

Running head: INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

By

AMY HNASKO

A dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School of Education

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Graduate Program in Early Childhood Education

written under the direction of

Dr. Sharon Ryan, Chair

Dr. Carrie Lobman, Committee

Dr. Ellen Wolock, Committee

New Brunswick, New Jersey

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

© 2017 by Amy Hnasko

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

While many preschool programs are including coaching as a mechanism for professional development, there is little information about how coaches define their roles and responsibilities, how they are prepared to do their jobs, and how to best support successful coaching in early childhood settings. The purpose of this mixed methods comparative case study was to more closely examine the work of early childhood coaches in action. The three research questions guiding the study were: (1) how do instructional coaches define their roles, (2) how do coaches approach their work with teachers, and (3) what factors mediate the work of coaches?

Data was gathered from a statewide survey of 64 coaches from throughout the state of NJ, ranging in age and educational background. Two master teachers from 2 different districts were then observed once a month for a period of 5 months. The case study teachers also participated in three structured interviews and kept coaching logs about their activities. The data from the survey, observations, interviews, and coaching logs were initially transcribed and coded separately. Then, further analysis was conducted to identify themes emerging across all data.

Findings from this study suggest organizational factors such as district size, curriculum utilized and competing responsibilities influence the coaches' work. The case study data indicates that the administration's interpretation of the master teacher role has an influence on how coaches approach their work. In addition to these organizational aspects, individual factors such as age, education and experience were also found to mediate the role of the master teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend a most sincere acknowledgement of my gratitude to a number of people who have considerably assisted in this endeavor:

To my wonderful chair, Dr. Sharon Ryan, I thank you for all your time, dedication and thorough editing throughout this entire process. Your comments, suggestions and support will be forever remembered.

I thank my committee, Dr. Lobman and Dr. Wollock for your time and commitment to reading and reviewing my work. Your comments have assisted me greatly.

To my doctoral support group, Dr. Amy Lewis, Kate Northey, Lauren Opeila, and Janice Parker - it has been wonderful to share this process with all of you and I cannot say thank you enough for the support that our group provided me in every way.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Reginald Luke. Your desire to understand my study while you assisted with my quantitative analysis of the survey data is ever so appreciated.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

For my three beautiful children, Jordyn, Hannah and Jacob, I hope I have shown you that you can achieve your dreams if you approach them with dedication, desire and effort. But, more importantly, I want you to know that have helped me to be a better person and I couldn't have done this without your ongoing support and presence in my life. Know that I am here to support all of your dreams for many years to come!

For my loving husband, John, I cannot begin to capture in words what your support and encouragement has meant to me over the past years. You have not only allowed me to pursue my dreams, but actively made me feel like they were *our* dreams and we were in it together. I couldn't ask for a better partner in this life and am ever so very grateful to have you by my side!

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
III. METHODOLOGY.....	32
IV. FINDINGS.....	55
V. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....	129
REFERENCES.....	143
APPENDICES	
A. North School District Permission Letter.....	156
B. South School District Permission Letter.....	157
C. Master Teacher Survey.....	158
D. Master Teacher Interview 1 Protocol.....	163
E. Master Teacher Interview 2 Protocol.....	166
F. Master Teacher Interview 3 Protocol.....	169

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Master teacher degrees/certifications.....	39
Table 2: Description of research questions related to data collection methods.....	49
Table 3: Average ranking of master teacher reported challenges.....	62
Table 4: Individual factors predicting role and responsibility differences between novice and experienced master teachers.....	70
Table 5: Organizational factors predicting reported roles and responsibilities.....	74

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Logic/theory model of coaching.....	37
Figure 2: Roles and responsibilities – working with teachers.....	57
Figure 3: Frequency of communicating and planning with colleagues.....	60
Figure 4: Ranking of professional development choices.....	64
Figure 5: Frequency of accessing various types of professional development.....	66

CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Participation in high quality preschool programs is a key factor contributing to children's learning and development throughout their schooling career (Barnett, Carolan, Squires, & Clarke Brown, 2013). Longitudinal studies of model programs (Barnett, Jung, Youn, & Frede, 2013; Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield, & Nores, 2005) and evaluations of state preschool programs (Peisner-Feinberg, Schaaf, Hildebrandt, Pan, & Warnaar, 2015; Gaylor, Spiker, Fleming, & Korfmacher, 2012) show that participating in a high quality preschool program can lead to improvements in school readiness skills, encompassing social-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes. For example, the APPLES (Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study): Fifth grade follow up (Barnett et al., 2013) not only found positive effects on children's oral language, early literacy and mathematics at the start of kindergarten, but also found evidence that these gains continued for a significant percentage of students through fifth grade, measured by state standardized test scores. This link between early childhood and later achievement, has led many states to begin early childhood initiatives to provide for state funded pre-kindergarten programs.

In 2014, forty states and the District of Columbia provided funding for their state pre-kindergarten programs, serving a total of more than 1.3 million, 3 and 4-year-old children (Barnett, Carolan, Squires, & Clarke Brown, & Horowitz, 2015). Many of these programs utilize a mixed service delivery system, comprised of a combination of both in-district classrooms and provider sites. These provider sites are typically local childcare centers that contract with the district to implement preschool programs within their facilities for eligible district children. While the use of a mixed service delivery system makes sense from a resource standpoint, the

reality is that the quality of programs in childcare and Head Start can be quite variable, as these programs have historically not had to meet the same standards as public schools.

One of the key ways these sites have historically differed is in their teacher credentialing requirements (Whitebook, 2014; Howes, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012). While public school teachers are required to be certified and have a Bachelor's degree, teachers in childcare and Head Start in some states may have as little education as a high school diploma. This variance in teacher professional education is significant as the accrued evidence of decades of studies has shown that the level of teacher education is a key indicator of instructional quality and therefore student learning (Barnett et al., 2015; Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, 2003; Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzales, 2010). Moreover, it is well documented in the teacher education literature (Early, Maxwell, Burchinal, Bender, Ebanks, Henry, ...Zill, 2007; Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, and Howes, 2002; Tout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006) that teachers need to be provided ongoing opportunities to develop their practice. It cannot be assumed that by obtaining a 4-year degree, teachers will automatically have all the necessary information and skills for their profession, as all early childhood teacher preparation programs are not equal (Whitebook, Austin, Ryan, Kipnis, Almaraz, & Sakai, 2012). Given the range of qualifications, and expertise of teachers in the early childhood field, professional development has been viewed by policymakers and administrators as one of the primary strategies for sustaining and supporting high quality early education experiences for all young children (Zigler, Gilliam & Barnett, 2011; NAEYC, 2009; Pianta, 2006; Zaslow, 2006).

Professional Development Approaches in ECE

The term professional development has been defined in many ways, but in general means approaches to improving teacher practice and effectiveness. Traditionally, professional development in education has been delivered as episodic workshops providing teachers with decontextualized training in skills, strategies, or programs (Little, 2006). The main criticism of this workshop model is that it has not been shown to routinely lead to changes in teacher practice (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, & Lavelle, 2010; Showers & Joyce, 1996). Just as recent studies have proposed using constructivist and active learning theories within the classroom to optimize children's learning, teacher learning experiences have been re-defined with the same assumptions that problem solving, socialization, and language are central to *any* learning, thinking, and development (Whitebook & Bellm, 2013). These assumptions focus on the process of adult learning as a developmental series of transformations whereby external information and experiences become internalized.

With this acknowledgement of the adult learning process, a number of new professional development approaches grounded in collaborative reflective inquiry, have gained prominence in the early childhood field. This shift in professional development approaches reflects the need to concentrate more on the adult learner, emphasizing the participants' orientations to what is to be learned, their past experiences, their motivation to learn, as well as the context in which their learning is supposed to be applied (Knowles, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In other words, it is assumed that if teachers are to learn then their professional development must be authentic, embedded in their daily work, and foster collaboration and problem solving among colleagues so that the learning is shared. For example, methods such as mentoring, coaching, and professional learning communities provide context-specific, individualized, ongoing feedback and support for

teachers to try out new ideas, practice new strategies, and have ongoing discussions around their efforts to change practice.

Coaching in Early Childhood Settings

One of the most commonly used collaborative professional development models employed in early childhood settings is that of coaching. Coaching is generally defined as an expert who aims to help others become more knowledgeable and skilled in their own practice (International Coach Federation (ICF), 2014). Coaching provides teachers with individualized support and feedback to help them learn to master new understandings and skills in the context of their own classrooms (Rush & Shelden, 2011). While there is limited research on coaching within the field of early childhood, several studies suggest that coaching can have an impact on teacher's understanding of specific content knowledge (Hindman & Wasik, 2012), and improve their practices (Domitrovich, Gest, Gill, Bierman, Welsh, & Jones, 2008; Zan & Ritter, 2014), which in turn have also been found to lead to positive student outcomes (Wilson, Dykstra, Watson, Boyd, & Crais, 2012). This positive research has catalyzed many early childhood programs to employ coaching as a professional development model.

