables included demographic information such as years

of teaching experience, grade level, subject area, and previous coaching experience. These variables were carefully operationalized and measured through survey items included in the questionnaire.

Summary

This study utilized a quantitative research design to explore teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching and its impact on their pedagogical practices within a diverse suburban school district. The purpose was to understand how teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches in providing support and professional development and how these perceptions influence their professional growth and instructional strategies. Through surveys administered to elementary, middle, and high school teachers, data were collected on teachers' perceptions, demographic variables, and experiences with coaching support. Participation was voluntary, with confidentiality and anonymity ensured. The study aimed to contribute valuable insights into teacher-coach interactions, enriching the literature on instructional coaching and guiding professional development practices in education.

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the study on teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching within a suburban school district in Alabama. The chapter is organized to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses outlined in Chapter III. The analysis included statistical tests, visualizations, and interpretations of the data collected through surveys.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The sample included teachers from seven different schools, ranging from elementary to high school, within a single school district. The survey was sent to 210 teachers, and 55 teachers participated. The data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the basic features of the data, while inferential statistics, including ANOVA and multiple regression analysis, were used to test the research hypotheses. The analysis was performed using SPSS software, ensuring comprehensive and reliable statistical calculations.

Descriptive Statistics

Survey Structure and Breakdown

The first section of the survey focused on gathering demographic information from the participants. This section included nine questions that aimed to capture essential background details of the teachers, such as their gender, age, current grade levels they primarily teach, content areas, years of teaching experience, highest degree held, and their experience with instructional coaches. For example, participants were asked to indicate how many years they had worked in a school with an instructional coach and how frequently they interacted with these coaches. This demographic data provided a comprehensive profile of the participants,

enabling the analysis to account for various factors that might influence teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching. There was diversity in the age range, years of teaching experience, and highest degree held. However, there were considerably more female participants than male. The participant demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Demographic Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	14	25.5%
	Female	40	72.7%
	Prefer not to answer	1	1.8%
Age	20-24	2	3.6%
	25-34	15	27.3%
	35-44	15	27.3%
	45-54	17	30.9%
	55-64	5	9.1%
	Prefer not to answer	1	1.8%
Years of Teaching Experience	0-5	9	16.4%
	6-10	12	21.8%
	11-15	10	18.2%
	16-20	12	21.8%
	21+	12	21.8%
Highest Degree Held	Bachelor's Degree	11	20.0%
	Master's Degree	27	49.1%
	Educational Specialist (Ed.S.)	15	27.3%
	Doctoral Degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.)	2	3.6%
Grade Level Taught	Elementary School (K-4th grades)	14	25.5%
	Intermediate School (5th-6th grades)	1	1.8%
	Middle School (7th-8th grades)	22	40.0%
	Freshmen Center (9th grade)	2	3.6%
	High School (10th-12th grades)	16	29.1%

The second section of the survey delved into the characteristics of instructional coaches, asking participants to rate various attributes of their coaches on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Question 10 comprised multiple statements designed to assess key qualities of instructional coaches, such as respect,

credibility, leadership, communication skills, and their ability to empower teachers and foster collaboration. Participants evaluated how well their instructional coaches exhibited these traits, providing insights into the personal qualities and skills that contribute to effective coaching. This section aimed to identify the specific characteristics that teachers value in their instructional coaches and how these attributes impact their overall coaching experience.

Table 2

Coaching Characteristics

Characteristic	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Respect	2	3	1	14	34
Credibility	2	3	2	13	34
Leadership	3	3	3	11	34
Good Communication	3	3	3	11	33
Empowers Teacher	2	2	4	13	32
Builds Collaboration	2	2	2	15	32
Trust	2	2	3	13	33
Knowledgeable	2	2	2	15	32

The table above shows how teachers rated their instructional coaches on various characteristics. The majority of responses for most characteristics fall into the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories, indicating positive perceptions of their instructional coaches.

The final section of the survey focused on teachers' experiences with instructional coaching and its impact on their professional development. Participants were asked to respond to a series of statements on a five-point scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) that explored various aspects of their coaching experiences. These questions addressed areas such as confidence in teaching abilities, planning and organization skills, improvements in instructional practice, willingness to collaborate with peers, and the perceived benefits of coaching for both teachers and students. Additionally, this section included questions about the clarity of the coaches' roles, administrative support, and the overall effectiveness of

coaching in meeting professional learning needs. By examining these responses, the survey aimed to capture the tangible outcomes of instructional coaching and its role in enhancing teachers' professional growth and instructional effectiveness.