Coaching in early childhood has typically taken on two forms: content specific coaching and instructional coaching. Although both of these models have been successfully utilized within early childhood settings, the instructional coaching model has more frequently been embedded in various early childhood programs. For example, the federal Head Start program has built coaching into its programs in an effort to supply ongoing professional development support for their staff (Lloyd & Modlin, 2012). Many state-funded early childhood programs have also embedded instructional coaches within their early childhood programs. An example is New

Jersey's state funded preschool programs that have 'master teachers' whose "primary role is to visit classrooms and coach teachers using reflective practice to improve instruction" (NJ State Department of Education). Along with regular classroom visits that involve modeling and planning goals, the master teachers are also responsible for administering and reporting on the results of classroom evaluations (e.g., Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)).

The research on coaching in early childhood is heavily focused on content specific coaching (Lloyd & Millenky, 2011; Neuman & Wright, 2010; Onchwari & Keengwee, 2009), with limited studies conducted on instructional coaching models (Howard, Rankin, Fishman, Hawkinson, McGroder, & Helsel et al, 2013; Ackerman, 2008; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ryan, Hornbeck & Frede, 2004). What this research highlights is that both individual and organizational factors shape successful coaching models. As coaching is a relationship-based professional development strategy, the expertise and training of both the teacher and the coach can either assist or distract from building an effective learning relationship (Domitrovich et al., 2008). Programmatic factors including how the role of the coach is defined, and the dosage, duration, and content of the coaching (Howard et al., 2013) also have been found to mediate how coaches approach their work. As coaching occurs within educational settings, the school organization such as whether a culture of collaboration exists, how the schedule is designed, and the degree of support and connection administration has with staff, have also been shown to directly impact on the ability to develop trusting, collaborative, and productive coaching relationships (Wilson et al, 2012; Ackerman, 2008).

What has not been fully examined in the current research is how instructional coaching is operationalized in early childhood settings. Although it has been acknowledged that coaches "must possess specialized knowledge and skills in evidence-based practices that support adult

learning to effectively ‘individualize’ the coaching component” (Gupta & Daniels, 2012, p. 217), little is also known about the profile of successful coaches and what the role of the coach is on a regular basis. So while many programs are including coaching as a mechanism for professional development, we have little information about how coaches define their roles and responsibilities, how they are prepared to do their jobs, and how to best support successful coaching in early childhood settings.

Research Questions

In my current position as Regional Training Manager for an early childhood curriculum, one of my primary roles is to train and provide support for coaches and teachers in their understanding and implementation of the curriculum. As my support spans a variety of states and locations, I have witnessed various approaches and interpretations of the instructional coaching model, that have translated into both positive and negative coaching experiences for teachers. For example, I have worked with coaches who have a highly structured protocol for their coaching. The protocol prepares them to work with only a few of their teachers in 6-week ‘cycles’ depending on the teacher’s projected needs. This requires in depth coaching for a period of time, but does not allow for flexibility if the other teachers on their caseload are not in the cycle. Often I have seen this lead to coach frustrations, as they feel restricted in how to provide support. There are also various interpretations, even within one state, of the roles and responsibilities of the coach. These differing interpretations influence the amount of time coaches spend working directly with teachers. Moreover, there is also variance in the credentials and expertise of coaches across the states I work in so that some coaches may never have worked in preschool settings.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to more closely examine the roles and responsibilities, support systems, and challenges within an established instructional coaching model to better inform those, like myself, who collaborate with coaches. I first gathered data from a statewide survey of New Jersey's instructional coaches (master teachers) within their state funded pre-kindergarten programs. The purpose of this survey was to learn how the master teachers defined their roles, the responsibilities associated with the job and the challenges faced in the position. In an effort to then more fully examine and describe the daily activities of coaches, I conducted a case study of two veteran master teachers from two districts within the state of New Jersey. Utilizing observations and interview data, along with collection of coaching logs, I described and compared essential components of successful coaching models as well as barriers and challenges that impede the coaches' success.

The research questions informing/guiding my comparative case study were:

1. How do instructional coaches define their roles and responsibilities?
 - a. How do the roles and responsibilities outlined in the job description and the coaches' descriptions differ?
2. How do coaches approach their work with teachers?
 - a. What activities do they engage in as part of their work?
 - b. What strategies do they utilize in their work with teachers?
3. What factors mediate the work of coaches?
 - a. What do the coaches' report as the challenges they face that impede their success?
 - b. What ongoing supports do the coaches report they need?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As the focus of this study was on coaching in early childhood settings, I reviewed three distinct bodies of literature. First, I reviewed what is currently known about coaching in general, highlighting various definitions and providing a brief history of its establishment as a professional development model. I then examined the research base on coaching in elementary education that is primarily focused on literacy and math. Finally, I reviewed the research on what is currently known regarding coaching within early childhood settings. In general, the research on coaching in early childhood education is limited to a handful of studies that are examining specific programs (i.e. Head Start), content area interventions (predominantly literacy or math), or professional development targeted to specific student populations (i.e. special education). The majority of the studies in both elementary and early childhood are small, qualitative studies, with only a few larger impact studies that consider coaching within the implementation of a larger reform initiative.

Definitions of Coaching and a Brief History

In general, coaching is defined as the process of a person with specific expertise or skill helping to identify and develop skills in another (Chu, 2014). Within this general definition, various types of coaching have emerged including: supervisory coaching, peer coaching, content specific coaching and instructional coaching (Kretlow, Cook, & Wood, 2012; Donegan, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 2000). Supervisory and peer coaching refer to either a superior or colleague also taking on the dual role of providing coaching for the teacher. These models vary in whether they have specific or broader goals. For example, sometimes there are very specified objectives designed by an administration such as supporting the implementation of a new program. But there are also supervisory and peer-coaching models that are designed to provide overarching

support for a variety of areas. For example, peer coaching may have the broad goal of sharing ideas, a problem solving team, or conducting classroom research. Content specific coaching refers to coaching around a specific purpose, often a content area such as literacy or math. While instructional coaching takes on a broader focus, with the coach supplying assistance for multiple areas ranging from curriculum to behavior to assessment.

Efforts to infuse coaching into the framework of professional development in K-12 education began as early as the 1980's. Joyce and Showers (1980) studied these early efforts, conducting a meta-analysis of over 200 studies in which researchers investigated the effectiveness of various training methods including, presentation, modeling and demonstration, practice within a classroom, providing feedback, and in-classroom coaching. Findings indicated that teachers were generally better able to demonstrate new skills and strategies "if provided opportunities for any combination of modeling, practice or feedback" (Joyce & Showers, 1980, p. 381). One early study of coaching (Showers, 1982) examined 17 grade school and middle school language arts and social studies teachers who were asked to begin implementing new, complex models of teaching into their repertoires. All of the teachers received training workshops. Nine of the teachers received coaching, while the other eight did not. Observations of the teachers took place over a six-week time period. Findings indicated that teachers who received the coaching not only increased their skill level, but their comfort level with the new behaviors and activities also increased (Showers, 1982). Several important elements of the coaching found to be beneficial including provision of companionship, giving technical feedback, and the analysis of application (Showers, 1982).

These early findings prompted many to examine the structure of professional development opportunities more closely. In 2002, Section 9101 a provision of the No Child Left

Behind (NCLB) Act determined that professional development opportunities must be “high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teachers performance in the classroom; and are not one day or short term workshops or conferences” (Long, 2014, p.36). While coaching had been evident as a professional development model for decades, this new provision brought emphasis to its incorporation into a variety of programs as more funding has increasingly become available to implement this professional development model.

As coaching has become utilized more frequently, it has been noted that the structure of the coaching determines various elements such as the method of delivery and duration of the coaching. In each of the models noted, the structure and particular elements vary. For example, the delivery method of coaching may be used in conjunction with workshops or seminars (Teemant, 2013; National Reading Technical Assistance Center, 2010) or as a stand-alone strategy to support ongoing teacher understanding (Polly, 2012). Both the general length of time that teachers are supported by coaches, as well as the specific length of time each coach is required to spend with the teacher defines the duration of the coaching model. The duration varies within the research, spanning from once a month or bi-weekly visits (Stephens et al., 2011; Amendum, 2014) to more frequent encounters. I now turn to more closely examine the research base on coaching in elementary education.

Research on Coaching in Elementary Education

The research on coaches in the elementary context has primarily focused on content specific coaching, where coaches work with teachers for a period of time to support various curricula reform initiatives. Most of this research focuses on literacy or math coaches (Teemant,

2013; Polly, 2012; Heineke, 2013). This research generally falls into two categories, small and qualitative, focusing on specific programs or initiatives (Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2012; Polly, 2012; Heineke, 2013) and larger studies that have been conducted on national initiatives such as Reading First (Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, & Unlu, 2008; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007). What emerges from this research base is identification of both organizational and individual factors that contribute to successful coaching. Most of the research proposes that coaching has been a beneficial addition to the professional development of teachers (Gamse et al., 2008; Polly, 2012; Scott, Cortina & Carlisle, 2012).