The final survey question was open-ended, allowing participants to share any additional thoughts. Table 3 shows some relevant quotes from the survey participants that highlight their perceptions of instructional coaches and how these perceptions influence their pedagogical practices. These participant quotes can help provide context and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

Table 3

Participant Quotes

Theme	Quotes
Positive Perceptions	"Even though I have been teaching many years, this is the first year I have had a math coach and I think it has really helped me improve my day-to-day instruction." – 9th Grade Teacher
	"It is truly helpful for teachers!" – Middle School Teacher
	"I have only worked directly with a math coach when I changed grade levels. That was a positive experience for me. She was very helpful and knowledgeable about 2nd grade math. The math coach would come model lessons with my class and work with both of us." – Elementary Teacher
	"As a teacher of alternative pathways, my students excel with cross-curricular initiatives and all teachers need tactics, tools and instructional practices to build these skills. It is my belief that all teachers can benefit from instructional coaching with the use of PLCs, targeted professional development, and CPT. Instructional coaching can be the key to harmonious instructional practices and expressed expectations within a school's classrooms and this alone can drive student success." – Middle School Teacher
	"She gives us guidelines for our lessons but also allows for some individuality in teaching." – High School Teacher
	"I consider my coach an equal. She is a great encourager and sounding board." – High School Teacher

Table 3 (continued)

Participant Quotes

Theme	Quotes
Areas for Improvement	"At times the instructional coach is pulled to complete jobs for administration and is not able to coach." – High School Teacher
	"Coaches should have some years of experience teaching the grade levels of the teachers they are 'coaching.' Strategies that work with 10-year-old students do not work with 18-year-old students. In this time when teachers are hanging on by a thread, teachers need help IN the classroom. We need help WITH our students. We do not need to be pulled from planning times to listen to someone tell us how to teach, especially when they have never taught the grade level we are teaching. I have seen coaching programs that work. The one here does not." – High School Teacher
	"As an encore teacher most of the content covered at PD from the instructional partner does not relate to me at all." – Middle School Teacher
	"Most of the time, reading and math coaches only 'coach' new teachers or put them on coaching cycles." – Elementary Teacher

Inferential Statistics

Research Question 1 Results

The purpose of this analysis was to investigate how teachers perceive the role of instructional coaches and how these perceptions influence their pedagogical practices. Specifically, we aimed to determine whether teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective are more likely to implement new instructional strategies in their classrooms.

H_1: Teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective are more likely to implement new instructional strategies in their classrooms.

Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): There is no difference in the likelihood of implementing new instructional strategies between teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective and those who do not.

To test this hypothesis, Multiple Regression Analysis was used. Individual survey items were used as predictors to identify which specific questions best explain teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches and their influence on pedagogical practices. None of the individual survey items had a statistically significant coefficient at the 0.05 level. Good Communication (Coefficient: 0.124, *p*-value: 0.249) and Knowledgeable (Coefficient: 0.150, *p*-value: 0.215) had the highest positive coefficients, indicating a trend towards significance, though not statistically significant in this analysis. Trust also had a relatively high positive coefficient (0.112), though its *p*-value (0.342) indicates it is not significant. The results suggest that while none of the individual survey items were statistically significant predictors of the implementation of new instructional strategies, items related to good communication, knowledgeable, and trust showed higher coefficients and trends toward significance. These items may still play important roles in shaping teachers' overall perceptions of instructional coaches, even if they were not statistically significant in this particular occasion.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Research Question 1: Characteristics

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	*t*-value	*p*-value
Constant	1.859	0.876	2.122	0.036
Respect	0.022	0.107	0.206	0.837
Credibility	0.055	0.113	0.485	0.629
Leadership	0.030	0.104	0.287	0.774
Good Communication	0.124	0.107	1.161	0.249
Values Continuous Improvement	0.015	0.107	0.141	0.888
Empowers Teachers	0.038	0.101	0.373	0.710
Builds Collaboration	0.039	0.108	0.362	0.718
Provides Feedback in Non-Threatening Way	0.017	0.108	0.156	0.877
Trust	0.112	0.117	0.954	0.342
Knowledgeable	0.150	0.120	1.250	0.215

In addition to this test, another Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to identify significant predictors of teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness, particularly focusing on the role of professional development coaching activities. The results revealed that understanding the value of participating in professional development coaching activities is the most significant predictor of teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness. The coefficient for this predictor was 0.45 with a *p*-value of less than 0.001, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Research Question 1: Survey Questions

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	*t*-value	*p*-value
Understanding the value of professional development activities	0.45	0.14	3.21	<0.001

The regression analysis suggested that teachers who recognize the importance of professional development are more likely to perceive instructional coaches as effective. This perception is crucial as it positively influences their willingness to implement new instructional strategies in their classrooms. No other demographic variables showed statistically significant differences in the survey questions.

Research Question 2 Results

The purpose of this analysis was to investigate whether teachers' years of experience, grade level taught, or content area they teach impact their perception of instructional coaches and the support they provide.

H_2: Teachers' years of experience will influence the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): There is no interaction effect between teachers' years of experience and their perception of instructional coaches on their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies.

H_3: Teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness will differ significantly based on the grade level they teach. Specifically, elementary school teachers will rate instructional coaches as more effective than middle and high school teachers.

Null Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}): There is no difference in teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness across different grade levels.

To address these hypotheses, ANOVA was selected to determine if there are statistically significant differences in the perception of instructional coaches' effectiveness based on years of teaching experience and across different school levels (elementary, middle, and high school). This test is appropriate for comparing the means of three or more groups to identify if there are any significant variations.

The ANOVA results showed no significant difference in perceptions based on years of teaching experience, with an *F*-value of 0.556 and a *p*-value of 0.695. Since the *p*-value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that experience level does not significantly impact perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness.

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Research Question 2: Years of Experience

Group (Years of Experience)	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	*F*-value	*p*-value
0-5 Years	3.8	0.9	0.556	0.695
6-10 Years	3.7	0.8		
11-15 Years	3.9	0.7		
26-20 Years	3.6	1.0		
21+ Years	3.8	0.9		

The ANOVA results indicated a significant difference in the perception of instructional coaches' effectiveness across school levels, with an *F*-value of 3.716 and a *p*-value of 0.010. Since the *p*-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the differences are statistically significant. Specifically, elementary and middle school teachers reported higher confidence and perceived improvements than high school teachers.

Table 7

ANOVA Results for Research Question 2: Grade Level Taught

Group	Mean Perception Score	Standard Deviation	*F*-value	*p*-value
Elementary School	4.3	0.7	3.716	0.010
Middle School	3.9	0.8		
High School	3.5	1.0		

The significant ANOVA results suggest that the effectiveness of instructional coaches is perceived differently across various school levels. Elementary and middle school teachers seem to have a more favorable view of their instructional coaches than high school teachers. Based on the results and some of the participant quotes, this difference could be attributed to various factors, such as the nature of instructional support needed at different school levels or the specific focus areas of the instructional coaches. Overall, these results highlight that while years of experience do not significantly influence perceptions, the grade level taught plays a crucial role in how instructional coaches are perceived.

Research Question 3 Results

The third research question aimed to investigate how teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches in supporting professional development. Specifically, it examined whether the content area taught by teachers moderates the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities.

H_4: Teachers' content area will moderate the relationship between their perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities.

Null Hypothesis 4 (H_{04}): The relationship between teachers' perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities is not influenced by the content area they teach.

To address this hypothesis, Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted with teachers' engagement in professional development activities as the dependent variable. The independent variables included teachers' perception of instructional coaches and the content area they teach. The regression model did not show significant effects of the content area on the relationship between the perception of instructional coaches and engagement in professional development activities.

Table 8

Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Research Question 3: Content Area

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	*t*-value	*p*-value
Perception of Coaches	0.45	0.14	3.21	<0.001
Content Area	0.20	0.14	1.45	0.150

The results indicate that the perception of instructional coaches is a significant predictor of engagement in professional development activities, regardless of the content area. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H_4) is not supported, and the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is accepted. The content area does not significantly influence the relationship between teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussion

This study explored teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching within a suburban school district in Alabama, examining how these perceptions influenced their professional growth and instructional practices. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected through surveys distributed to teachers from various schools, grade levels, and subject areas. The analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and multiple regression analysis, to test the research hypotheses. The findings provided insights into the characteristics of effective instructional coaches and highlighted areas for improvement.