Large scale studies. The larger studies typically examine coaching as one element of an overall professional development initiative and in doing so offer some insight into how the coaching is structured. For example, funded through NCLB, Reading First is a federal project with a focus on elevating teachers' literacy practices and student reading achievement in grades K-3. Reading First provides grants for states to implement proven methods of early reading instruction (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/index.html>). One part of this initiative involves employing literacy coaches to work in schools with teachers to improve their literacy beliefs and practices.

A large impact study of the Reading First program utilized a regression discontinuity design to study a total sample of 125 Reading First schools (Gamse et al., 2008). Over a three-year period, data was collected from multiple sources including student assessments, classroom observations, and surveys from teachers, coaches, principals and district personnel. While this study's primary focus was on the relationship between teacher practice and student learning, professional development and coaching are integral supports for developing teacher practice in

the Reading First program. Therefore, the coaching was studied as one element mediating teacher practice.

Teachers and principals were asked to complete surveys reporting the amount of coaching that was provided as well as what was covered in the coaching sessions. Coaches were also asked through a survey to report the time dedicated to each component of the coaching session and the time dedicated to each teacher. A correlation was found between the amount of time the coaches spent in their role and the amount, content and type of professional development teachers received (Gamse et al., 2008). It was noted that an increase in time spent in the coaching correlated positively with an increase in teacher practice as measured by two composite tests combining these outcome measures. A consistent positive impact on reading instruction was found to also correlate with teachers self-reports of an increase in how supported they felt through the coaching (Gamse et al., 2008).

Another large study examining Reading First coaches in 203 schools across the nation (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007) aimed to provide clarity about who the reading coaches were and how they spent their time. Surveys were administered to teachers and coaches in all 203 schools, providing data from 190 coaches regarding their backgrounds and experiences. From this total number, a sample of 77 coaches were then interviewed to elicit descriptions and explanations of their daily experiences. Findings illustrated how varied the roles and activities were that coaches performed as part of their job. These variations in performance were found to be linked to the way the sites organized the coaching as categories of types of coaches emerged (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007). Through both cluster and qualitative analysis the researchers distinguished four categories of coaches: data-oriented, student-oriented, managerial, and teacher-oriented. These categories illustrated differences with

how the coaches spent their time and approached their role. The data-oriented coaches focused their work mainly on assessment, student-oriented coaches spent the majority of time working directly with students, managerial coaches found their role to mainly be facilitating meetings and paperwork, while teacher-oriented coaches saw their primary role as providers of professional development for the teachers and worked directly with small groups or individual teachers (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007). The researchers also detected clusters of coaches within each category within states or sites, indicating that the job descriptions, organization and structures in place may predict the type of coaching that occurred (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007) in particular states. For example, if the job description within a site prioritized more managerial tasks over teacher collaboration, then the majority of coaches within that site were found to be managerial coaches.

Small scale studies. The smaller studies of content specific coaching in elementary schools tend to examine coaching from a variety of lenses: how the coaching affects teacher learning, and student achievement or how the coaching assisted the professional development intervention. Along with organizational impacts, individual factors such as relationship building, the coaches' credentials and skills, and coach decision-making (such as where to focus their attention or what strategies to use) have been noted as important contributing factors to successful coaching (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen & Zigmond, 2010). Again focusing on Reading First coaches, a small qualitative study examined how coaches describe their work, the reasoning behind the decisions they make, and how teachers feel about coaches (Bean et al, 2010). Twenty coaches participated in telephone interviews utilizing a retrospective time diary study design to capture their daily routines. Teacher questionnaires were also collected from 264

of the teachers these coaches were associated with, providing insight into the teachers' opinions of the role of the reading coaches.

The findings from this study indicated there was great variability in how the coaches utilized their time as well as the areas they focused on within each category. The highest percentage of time was found to be working with individual teachers (23.6%) followed by management tasks (21.1%) (Bean et al., 2010). The category 'working with individual teachers' included activities such as one-on-one conferences, observations and feedback, and modeling or co-teaching. But, coaches interpreted their individual work with teachers differently, with only half of the coaches reporting they spent any time observing (Bean et al., 2010). The highest percentage of time was spent having one-on-one conferences on a range of foci including assessment, selection of materials, classroom management and assistance with specific students. The variation in decision-making appeared to be shaped by how the coaching role was defined by the organization.

While this was a small study of some Reading First coaches, findings also point to a need for coaches to have training in how to work effectively with adults. All 20 coaches reported a thorough understanding of reading, reading instruction and assessment, but a majority acknowledged that they had much to learn about working with adult learners and the dynamics of relationship building (Bean et al, 2010). This lack of knowledge translated into how they approached their work as many of the coaches felt their role was grounded in assisting the teachers to solve specific student problems, and they were less focused on making overall changes in teacher practice. While this finding may relate to the emphasis of the Reading First program on improving student reading outcomes, it also illustrates the dynamics of the coaching

relationship. Coaches must not only be knowledgeable of student learning strategies, but also have a comfort level and understanding of how to work effectively with adults.

Polly (2012) conducted a small qualitative study of four elementary school teachers who received coaching for mathematics instruction. The participants in the study were offered any type of coaching support they desired, ranging from the provision of resources, co-planning, in-class observations and feedback, or modeling/co-teaching. The study's purpose was to examine the types of support the teachers would seek, as well as capturing the influence the various types of coaching support had on their teaching practices. Data was collected through interviews, and observations using anecdotal notes. Through inductive analysis of this data, the findings indicated that although teachers sought similar support, the coach needed to differentiate the support s/he provided for each teacher. For example, although three of the four teachers all asked for feedback for their lessons, one teacher wanted specific feedback about management techniques while the others were more interested in feedback about the specific task (Polly, 2012). It was also found that the need for support varied as the content varied, with all participants requesting support while teaching fractions (Polly, 2012). Although the study noted that the support influenced both the quality of mathematical tasks teachers posed as well as the increase in higher order questions during math, the design allowed teachers to pick and choose their own supports. As a consequence, those teachers who were more resistant to change sought less support and limited the support to the coach providing resources or planning (Polly, 2012).

In summary, while the research base in elementary education has demonstrated that coaching has been successful in various initiatives (Bean et al., 2010; Gamse et al., 2008), it has also illustrated how coaching even within the same program varies because of the context in which it takes place and the interpretations of teachers and coaches about the role. As the large

scale studies do not focus solely on coaching, but on coaching as a piece within a larger initiative, they can only imply causation. No study measured teacher or student improvement as directly related to coaching. The small-scale studies provide an illustration and description of various elements of coaching. While it has been noted that the way coaching is structured (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007), how coaches make their decisions (Bean et al, 2010), and the coaching relationship (Polly, 2012) are all important factors in successful coaching, there is limited descriptive data on any of these influences. Together, both sets of studies identify some of the factors influencing successful coaching. Some of these same factors are highlighted within the research on early childhood coaching as well, which is the topic that this review now addresses.

Research on Coaching in Early Childhood Education

The general findings of the research in early childhood mimics that of elementary education coaching, identifying a range of factors that contribute to successful coaching including various organizational aspects, such as leadership (Ackerman, 2008), structural factors such as the dosage and duration (Neuman & Wright, 2010) as well as individual factors such as relationship building (Domitrovich et al., 2008). Some specific benefits cited are increases in teacher skill development (Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014; Domitrovich et al., 2008), increased staff collaboration (Wilson et al., 2012), and increases in student outcomes (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2010). The two main models evident in early childhood settings are content specific and instructional coaching. As both of these models have differing ways of defining the roles and responsibilities of the coach as well as the necessary factors for successful coaching to occur, I will examine the research for each type of coaching separately.

Content Specific Coaching

Similar to the research base on content specific coaching in elementary education, much of the research in early childhood examines coaching in relation to specific content areas. The majority of studies focus on the work of literacy coaches (Neuman & Wright, 2010; Hindman & Wasik, 2012) and math coaches (Rudd, Lambert, Satterwhite, & Smith, 2009) typically within various initiatives. The literature for content specific coaching also examines coaching linked to various instruments/assessments such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014), or coaching for specific intervention programs (Ganz, Goodwyn, Boles, Hong, Rispoli, Lund & Kite, 2013). Many of these content-specific coaching models have a pre-determined goal of ‘mastery’ in an intervention or program as their identified outcome. In general, this means that the goal is for the coach to supply support and resources to assist a teacher learn and/or perform a specific instrument or program with fidelity. Often, this goal of mastery is within a set amount of time. The research on coaching within the content areas as well as for specified programs and instruments illustrates positive improvement in both teacher practice and understanding as a result of the individualized supports provided through coaching (Ganz et al., 2013; Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014; Domitrovich et al., 2008).