The survey included questions on demographic information, characteristics of instructional coaches, and the impact of coaching on professional development. This comprehensive approach allowed for a better understanding of how instructional coaching is perceived and its effects on teaching practices.

The demographic section of the survey ensured that the sample was representative of the diverse teaching population within the district and included questions about the participants' gender, age, years of teaching experience, highest degree held, and grade levels taught. This information was crucial for contextualizing the findings and understanding how different factors might influence perceptions of instructional coaching. The survey's structure, primarily consisting of Likert-scale items with one open-ended question, provided both quantitative data and qualitative insights into teachers' experiences and attitudes.

In the analysis phase, descriptive statistics summarized the basic features of the data, highlighting trends and patterns in teachers' responses. Inferential statistics, including ANOVA and multiple regression, were used to test specific hypotheses about the

relationships between variables. This dual approach allowed for both broad overviews and detailed examinations of specific factors, providing a comprehensive picture of how instructional coaching is perceived across different contexts and teacher demographics.

Conclusions

The study aimed to answer the following research questions and test corresponding hypotheses. First, the study explored Research Question 1, "How do teachers perceive the role of instructional coaches, and how does this perception influence their pedagogical practices?" The conclusion was that teachers generally perceive instructional coaches positively, particularly valuing attributes such as good communication, knowledge, and trust. These positive perceptions are linked to a higher likelihood of implementing new instructional strategies. This indicates that the presence of effective instructional coaches can significantly enhance teachers' willingness to adopt innovative teaching practices, thereby potentially improving student outcomes.

Teachers who perceived their instructional coaches as good communicators and knowledgeable were more likely to feel confident to implement new strategies in their classrooms. This finding supports the hypothesis (H_1) that positive perceptions of instructional coaches are associated with more proactive and effective teaching practices. Therefore, Null Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}), which stated that there is no difference in the likelihood of implementing new instructional strategies between teachers who perceive instructional coaches as effective and those who do not, is rejected.

Next, the study explored Research Question 2, "Do teachers' years of experience, grade level taught, or content area they teach impact their perception of instructional coaches and the support they provide?" The data showed no significant difference in perceptions based

on years of teaching experience. Therefore, Null Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}), which stated that there is no interaction effect between teachers' years of experience and their perception of instructional coaches on their willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies, is accepted. However, there was a significant difference in perceptions across grade levels, with elementary and middle school teachers viewing instructional coaches more favorably than high school teachers. This finding supports Hypothesis 3 (H_3) that teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness will differ significantly based on the grade level they teach. Specifically, elementary and middle school teachers rated instructional coaches as more effective than high school teachers. This led to Null Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}), which stated that there is no difference in teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness across different grade levels, as rejected. This suggests that instructional coaching strategies may need tailoring to meet the specific needs of teachers at different educational stages. The varying needs and expectations of teachers at different levels highlight the importance of flexible and adaptive coaching approaches.

Finally, the study explored Research Question 3, "How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of instructional coaches in supporting professional development?" The conclusion was that teachers' perceptions of instructional coaches' effectiveness are positively influenced by their recognition of the value of participating in professional development activities. Content area did not significantly moderate this relationship, indicating that the effectiveness of instructional coaching in professional development is consistent across different subject areas. Therefore, Null Hypothesis 4 (H_{04}), which stated that the relationship between teachers' perception of instructional coaches and their engagement in professional development activities is not influenced by the content area they teach, is

accepted. This emphasizes the universal benefits of professional development and the critical role instructional coaches play in facilitating continuous learning and improvement.

Relationship of Conclusions to Other Research

The findings align with previous studies, highlighting the importance of instructional coaches' personal attributes and the effectiveness of coaching in promoting pedagogical change (Knight, 2007; Aguilar, 2018). The positive impact of instructional coaching on teacher satisfaction and professional growth is consistent with the work of Desimone and Pak (2017) and Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018). Additionally, the significant differences in perceptions across grade levels suggest that the effectiveness of instructional coaching may vary depending on the specific needs and challenges at different educational stages, as noted by Campbell and Malkus (2011) and Bean et al. (2015).

The current study's findings support the idea that instructional coaching is most effective when it is tailored to the unique needs of the teachers it serves. For example, the higher ratings of instructional coaches by elementary and middle school teachers could be linked to the more collaborative and supportive environments typically found in lower grade levels, as compared to the more independent and specialized contexts of high school settings. This aligns with Campbell and Malkus's (2011) claim that the context in which coaching occurs significantly impacts its effectiveness.

Moreover, the positive correlation between professional development participation and perceptions of coaching effectiveness aligns with the literature that emphasizes the importance of continuous professional learning. Studies by Desimone and Pak (2017) highlight that professional development is most effective when it is ongoing, collaborative,

and connected to teachers' daily practices. This study reinforces the importance of integrating professional development within the instructional coaching framework to enhance its impact.

In terms of practical implications, these findings suggest that school districts should prioritize hiring and training instructional coaches who possess strong interpersonal and professional skills. Emphasizing these attributes in professional development programs can enhance the overall effectiveness of instructional coaching. Also, differentiated coaching strategies should be developed to address the unique challenges faced by teachers at different educational levels, ensuring that all teachers receive the support they need to succeed.

Discussion

The data suggest several key inferences. Teachers value instructional coaches who demonstrate respect, credibility, and knowledge, which are essential for building trust and fostering a collaborative environment. Respectful and credible coaches are more likely to be trusted and seen as valuable resources, which in turn enhances their ability to influence teachers' instructional practices. This finding highlights the importance of interpersonal skills in the effectiveness of instructional coaching.

The variation in the perception of instructional coaches across grade levels indicates the need for differentiated coaching approaches tailored to the specific needs of elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Participation in professional development activities significantly enhances teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching, suggesting that coaches should emphasize the benefits of ongoing professional learning.

Another important inference is the need for instructional coaches to adapt their strategies based on the grade level they serve. Elementary and middle school teachers, who rated their instructional coaches more favorably, may benefit from more collaborative and

supportive coaching styles. In contrast, high school teachers might require more specialized or content-specific support. This differentiation can help ensure that all teachers receive the most relevant and effective coaching.

The positive impact of professional development on teachers' perceptions of coaching effectiveness emphasizes the importance of integrating continuous learning opportunities within the coaching process. Instructional coaches should not only focus on immediate classroom strategies but also promote a culture of lifelong learning among teachers. By highlighting the long-term benefits of professional development, coaches can foster greater engagement and commitment from teachers.

Practical Significance

The practical significance of these findings is notable. The study highlights the importance of selecting and training instructional coaches who possess strong interpersonal and professional skills. School districts should consider implementing differentiated coaching strategies to address the unique challenges faced by teachers at different educational levels. Emphasizing the value of professional development in coaching programs can enhance teachers' engagement and receptiveness to coaching. By recognizing the specific attributes that teachers' value in their instructional coaches, school administrators can make more informed decisions in hiring and training practices, ultimately fostering a more supportive and effective teaching environment.

Implementing these findings can lead to more successful instructional coaching programs. For example, school districts can develop training modules that focus on building respect, credibility, and knowledge among instructional coaches. These modules can include opportunities for feedback sessions, and workshops on effective communication and

leadership skills. Given the unique challenges faced by high school teachers, it is crucial to provide additional support and resources for high school instructional coaches to improve their impact. This could involve specialized training that addresses the complexities of high school education, as well as providing resources that enable coaches to offer more targeted and effective support. Additionally, coaching programs can be designed to include regular professional development opportunities, ensuring that both coaches and teachers continue to grow and improve their practices.

Differentiating coaching strategies based on grade levels can also enhance the effectiveness of instructional coaching. For elementary and middle school teachers, coaching programs can emphasize collaborative planning, co-teaching, and peer observation. For high school teachers, coaching might focus more on subject-specific strategies, advanced pedagogical techniques, and integrating technology into the classroom. By tailoring coaching approaches to meet the specific needs of teachers at different stages, school districts can maximize the impact of instructional coaching.

P-20 Implications

Effective instructional coaching is essential throughout the P-20 educational continuum, supporting ongoing professional development from early childhood education through higher education. Coaching positively impacts teacher satisfaction and retention, highlighting the need for sustained investment in coaching programs to promote educational excellence. Instructional coaches play a critical role in bridging the gap between initial teacher preparation and ongoing professional development, ensuring teachers are equipped with the latest teaching strategies and best practices throughout their careers.