Large scale studies. Since its inception, Head Start has actively supported professional development for their staff; in 2014 their budget was over \$200 million dollars nationwide on training and technical assistance alone (Head Start, 2015). The use of coaching in Head Start across a variety of initiatives has been evident and growing over the past years. A randomized controlled trial conducted by Domitrovich et al. (2008) with Head Start classrooms found that the teacher-coach relationship was a significant factor in the effectiveness of the coaching. The study examined 84 classrooms that utilized the Research-based Developmentally Informed

(REDI) intervention approach. REDI focuses on both interpersonal and instructional features aimed at increasing emergent literacy practices as well as social emotional supports within the classroom. Half of the teachers received the intervention program while the other half comprised the control group. The groups were matched on characteristics, therefore had similar profiles of demographics, education, experience and existing curriculum. The control group received their existing professional development that included four to six in-service days throughout the year. The REDI intervention provided teachers with a 3-day workshop at the beginning of the school year that were followed with weekly coaching sessions, approximately 3 hours per week, entailing observations, discussions, and modeling focusing on the various strategies used (Domitrovich et al., 2008). Weekly meetings with coaches were designed to be supportive rather than evaluative and encourage teachers to self reflect and create individualized goals. Teachers were assessed utilizing three measures: the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; La Paro & Pianta, 2003), Teaching Style Rating Scale (TSRS; Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2000) and the Classroom Language and Literacy Environment Observation (CLEO; Holland-Coviello, 2005).

Before the intervention, both groups were given a “pre-test” of the areas that would be assessed (emotional support, behavioral support and linguistic support) and there no statistical differences between the groups were found. Post-test findings indicated positive impacts on emotional climate, the use of proactive behavior management strategies, and language use with the REDI group who received the coaching support. Compared with teachers in the control classrooms, the REDI teachers spoke more with their students, used more questions and were more sensitive and responsive (Domitrovich et al., 2008). When discussing the comparison of the REDI intervention with that of the control group, researchers noted that the coaching

relationship provided more opportunities for teachers to reflect, explore, and extend their learning (Domitrivich et al., 2008). While the training provided to both groups utilized the same structured lessons, the coaching support provided “an important scaffold for professional development efforts, as they provide a concrete model and performance demand” (Domitrivich et al., 2008, p.22). Due to the design of the study, it was not possible to determine the effects of the program without the coaching as the coaching was embedded as one of the program’s components. Therefore, coaching alone cannot be attributed as the main predictor of teacher’s growth.

Another large-scale mixed-methods study of early childhood literacy coaching by Neuman and Wright (2010) examined 148 pre-kindergarten teachers from 6 urban cities. The participants were randomly assigned to 3 groups. One group received on-site coaching, another participated in a training course, and another received no professional development. The study aimed to examine the impact the two forms of professional development would have on language and literacy practices. To ensure equal treatment, the groups were both given the same syllabus and readings, emphasizing similar content and skills. The professional development occurred over a 10-week period. Those participating in the coaching intervention were provided weekly one-on-one sessions that lasted for approximately 3 hours. Coaches were encouraged to meet teachers’ individual needs using a range of strategies including, modeling within the classroom, demonstration of particular activities, observation of the teachers, as well as relationship building. Participants were surveyed, and assessed through the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) to determine both their knowledge of, and quality of, language and literacy practices. Coaching logs were also analyzed to monitor the fidelity and progress as well as confirm and/or clarify the survey and assessment data.

Findings from this study (Neuman & Wright, 2010) demonstrated that those teachers receiving the coaching made substantive improvements in literacy practices involving structural elements, such as changes to their environments. In contrast, there was no significant improvement in process elements, such as using various instructional strategies. Through further analysis of the coaching logs, Neuman and Wright (2010) discovered that more coaching sessions focused on environment rather than instruction. Also, many coaches reported that a reason for the lack of success with teachers was that the goals were too ambitious to be covered within the 30 hours of coaching provided through the study (Neuman & Wright, 2010). The researchers highlighted that these findings indicate the dosage and duration of a coaching model impacts its success. Therefore suggesting that devoting more dosage or a longer duration of coaching to more challenging elements of instruction is necessary.

Small scale studies. The smaller scale studies on content specific coaching offer further insights into some of these findings. Overwhelmingly, the research base is comprised of small, qualitative studies although there are several quantitative studies also. For example, Hindman and Wasik (2012) had similar findings as the Neuman and Wright (2010) study regarding dosage and duration in their 3-year, quasi-randomized controlled trial investigating the “Examining the Exceptional Coaching for Language and Literacy” (ExCELL) model. This program aimed to improve language and literacy in Head Start classrooms. The sample was comprised of four coaches working with 16 teachers. The cycle of support included group workshops that were conducted on various literacy skills, followed by weekly visits by the coach to provide feedback through checklists and sometimes videotapes. Coaches offered suggestions for improvements and follow up visits occurred to gauge this improvement. Teachers were measured using the Literacy Environment Checklist of the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation

(ELLCO; Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002) to assess quality of the environment and CLASS (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2006) to assess quality of instruction. Student progress was also measured using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT; Dunn & Dunn, 1998) to measure receptive language skills, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS – PreK; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meirer, & Swank, 2004) to measure letter and sound recognition.

Findings suggested that only after the second year did most of the teachers produce skills associated with the “solid midrange of quality” (Hindman & Wasik, 2012, p.147). Researchers identified that the focus of coaching in year 1 was on changes to the quality of the classroom environment, which was identified as “easier to change;” while the focus in year 2 was more on instructional practices which were deemed as more difficult to change as this required a shift in teacher beliefs and practices (Hindman & Wasik, 2012). Hindman and Wasik (2012) argue “teachers might need more time to learn and reflect on new techniques in order to improve interaction quality” (p.148).

As mentioned previously, most content specific coaching is implemented for a set period of time with the goal of mastery in a particular skill or program. This idea of mastery of skills is evident in a small qualitative study conducted by Ganz et al. (2013) examining the effectiveness of coaching on teacher use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) with children in a pre-kindergarten, self-contained classroom. Three teachers were first provided a three-hour workshop, followed by a series of coaching sessions that focused on specific steps. The coach first explained the purpose, reviewed the protocol of the intervention, answering teachers’ specific questions, and then proceeded to practice the skills with each teacher one on one. Teachers were then observed using the system with children. The coaching model was

highly structured and dictated the number of times all teachers should practice and set the goal of 100% accuracy in using the system (Ganz et al., 2013). Coaches determined if teachers needed supplementary ‘booster’ workshops if they fell below the desired accuracy rate.

Analysis of the observational data showed that the coaching assisted in the ongoing maintenance of skills by providing the teachers individual supports (Ganz et al., 2013). But, there was limited individualization to assist the teachers who needed support. The only scaffold provided by the coaches occurred with dosage; if a teacher was not 100% accurate by the end of the first coaching session, they received more of the same coaching. Although this determined outcome of mastery might be acceptable utilizing a fairly scripted intervention strategy such as PECS, this study failed to identify other factors involved in each individual teacher’s style of learning. The coaching model utilized in the study provided only one mechanism (supplying more coaching) for assisting the teachers in their understanding of and improving their ability to use the PECS system. As coaching has been identified as an individualized professional development model, there are often various factors that may influence teacher learning. Teachers’ prior experiences, their education, differing learning styles and ways of communication may all impact their learning requiring variations in the strategies used by the coach. Although Ganz et al. (2013) found that coaching was beneficial to the teacher’s understanding, this type of individualization of the learning process did not seem to be accounted for in the coaching model utilized.

Wilson et al. (2012) conducted a study that emphasized the collaborative nature of coaching. The study aimed to illustrate the benefits of utilizing a coaching model within an intervention program, Advancing Social-communication and Play (ASAP), for students with autism. ASAP was designed to promote social-communication and play skills in children but

also incorporated an embedded coaching model with an emphasis on group collaboration and the development of team action plans. Using a descriptive analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, six teachers' learning was studied. For this pilot study, two teachers were provided with specific training for the program, two were provided with the training and coaching, and two received no assistance. Data was collected on fidelity instruments as well as teacher interviews. The fidelity instruments were collected at two time points for each group. Three different measures were utilized, one measuring dosage and goals being addressed with students and the other two measuring collaborative planning and progress monitoring strategies. In addition to these data sources, additional qualitative data was gathered through one-on-one teacher interviews at the end of the study.

Data from the fidelity interviews found that not only did the teachers with coaching support and training have greater adherence and understanding of the program but it was also noted that the coaching impacted the teachers' collaborative practices (Wilson et al., 2012). For example, the coaching model was noted to not only allow the teams to address their deficit areas, but also supported greater communication between team members and increased goal-sharing when compared to those with the training alone (Wilson et al., 2012). This study supports a foundational principle of the coaching model as being a relationship-based model as it was reported in the teacher interviews, those who received the coaching had a greater sense of support, focus, and accountability (Wilson et al., 2012). Although Wilson et al. (2012) state that within any coaching model professionals need to "advocate for time to engage in coaching and collaboration" (p.103), all three groups reported that 'time for planning' and 'team collaboration' were challenges, but the group receiving the coaching found that the benefits to this collaboration superseded the barriers. This idea of increasing collaboration amongst staff can be

seen as a strong benefit of coaching, as early childhood settings typically have multiple members working together to ensure the students' success (i.e., teachers, assistants, and related service providers).