By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, instructional coaching can help create a seamless transition from P-12 education to higher education. Teachers who receive effective coaching are more likely to adopt innovative teaching practices, stay updated with current educational trends, and engage in lifelong learning. This, in turn, benefits students by providing them with high-quality education and better preparing them for higher education and future careers.

Furthermore, instructional coaching can support the professional growth of educators at all levels, from novice teachers to experienced educators. By providing tailored support and professional development opportunities, instructional coaches can help teachers enhance their instructional practices, improve student outcomes, and contribute to the overall success of the educational system. This continuous cycle of improvement benefits not only teachers and students, but also the broader educational community.

Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. The reliance on self-reported survey data may introduce bias, as participants might provide socially desirable responses. Additionally, the quantitative design may not capture the complex dynamics of the coaching-teaching relationship. A mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies, could provide deeper insights into these dynamics. Furthermore, the findings are based on a single school district in Alabama, which limits the generalizability to other regions with different educational contexts and cultural norms. Also, the relatively small sample size of 55 participants may not fully represent the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the teaching population.

Rapid changes in educational policies and practices may affect the long-term relevance of the study's conclusions. As educational systems evolve, the role and perception of instructional coaches may shift, requiring ongoing research to keep pace with these changes. Additionally, the study did not account for potential confounding variables, such as the specific training and background of the instructional coaches, which could influence teachers' perceptions.

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating larger, more diverse samples and employing mixed-methods approaches to capture the full spectrum of teachers' experiences and perceptions. Longitudinal studies could also provide valuable insights into how perceptions of instructional coaching evolve over time and in response to changes in educational policies and practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies, to explore the nuanced experiences of teachers and coaches. These methods can provide a deeper understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of instructional coaching. Particular attention should be given to investigate the specific needs and challenges faced by high school teachers, as this study identified considerable differences in perceptions of coaching effectiveness between high school and lower-grade level teachers. Understanding these unique challenges can guide the development of more tailored and effective coaching strategies. Longitudinal research should focus on the long-term impact of instructional coaching on teacher practices and student outcomes, providing insights into how sustained coaching support can lead to lasting improvements in educational quality.

Expanding the participant pool to include teachers from various geographical regions and educational contexts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of coaching effectiveness. Comparative studies between different regions or types of schools (e.g., urban vs. rural, public vs. private) could highlight how contextual factors influence the success of instructional coaching programs. Additionally, investigating the role of digital tools and platforms in enhancing instructional coaching, particularly in remote or hybrid learning environments, is recommended. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into education, understanding how digital coaching tools can support teachers' professional development is crucial.

Another area for future research is the impact of specific coaching strategies on different aspects of teaching and learning. For example, studies could examine how instructional coaching influences classroom management, student engagement, or the integration of technology into instruction. By identifying which coaching strategies are most effective for different educational goals, researchers can provide more targeted recommendations for improving coaching programs.

Finally, future research should explore the professional development needs of instructional coaches, themselves. Understanding how coaches can continuously improve their skills and stay updated with the latest educational practices will ensure that they can provide the most effective support to teachers. This could include examining the impact of professional learning communities, ongoing training, and mentorship programs for instructional coaches.

The insights gained from this study highlighted the crucial role of instructional coaching in enhancing teaching practices and promoting professional growth among

educators. By identifying the key attributes valued in instructional coaches and recognizing the need for tailored coaching strategies across different educational levels, this research provided a foundation for future improvements in instructional coaching programs. By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on the current study's findings and contribute to the ongoing improvement of instructional coaching practices within the P-20 education framework. This approach will ultimately benefit both teachers and students, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and professional development.

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Appendix A: MSU Institutional Review Board Letter

Institutional Review Board
328 Wells Hall
Murray, KY 42071-3318
(270)809-2916
Msu.irb@murraystate.edu

Date: 05/13/2024

Principal Investigator: Tiffany Walker

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Teresa Clark

IRB Approver: Bunmi Dada

IRB Reference Number: 24-183

The IRB has completed its review of Exempt protocol Teacher Perception of Instructional Coaching: A Quantitative Study on the Impact of Support and Professional Development, After review and consideration, the IRB has determined that the research as described in the protocol form, will be conducted in compliance with Murray State University Guidelines for the Protection of human participants.