In summary, the research on content specific coaching has illustrated specific factors influencing the success of coaching. Organizational/structural factors of the coaching, such as the time devoted, in both the dosage and duration of coaching have been noted as impacting its overall success. Coaching has also been highlighted in the research as being relationship-based. This focus on relationship-based professional development has been seen as beneficial, producing more opportunities to reflect, explore and extend teacher learning, but also seen as a challenge in relation to the structure of the coaching. It has also been noted that to form this relationship in a way that fosters a deeper learning, there must be enough time devoted to the coaching. I will now turn to examine the research on instructional coaching.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaches typically are embedded as full time staff who provide on-going support to teachers to help them learn a variety of practices from curriculum, assessment, and environment planning, to assisting with behavior management. In contrast to content specific coaching, the goal of instructional coaching is overall teacher development rather than development in just one specific area or skill. There are limited studies of the instructional coaching model in early childhood settings (Ackerman, 2008; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004), and the research base is comprised mostly of small, qualitative studies. The few available larger studies have been conducted on federal Head Start programs (Howard et al., 2013), as they have had a history of incorporating coaching into their program.

Large-scale studies. A large-scale study conducted in 2010, by the Office of Head Start provided grant funding to hire instructional coaches for 130 sites with the overarching goal of improving staff practices. The research on this Early Learning Mentor Coach (ELMC) initiative examined a variety of organizational/structural components (hiring processes, format of coaching, and workloads), procedural dimensions (identifying needs and goals, coaching strategies), as well as individual components (relationships and perceptions of challenges) (Howard et al., 2013) of coaching. Utilizing a mixed method design, data was collected from 384 coaches via online surveys, then 54 of those coaches and 80 instructional staff receiving the coaching participated in one on one telephone interviews. The findings of this study are organized into 7 sections, corresponding to what the researchers determined were key aspects of coaching: “(1) context of coaching, (2) basic dimensions of coaching, (3) structural dimensions of coaching, (4) procedural dimensions of coaching, (5) outputs of coaching, (6) perceived outcomes of coaching, successes and challenges, and (7) sustainability” (Howard et al., 2013, p. 27). These key findings can be broadly categorized as organizational and individual characteristics mediating coaching.

One of the organizational aspects examined in the survey was the coaches’ caseload. It was found that most of the coaches worked in multiple locations, with more than one-third working in 5 or more centers. This fact correlated to both the reported challenges by coaches of not being able to see teachers regularly and not having enough time to work with all staff (Howard et al., 2013). The caseload also correlated to the perceived role of the coach that was noted in both the surveys and follow up phone interviews. The top two perceived roles that coaches reported were that of collaborative partner (74.5%) and emotional supporter (58.3%). Although in the phone interviews, instructional staff members identified emotional supporter

(58.8%) and an assistant in the classroom (46.3%) (Howard et al., 2013) as the two roles of the coaches. It was found that these perceived roles were correlated to factors such as the coach caseload and experience or education. Coaches with larger caseloads were often reported as taking on several roles while those coaches with less experience or education frequently reported taking on roles outside of the scope of coaching such as assistant in the classroom (Howard et al., 2013).

One important finding related to the training and preparation coaches had received for the position. The researchers found that a high percentage of coaches (88.7%) indicated through their survey responses that they were at least moderately satisfied with their own ongoing trainings (Howard et al., 2013). But, in the telephone interview when asked to describe the training they had received in detail, very few (16%) described training that related specifically to coaching. Much of the training described was in regards to programs and assessments, for example training in administration of CLASS (Howard et al., 2013).

As with content specific coaching, the development of trusting relationships is a critical component for successful coaching. The study by Howard et al., (2013) found in both the coach and administrative interviews that interpersonal skills were cited as one of the most important qualifications of the coaches, even over knowledge, expertise and qualifications. Noted interpersonal skills included “the ability to build trusting relationships, being able to listen, respecting others, and being good at building rapport” (Howard et al., 2013, p.38). It was also noted that relationship building requires this rapport building, but also requires the teacher to have a level of openness and engagement (Howard et al., 2013). This relationship/rapport building was noted as a key aspect influencing the outputs of coaching. Various themes emerged from the coach and staff interviews regarding the perceptions of the level of “coachability”, or

the ability to foster this successful coaching relationship, including: having a positive attitude, openness to suggestions, effort to implement changes, and active participation in coaching sessions (Howard et al., 2013). While the majority of teachers and coaches reported positive relationships, explanations of the few negative reports on the teacher-coach relationship were categorized as teacher's having a mistrust of the coach or the feeling that they were unable to share mistakes. Another theme noted as negatively influencing the coach-teacher relationship was the perception of the level of experience. When asked in the interview to note their perception of coaching skills and knowledge, 30% of the respondents noted that they felt the coaches' past experiences in the classroom impacted their reception of coaching feedback.

While this study by Howard et al. (2013), is limited to the self-reports of coaches and teaching staff and does not include observations of coaching in action or measures of the impacts of coaching, it is one of the few available to have sampled such a large number of coaches. Most studies of instructional coaching in early education settings are small-scale, qualitative studies.

Small scale studies. A handful of smaller, mostly qualitative studies of instructional coaching in early childhood settings describe this role in action and highlight how coaching also occurs within an organizational context that in turn, shapes how coaches approach their work. Two studies conducted by Ryan and Hornbeck (2004) and Ryan, Hornbeck, and Frede (2004) examined the role of master teachers (instructional coaches) in New Jersey preschool programs, providing some insight into the daily obligations and activities of an instructional coach.

Employing a time use study with 35 master teachers Ryan, Hornbeck, and Frede (2004) asked participants to account for their activities over a 24-hour period through the use of a structured telephone interview protocol. The authors identified 20 activities within the NJ master

teachers daily practices that fell under five main categories: technical assistance, professional development, district-related work (primarily paperwork), leadership activities and ‘other’ (such as driving from locations or breaks). Interestingly, it was found that the majority of the master teachers’ time use was spent planning professional development, while things like ‘meetings with teachers’ and ‘rapport building’ had considerably less time devoted to them. This time use study also noted that while all participants held bachelor’s degrees and were certified, with many (86%) completing some graduate work, over half of the coach’s (57%) reported they did not receive any specialized training for their role.

Ryan and Hornbeck (2004) conducted an in-depth case study of one of the instructional coaches in NJ in an effort to provide a fuller description of the daily work of coaching. Data was collected from a time diary, observations, interviews and collected documents. Coding the data provided 18 possible activities the master teacher was involved in on varying levels. ‘Rapport building’ was noted as one activity with the participant reporting that in her first year as master teacher she had “found it difficult to build this kind of relationship with many teachers” (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004, p.87). As the case study documented this coach’s second year in the position, she reported that she had learned the importance of this relationship building process and therefore she began her second year with the aim of spending a greater amount of time building and re-building relationships. The findings suggest that the experience level and training of the coach mediated her ability to work with teachers. With less experience than some of the teachers on the coach’s caseload, it was noted that it was “not surprising that some may have resisted the changes she suggested” (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004, p.92).

These studies of New Jersey’s master teachers (Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004) suggest that to support the relationship building process, coaches must have

enough time to devote to rapport building with the teachers and not have competing requirements. Both studies also suggest a need for targeted preparation for the role of coach. As the case study notes, without specialized training it was difficult for the coach to establish a level of expertise and leadership (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004). This mimics the Howard et al. (2013) study noting that adequate preparation and training for the role can influence the success of the coaching relationship.

A small survey study by Ackerman (2008) determined that many of the challenges cited by coaches were, in part, because of a non-supportive infrastructure and administration. The study looked at self-reported survey data from 18 coaches working in a quality improvement pilot to examine the challenges and supports influencing the coaching model. Participants were asked to complete open and closed questions identifying the most challenging characteristics of their position. Coaches were also asked to indicate on a Likert scale the level of importance of various criteria in their decision-making process. Coaches' decision-making was directly impacted by how open and receptive the administration was to the coaching process. Administrators were noted as the "make or break gatekeepers" for success (Ackerman, 2008). When asked about characteristics of successful and failing sites, the coaches overwhelmingly reported the need for administrators to provide open, available and supportive environments. The failing to improve sites were noted by the coaches to have a "lack of leadership" while the most improved sites were noted to have "strong follow-up on part of the director, with expectation of accountability" (Ackerman, 2008, p.12).

To date, this is one of the few studies that looks at the relations between coaches and on-site leadership where coaching is taking place. However, this study would suggest that to understand the work of coaches requires also having some sense of the contexts in which the

coaching is taking place. In addition to providing insights into the organization and leadership necessary to support the work of coaching, Ackerman's (2008) survey of 18 coaches indicated that often coaches did not feel they had a "sufficient 'bag of tricks' for dealing with the challenges present in some programs" (p.13). According to Ackerman (2008), and consistent with other research (Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Howard et al., 2013) the complexity of the job requires "ongoing coach training" (p. 13).

Other studies suggest that the way the coaching work is organized and where it occurs mediates the effectiveness of coaching. As previously noted by Howard et al. (2013), one organizational factor found to mediate the amount of time and attention the coach can devote to each teacher is the coaches' caseload. In the time use study of 35 coaches, Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede (2004) found that nearly half (48%) of them had caseloads greater than the optimal '20 classrooms or fewer.' This finding indicates that instructional coaches may not have enough time to provide the kinds of individualized support necessary to teacher change. However, so few studies have examined this issue that there is little evidence regarding what is the ideal coach to teacher ratio that leads to improvement.

The overarching goal of any coaching model is to bring about change, therefore it must be considered that the change aimed for may be more than just teaching skills, but also adjustment to the culture and vision of an organization (Ackerman, 2008). One organizational factor influencing coaching is the school culture, which is defined as the norms, values and attitudes of the entire school staff. The culture of a school is directly linked to its leadership (Ackerman, 2008). School leaders like center directors and principals influence the overall climate in which coaching operates, and depending on the circumstances, may also shape how the coaching is structured and supported. The leaders in schools have the power to provide a

supportive culture, with shared goals and vision. Therefore leaders are the decision-makers for how coaching is implemented in a site and can either support and/or hinder the success of the coaching. Organization of time, provision of an appropriate mechanism for feedback, fostering an atmosphere of reflection and ability to take risks and an emphasis on collaboration are all vital components for the social organization of the school (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the two types of coaching models identified in the research, content specific and instructional coaching, have been shown to be effective within different settings (Wilson et al., 2012; Ganz et al., 2013; Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014; Bean et al., 2010; Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2012). However, much of the research on coaching in early childhood is overwhelmingly focused on content specific coaching. Only a handful of studies exist that explore instructional coaching in early childhood settings. Regardless of whether the focus is on content specific or instructional coaching, little is known about the work of coaches, how they define their roles and responsibilities, and how they work with teachers to learn and apply new practices. Moreover, while the research suggests that the organizational context shapes coaching, only a few studies have begun to identify these contextual factors. This study adds to the research base on instructional coaching by examining the work of coaches in one state. Through both quantitative and qualitative measures, I examined how coaches define their roles and responsibilities, how they approach their work (activities and strategies) and what mediates their success (reported challenges and supports). My hope is that the gathered data on how a coaching model is operationalized on a regular basis provides greater insight into how to best support successful coaching in early childhood settings.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As the purpose of this study was to collect descriptive evidence of an instructional coaching model, a mixed method comparative case study design was utilized. The case study approach is defined as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2007, p.73). The cases for this study were two master teachers, working in separate districts within the state of New Jersey (identified as North district and South district), along with data collected from a survey conducted of all master teachers within the state. As this larger survey sample was analyzed along with interviewing and observing two master teachers, the study is identified as a comparative or multiple-case study (Yin, 2003). To understand how master teachers approach their work within an organizational context, data was collected on each teacher through observations, interviews, and coaching logs. The data collected from the statewide survey of all NJ master teachers provided a way to compare data collected from the cases with that of all master teachers in one state. I will begin with an explanation of the theoretical framework informing my methodology. This framework guided my sampling, data collection and analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Coaches are responsible for helping adult teachers to develop and learn. It is therefore necessary to draw on adult learning theories to frame a study about those who do professional development with teachers with the aim of program improvement. Coaching is directly related to two specific adult learning theories that have their foundation in Vygotskian principles of social development and co-construction: Andragogy (Knowles, 1990) and Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Andragogy attends to the individual factors necessary for the

adult learner, while Situated Learning Theory provides insight into the organizational structures that are necessary for a supportive learning environment. Both Knowles (1990) and Lave & Wenger's (1991) theories provide a theoretical framework for understanding how coaching can be a powerful and supportive type of professional development. Together, these theories underpin the importance of learners being given the opportunity to engage collaboratively with others and actively apply their knowledge within a social community.

Knowles Theory of Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles uses the term 'andragogy' to explain a set of principles that influence the adult learner. Andragogy emphasizes both the individual characteristics of the learner as well as their individual orientation to learning as having an impact on the learning experience. Therefore, there should be a "great emphasis in adult education on individualization of teaching and learning strategies" (Knowles, 1990, p.59). The learners' past experiences and readiness to learn play a critical role in how they perceive a learning situation. If these are ignored or devalued, it is likely that the adults will view this as a rejection of themselves thus compromising the learning experience (Knowles, 1990). Focusing on this principle emphasizes utilizing techniques for learning that permit discussion, simulation and problem solving over mere transmittal techniques such as lecture. These techniques provide a greater ability for the learner to be engaged in the process and for the process to be more relevant to their individual experiences.

Andragogy also proposes that the orientation of adult learners to learning is very "life-centered," meaning they must be internally motivated to learn and have the learning of new skills and information be grounded in real application (Knowles, 1990, p.61). This suggests that for

learning to occur adults must perceive the professional development opportunity as directly assisting them in their individual lives. As adults are highly ‘task-centered’ learners they are more motivated to learn when the learning is directly related to a task (i.e. a problem or situation) that they are involved in or related to in some way. These principles emphasize the importance of focusing on the learner within the creation of professional learning experiences.

Drawing on the theory of andragogy, coaching supports a learning environment focused on individualization and the orientations of the learners. As coaches typically work one on one with teachers within their sites and/or classrooms, their coaching provides an individualized social climate that can foster a greater sense of ownership in the learning process. The focus is on utilizing experiential techniques to guide the teacher’s learning within his/her individual ZPD. By grounding the context of learning within a teacher’s classroom practices while involving them in sharing responsibility for evaluating their own learning, the coach can make the learning more connected and relevant for the teacher. The learning process is grounded in examples, situations and experiences directly from the teacher’s classrooms and students.

Lave & Wenger’s Situated Learning Theory

Lave & Wenger’s (1991) Situated Learning Theory proposes that all learning must be embedded within an activity and situated within an authentic context, both of which are influenced by the organizational culture in which adults find themselves. This theory relates directly to the Vygotskian principle of co-construction. According to Vygotsky (1978), the process of learning is a developmental series of transformations whereby external information and experiences become internalized. In essence, this view determines that we are not isolated learners; children and adults alike learn through the support of their environment and interaction

with others. The environment or context of learning for the adult learner is often the workplace, which becomes what Lave and Wenger term “a community of practitioners” that can either support or hinder personal learning. This means that an individual’s experience and learning is interdependent with the social and organizational culture and practices in which they find themselves; they become a part of a ‘system of relations.’ “Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.53). An important feature of this idea of community of learners lies in how it is organized to support the learner, meaning the learning structure requires access to ongoing activities, other members, resources, and ongoing opportunities to participate in discourse (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Drawing on Lave and Wenger’s theory in relation to professional development suggests that the focus should not be merely on the instruction of individuals, but rather on the opportunities for the community of learners to process ideas, problem solve, and practice together within the context of the work environment. Stemming from Vygotsky’s focus on language as a psychological tool, the development of a community of learners also stresses the importance of language or discourses for learning. Vygotsky (1978) established that it is through our external language or communication with others in a social context, that we process our internal thinking. Therefore, learning is the process of internalizing information so that externalized language becomes intrapersonal knowledge. Rather than seeing the sole purpose of language as instructional, Lave and Wenger argue that language provides access to practice. Therefore, professional development initiatives must shift their focus from instruction to practice. These opportunities and experiences must exist within an organizational framework that supports and encourages ongoing discourse, development, and change.

Taken together, these theories inform this study by drawing my attention to the varying factors, individual, social and organizational, which may influence coaching in action. While the small body of research on coaching in early childhood has demonstrated it to be an effective mode of professional development, there is limited research on how coaching is implemented and how it might be mediated by a range of factors. Figure 1 (below) represents the logic/theory model that illustrates the connections between adult learning theories and the coaching relationship. In keeping with these theories, coaching ensures effective professional development in that the focus is on the social, individual and organizational factors necessary to optimize adult learning. With coaching, the learning is grounded in a social context where interpersonal connections and the learners' collaboration are key elements (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the learners are allowed to be self-directed active participants in the learning (Knowles, 1990). The relationship formed between coach and teacher creates this learning experience, whereby the coach facilitates, not dictates, teacher learning. Therefore, the coach and the teacher both have individual factors influencing their relationship.