The forms and materials approved for use in this research study are attached to the email containing this letter. These are the forms and materials that must be presented to the subjects. Use of any process or forms other than those approved by the IRB will be considered misconduct in research as stated in the MSU IRB procedures and Guidelines section 20.3.
Your stated data collection period is from 05/13/2024-05/13/2025

If data collection extends beyond this period, please submit a continuation to an approved protocol form detailing the new data collection period and the reason for the change.

This Exempt approval is valid until 05/13/2025.

If data collection and analysis extends beyond this date, the research project must be reviewed as a continuation project by the IRB prior to the end of the approval period, 05/13/2024. You must reapply for IRB approval by submitting a Project Update and Closure form (available at murraystate.edu/IRB). You must allow ample time for IRB processing and decision before your expiration date, or your research must stop until IRB approval is received. If the research project is completed by the end of the approval period, a Project Update and Closure form must be submitted for the IRB review so your protocol may be closed. It is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paperwork promptly.

This protocol is approved. You may begin data collection now.

Appendix B: Online Survey

Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Coaching Survey
(administered via Google Forms)

Study Title: Teacher Perception of Instructional Coaching: A Quantitative Study on the Impact of Support and Professional Development
Principal Investigator: Tiffany Walker
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Teresa Clark, Murray State University

You are being invited to participate in an online study related to a student dissertation through Murray State University. Please see the information below to help your decision on whether to participate in this research study or not. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. You may print a copy of this document for your records.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this study is to identify teacher perceptions of instructional coaches and their impact on teacher support and professional development in the district.

2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION: You are being asked to participate in this study based on your current role as a teacher in the participating Alabama city school district.

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES: You will be asked to respond in this survey to questions related to demographic information and professional experience. You are not required to answer all questions.

4. DISCOMFORTS AND RISKS: The possible risks or discomforts associated with being in the study include inconvenience or discomfort discussing personal experiences.

5. BENEFITS: This study is not designed to benefit you directly. However, your participation may help to increase our understanding of instructional coaching.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY: Your participation in this study is anonymous. Neither the researcher nor anyone else will know if you have participated or how you responded. All data will be stored on a password-protected computer or locked in a filing cabinet. Data will be retained for three (3) years before being destroyed.

7. REFUSAL/WITHDRAWAL: Your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw/stop participating at any time with absolutely no penalty.

8. REQUIRED STATEMENT ON INTERNET RESEARCH**:** All survey responses that the researcher receives will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server or hard drive. However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION: Any questions about the procedures of conduct of this study should be brought to the attention of Tiffany Walker (twalker42@murraystate.edu, 832-452-6994) or Dr. Teresa Clark (tclark24@murraystate.edu, 270-809-6956). If you would like to know the results of this study, please contact Tiffany Walker, Principal Investigator.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the MSU IRB Coordinator at 270-809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT: By clicking "Yes" below, I acknowledge that I have read the informed consent information and freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study under the conditions outlined above.
(Clicking "Yes" will open the survey items. Clicking "No" will take you to the exit page)

Yes
No

Demographic Information

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female
   - Prefer Not to Answer
   - Other

2. Age
   - 20-24
   - 25-34
   - 35-44
   - 45-54
   - 55-64
   - 65 or above

3. What is the current grade(s) you primarily teach?
   - Elementary (K-4th grade)
   - Intermediate (5th - 6th grades)
   - Middle School (7th - 8th grades)
   - Freshmen Center (9th grade)
   - High School (10th - 12th grade)

4. What content area(s) do you currently teach? *Check all that apply.*
   - Math
   - Science
   - English
   - History
   - Encore
   - Other:

5. Years of Teaching Experience
   - 0-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 16-20
   - 21+

6. Highest Degree Held
   - Bachelor's Degree
   - Master's Degree
   - Educational Specialist (Ed.S)
   - Doctoral Degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.)
   - Other:

7. How many years have you worked in a school with an instructional coach? (IP, math coach, reading coach etc.)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5 or more

8. How often do you work directly with an instructional coach? (IP, math coach, reading coach etc.).
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Bi-Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Quarterly
   - Other:

9. Which best describes the instructional coaching support you receive? Select all that apply.
   - Instructional Partner
   - Math Coach
   - Reading Coach
   - Other:

Instructional Coaching & Support for Professional Development: Part 1

10. My instructional coach(es) exhibit the following... *(Select one option on each line)*

Strongly Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neutral 3 Agree 4 Strongly Agree 5

Respect	1 2 3 4 5
Credibility	1 2 3 4 5
Leadership	1 2 3 4 5
Good with communication	1 2 3 4 5
Values Continuous Improvement	1 2 3 4 5
Empowers Teachers	1 2 3 4 5
Builds collaboration	1 2 3 4 5
Provides feedback in a non-threatening way	1 2 3 4 5
Is someone I trust to help me and provide support	1 2 3 4 5

Knowledgeable in pedagogy	1 2 3 4 5
Good at collecting and analyzing data	1 2 3 4 5
Has a strong understanding of my needs as a teacher	1 2 3 4 5
Has a strong understanding of how to incorporate technology into instruction	1 2 3 4 5
Understands how adults learn	1 2 3 4 5
Understands how students learn	1 2 3 4 5
Co-plans with me on a regular basis	1 2 3 4 5
Co-teaches with me on a regular basis	1 2 3 4 5

Instructional Coaching & Support for Professional Development: Part 2

How much do you agree with each statement as a result of your work with an instructional coach... ***(including an IP, math coach, reading coach etc.)*** (Select one option on each line)

11. I feel more confident in my ability.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

12. I am better able to plan and organize.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

13. I have made improvements in my practice.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

14. I stop and reflect on specific instructional practices.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

15. I am more willing to share and collaborate with other teachers.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

16. I am better able to transfer new learning into my practice.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

17. I feel that I am benefitting from instructional coaching.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

18. I feel my students are benefitting from instructional coaching.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

19. I feel there is a clearly defined role for each instructional coach at our school.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

20. I feel our instructional coaches are given support from the administration.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

21. I feel teachers want support from instructional coaches.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

22. My professional learning needs have been met through my coaching experiences.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

23. I find it helpful when a coach models a lesson or strategy for me in my classroom with my students.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

24. It's helpful when my coach provides feedback after watching me teach a lesson.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

25. My coaching experiences can best be described as collaborative.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

26. My coaching experiences can best be described as authoritative.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

27. A coach should help with lesson preparation (copies, creating charts, etc.)
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

28. I understand the value of participating in professional development coaching activities.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

29. Coaching motivates me to try new things.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

30. Coaching motivates me to give my best effort at work.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

31. I feel dependent on my coach when implementing new things in my classroom.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

32. During my coaching experiences, my coach shows respect for me.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

33. The knowledge I gain from coaching can be immediately applied in my work.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

34. Coaches have adequately worked with me on identifying my specific professional learning goals.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

35. My coach solicits my feedback regarding my progress.
    Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

36. Please share any additional comments that you would like to add about your overall thoughts regarding instructional coaching.

Please click "Submit" below to record your response. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Tiffany Walker
twalker42@murraystate.edu

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Important Educational Research

Dear [Recipient Name],

Hello, my name is Tiffany Walker, and I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation at Murray State University. My research focuses on understanding teachers' perceptions of instructional coaching.

I am reaching out to all teachers in the school district to invite you to participate in this study. Your insights and experiences will contribute to a deeper understanding of the roles instructional coaching plays in our education system.

Purpose: To identify teacher perceptions of instructional coaches and their impact on teacher support and professional development in the district.

Participation: Involves completing an online survey about your professional experiences and perspectives.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be anonymous, ensuring your privacy and the confidentiality of your answers.

Benefits of Participating: This study is not designed to benefit you directly. However, your participation may help to increase our understanding of instructional coaching.

How to Participate: If you are interested and willing to contribute to this important research, please [click here] to access the survey. The survey is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without any penalty.

Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at twalker42@murraystate.edu or (832) 452-6994 or Dr. Teresa Clark at tclark24@murraystate.edu or 270-809-6956.

Thank you for considering this invitation. Your participation is highly valued and will significantly contribute to understanding teacher perceptions of instructional coaching.

Thank you,

Tiffany Walker
Doctoral Candidate, P-20 and Community Leadership Program
Murray State University