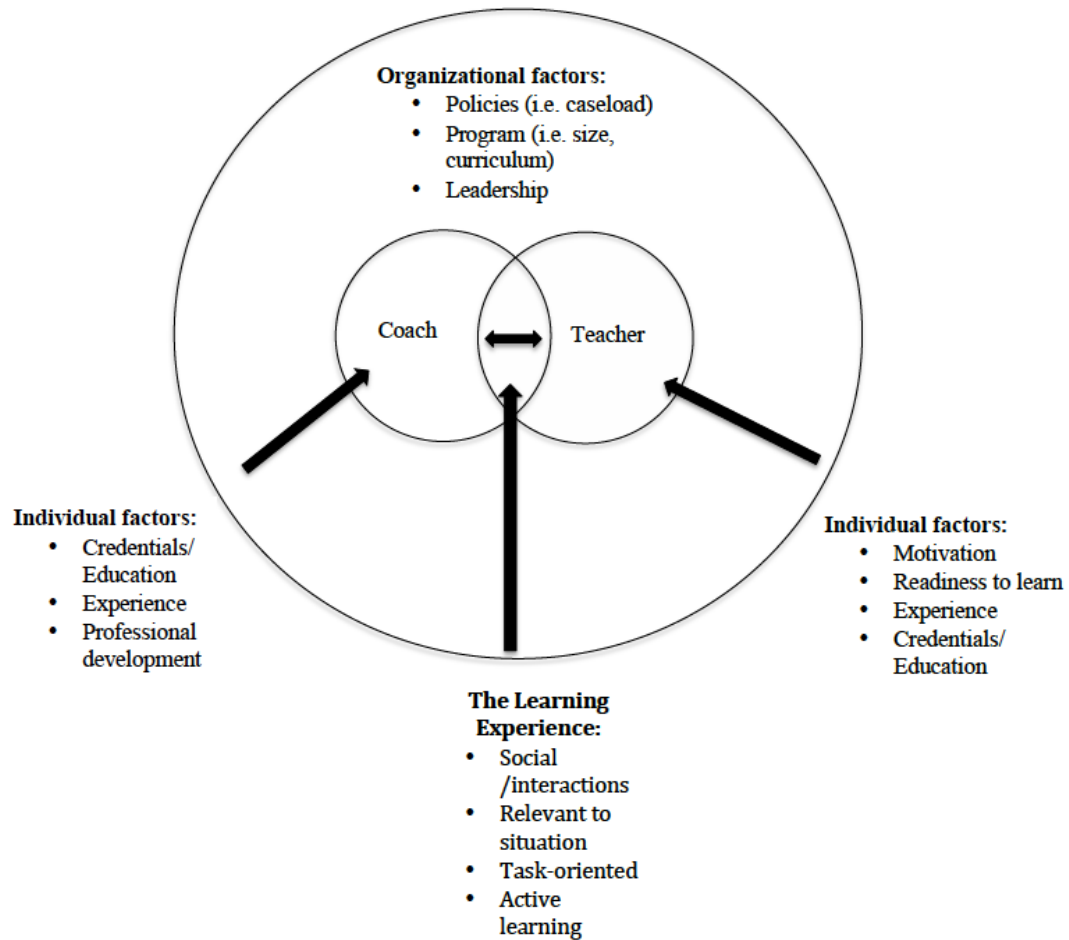


Figure 1. Logic/theory model of coaching. Factors influencing successful coaching.

This logic model served as a guide for how I collected and analyzed data on coaching in action. I drew from several data sources to capture both the individual and organizational factors shaping how coaches and teachers interact with one another. I now turn to fully describe my process for data collection and analysis.

Data Collection

Setting and Sample

The New Jersey Supreme Court decision Abbott vs. Burke (1988) set standards for the implementation of state funded high quality preschool programs for three and four year olds (<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/pd/mt/reflective.htm>). The master teacher (MT) position evolved as a mechanism to support teachers to meet these standards. The New Jersey Administrative Code, N.J.A.C. 6A: 13A, entitled the ‘Elements of high quality preschool programs,’ defines the position of master teacher as “modeling, coaching, observing and providing feedback to teaching staff in preschool programs” (p. 2). The administrative code outlines the roles, responsibilities and some of the organizational factors of the MT position including the caseloads of MTs and required qualifications. At a minimum, there is one master teacher provided for every 20 classrooms within a district. Their primary role is outlined as visiting classrooms and coaching teachers utilizing the reflective cycle. But, master teachers may also have other specific responsibilities including, administering classroom evaluations, planning professional development, and working with other early childhood staff to support ongoing communication.

The sample for this study was the population of master teachers within the state of NJ. There are 35 districts offering state funded preschool programs servicing three to four year olds. Most of these districts have master teachers on staff to support their pre-kindergarten teachers. This group formed the sample for the statewide survey. The representative sample (n=64) was drawn from 12 of the 21 counties in New Jersey, with the majority (67%) from the northern half of the state. The state of NJ identifies a bachelor’s degree and three to five years of teaching

experience in preschool are job requirements for the position of master teacher. They must also possess NJ P-3 or N-6 (early childhood certifications) or a standard elementary certificate with at least 2 years teaching under the certificate in a P-3 setting

(<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psguide/master.htm>). The typical (median) respondent to the survey was a 30-40 year old white female, working in an urban school district, employed by the district over 10 years and in the master teacher position for at least 4-6 years. The survey sample illustrates on average that master teachers are a highly educated group, with 72% of the respondents holding a Master's degree or above. Nearly all (88%) reported having a P-3 or N-6 early childhood certification. A smaller percentage of the participants held other certifications such as Supervisor, Special Education or ESL/Bilingual teacher. Table 1 below illustrates the master teacher's education and credentials.

Table 1

Master Teacher degrees/certifications.

Master Teacher Characteristics	Percent
Education	
Bachelor's / plus credits	28%
Master's	24%
Master's plus credits	48%
Certification	
P-3 or N-6	88%
Supervisor	31%
Special Education	24%
English as a Second Language (ESL) or Bilingual	20%

From this larger sample of master teachers, two were purposefully selected as case studies for deeper investigation of their roles and approaches to coaching. Several criteria guided the selection of the two master teachers. First, familiarity and access to the district was important as I collected ongoing, open and honest data from the master teachers. I gained access to the districts because of my role as the Regional Training Manager for the Tools of the Mind (TOM) curriculum, as both districts utilize the curriculum in their pre-kindergarten classrooms. For the purposes of this study, and to avoid conflicts of time and attention, observation dates were kept separate from the dates I provided curriculum support for TOM. Both districts gave permission for me to collect data on their master teachers (see Appendices A and B).

While the choice of these two case study teachers was convenient as I work with both districts in my role with the TOM curriculum, I used specific criteria to at least allow for the comparison of the work of master teachers across various organizational and individual characteristics. Therefore, a second criterion guiding selection of master teachers was location within the state. I specifically chose to focus on master teachers within two districts to gather rich comparative data and increase the external validity of the study by enhancing transferability of the findings. The districts were representative of two differing regions within the state, providing insights into how the roles and responsibilities of master teachers may differ because of district factors. One district was located in the north of the state, the other in the south. The fact that these two districts have different sizes and structures was intentionally considered when choosing the sample. As size of district is part of the demographics considered in the statewide survey as well, this was a characteristic considered in the analysis.

North District. North District is a large urban district servicing a total of over 9,000 students and comprised of ten elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

There are a total of 110 pre-kindergarten classrooms, with 106 categorized as inclusion and 4 as self-contained special education classrooms. The preschool program services approximately 1,630 three- and four-year-old students. The pre-kindergarten classrooms are located in both in-district (housed directly in the elementary school buildings) and provider sites (housed in child care facilities that hold an annual contract with the Board of Education). The majority of classrooms are located in the provider sites. North District has a large population of English Language Learner (ELL) students, comprising about 77% of the pre-k population annually. About one-third of the preschool students are receiving free and reduced lunch program. At the time of the study, there were a total of five master teachers coaching the pre-kindergarten teachers throughout the district.

South district. South district is a smaller district, about one quarter the size of North district. The district is comprised of one early childhood building, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. There are a total of 34 pre-kindergarten classrooms servicing approximately 450 three and four year old students. Unlike the North district, these pre-kindergarten classrooms are all located within district classrooms with 15 classrooms at the early childhood building, while the others are scattered among the five elementary school buildings. South district has approximately 15% of its pre-k population classified as English Language Learners. Annually, about 45% of the population is classified for the free and reduced lunch program. Two master teachers were responsible for coaching all of the pre-kindergarten teachers throughout the district.

As the purpose of this study was to provide an in depth and comparative examination of the roles and responsibilities of master teachers in NJ, I have chosen to focus my attention on one master teacher within each district.

Teacher A – North district. Natalie (a pseudonym) has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and received her P-3 certification through the state’s alternate route certification eleven years ago. She also completed 7 courses towards her Master’s degree in Education. At the time of the study, she had been a master teacher in North district for the past four years. Prior to obtaining this position, Natalie taught pre-kindergarten in one of North district’s provider sites for seven years. She also taught preschool at a private preschool outside of the district for three years. During the study (SY 2015-16), Natalie supported three different sites within the district, with a total of 21 teachers. In addition to this caseload, she is also mentoring a new teacher at another site.

Teacher B – South district. Lydia (a pseudonym) has a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, obtaining her NJ P-3 and Elementary certificates 12 years ago. She also has 13 graduate hours towards a Master’s in early childhood education. Lydia worked in South district for 16 years, the first 8 years as a preschool teacher and then in the capacity of master teacher. Before working in South district, Lydia was an early childhood coordinator/specialist in a Head Start program outside of the state. As South district only has 2 master teachers, they work very closely together and actively share the caseloads of all 34 classrooms.

Both Natalie and Lydia willingly volunteered to be a part of this study and have signed permission forms for me to collect various data over a period of 5 months.

Data Collection Procedures

“A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Yin, 2003, p.97). The data collection procedures for this study encompassed four sources of evidence: a statewide survey, interviews, observations, and coach

logs. Each source of evidence provides unique strengths to the data collection and a way to develop a convergence of evidence (Yin, 2003).

Statewide survey. My first research question, how do instructional coaches define their roles and responsibilities, aimed to collect information about the match between the state-developed definition of master teacher roles and responsibilities and how master teachers perceive their role and responsibilities. My third research question, what factors mediate the work of coaches, aimed to identify some of the challenges and necessary supports master teachers report are associated with their position. To gather data to answer these questions, I surveyed all master teachers within the state of New Jersey. The survey (see Appendix C) was distributed to all master teachers via Qualtrics, an online survey development and distribution program. Participants were asked to agree to take part in the study by completing an online survey. As I was not privy to a comprehensive email list of these master teachers, I compiled the list through online searches of the 35 district's early childhood departments. Some of these websites readily provided email lists for their master teachers. For the districts who did not supply contact information directly on the website, I reached out to the district administration either via email or phone to request the emails of their master teachers. Through this process I was able to obtain emails for 30 of the 35 districts. Two districts responded that due to the size of their early childhood programs, they did not employ a master teacher. Two districts replied that they would like to refrain from being a part of the survey. One district did not reply to any attempt at communication. Therefore, the final sample receiving the online survey was approximately 125 master teachers from 30 districts in NJ. Participants had three weeks to respond from the original receipt of the survey invitation. A reminder email was sent after 1

week and again after 2 weeks. Sixty-four participants (51.2%) completed the survey at the end of this timeframe.

The survey was comprised of various sets of questions. A set of 16 closed questions asked for demographic information such as age, gender, and race as well as information about qualifications, certification and length of time in the field. A set of two questions on the statewide survey sought participants' interpretations of the key challenges in their daily work and what they identified as their most important needs in terms of their own professional development. Participants rated on a scale of 1 – 10, with one being what they perceived to be their biggest challenge and ten being the least challenging aspect of the position. They also chose their top three professional development needs from a set of 10 possible choices. Another set of 21 statements focused on the roles and responsibilities of master teachers. Participants were asked to rate various statements taken from the state master teacher job description as to the frequency they perform this aspect of their work, using a 4 point rating scale of 'frequently', 'occasionally', 'hardly ever' and 'never.' This scale was taken from the study conducted by Howard et al. (2012) that collected survey data from Head Start coaches.

In an effort to check the survey for ambiguity, confusion and/or adjust the quality of the questions, the survey was piloted with a small group of curriculum coaches who worked outside of the state of NJ, who did not participate in the final administration of the survey. In general these coaches helped to clarify the directions for the survey as well as the arrangement of some of the choices within questions. For example, it was recommended that the choices for ranking the 10 challenges from least to most challenging be in alphabetical order and the directions for choosing their top three choices be further clarified.

All survey data collected remained anonymous. All survey results were stored within a password-protected Qualtrics account, and then downloaded as a CSV file which was stored and analyzed as an Excel file on the researcher's password-protected laptop.

Case study of two master teachers in action. “The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 2). In keeping with my aim of providing an in-depth description of the work of instructional coaches as well as the supports and challenges involved in this work, I followed two master teachers over the course of approximately five months (late December through early May). As case study research requires comprehensive data collection involving multiple sources (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003), I utilized observations, interviews and coaching logs to collect rich descriptive information on each master teacher and their work. To protect the anonymity of the participants, all data collected was stored under pseudonyms for the cases and stored in files on the researcher's password-protected laptop and iPad.

Observations and field notes journal. Observational evidence is a useful source of data in case studies, providing additional information about relevant behaviors and environmental conditions (Yin, 2003). For the observations, I took on the role of being a “privileged observer” (Weirisma & Jurs, 2009, p.283) following each master teacher as she undertook normal daily routines. This included their work in classrooms, meetings with teachers and other staff members, traveling to and from sites, and in de-briefs with colleagues. Observations spanned the course of five months of the school year, with at least one visit per month to each master teacher for a minimum total of 5 visits per MT. These observations provided information to answer all research questions, but particularly research question 2, how do coaches approach their work?

While conducting the observations, I kept an online field notes journal with both descriptive and analytic field notes using Evernote, a note-taking application for iPads, that permits the researcher to record observations via audiotaping, handwritten or typed notes, and pictures. The descriptive notes allowed me to illustrate when, where and under what circumstances the observations were made while the analytic notes included inferences and interpretations about what was observed (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). The focus of these observations was to collect information regarding what the master teacher does throughout her day, who she interacts with, the various tasks, and roles she is expected to take on as well as to describe various challenges and situations that occur. Field notes were immediately synthesized and summarized following each observation. These notes were dated and saved in folders under each teacher's pseudonym. The field notes journal will be kept on the researcher's password-protected iPad.

Interviews. Interviews are one of “the most important sources of case study information” (Yin, 2003, p.89) as they provide a way to pursue a more consistent and structured line of inquiry. This means that while the observations provided me with spontaneous and data from the natural world of the master teachers, the interviews provided time to create planned and framed questions. In-depth interviewing allowed me to obtain the participants' personal views of their work as master teachers in their own words. I conducted three focused, or semi-structured interviews, with each of the master teachers (I describe each interview protocol in more detail below). A focused interview is open-ended and conversational in nature, but follows a set of questions derived from the case study protocol (Yin, 2003). This type of interview allowed me to corroborate the evidence I gathered from the observations as well as allowed for

individualization of the interview conversations while also following an established set of questions.

The first interview (see Appendix D) took place at the beginning of the study and aimed to gather specific information regarding how the master teacher defined her role and responsibilities (Research question 1). Using Patton's (2015) six types of questions as a guide, this first interview utilized both experience and behavior questions and background demographic questions. I first gathered some descriptive information about the participants' employment history, education and preparation. The participants were then asked experience and behavior questions, providing their interpretations of their position (roles and responsibilities) by using descriptive scenarios or examples from their daily activities to illustrate views of the work. This information provided a way to gather facts directly from the participants that can then be corroborated with observational data. Questions were framed as open-ended and descriptive in nature, supplying the participant the ability to give examples or scenarios to illustrate their viewpoint and perspective.

The second interview (see Appendix E) took place shortly after the first, after some of the observation data had been collected. The focus of this interview was to gather more in-depth information regarding what the master teacher's report as challenges that impede their success and what needs they identified for ongoing support in their role (Research question 3). As the research has demonstrated, individual as well as organizational factors influence the success of coaching (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007; Howard et al., 2013, p. 27; Ackerman, 2008). In this second interview the questions were open-ended in nature and framed as opinion and value questions (Patton, 2015), requiring the participants to provide their opinion of the supports they felt are necessary to their position and describe some of the challenges they face.

Key topics focused on describing challenges of their role, who the master teacher relies on when needing support, the professional development they receive for the position, and their opinions of the professional development they feel is necessary to their ongoing success.

The third and final interview (Appendix F) was conducted at the conclusion of the data collection period. This interview served primarily as a way to reflect on the process and allow the participants to add any additional thoughts they may have had regarding any themes or information that had surfaced throughout the observations and/or initial interviews. The questions were designed as opinion and value questions (Patton, 2015), requiring the participants to give their opinions of their roles and responsibilities and the supports necessary for success. There was also a chance for the participants to provide recommendations regarding anything they feel should be changed about their position.

All interviews were conducted one-on-one at a time and location convenient to the participants. The first and second interviews were approximately one hour in length, while the final interview took approximately 20 minutes. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed immediately after the interviews took place. Following the interview, the transcription was made available to the participants, allowing them the opportunity to confirm and/or clarify any points made.

Coach logs. Throughout the five months of data collection, the master teachers were also asked to submit a log of their daily routines and interactions with the teachers they serve. This is part of the recommended protocol for all New Jersey master teachers as it supports the reflective cycle. The log was formatted electronically and submitted to the researcher monthly via email. As other studies have demonstrated (Scott, Cortina & Carlisle, 2012), these logs serve an

important purpose of gathering more information about the daily work of coaches. Neuman and Wright (2010) found the coaching logs served as another way to better understand the “active ingredients” in coaching (p. 2). The logs were dated and served as a way to keep in communication with the coaches when I was not directly observing them. These logs were stored in files designated for each master teacher, in the researcher’s password-protected laptop.

Together, these four sources of evidence -- statewide survey, interviews, observations, and coach logs—will help to answer my research questions (See Table 2).

Table 2 Description of research questions related to data collection methods.	
Research Questions	Data Collection
1. How do instructional coaches define their roles and responsibilities? a. How do the roles and responsibilities outlined in the job description and their descriptions differ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-wide survey • Master teacher interview - 1
2. How do coaches approach their work with teachers? a. What activities do they engage in as part of their work? b. What strategies do they utilize to facilitate their work with teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations of master teachers/ Field notes journal • Coach logs
3. What factors are present to support the coaches? a. What do the coaches report as their needs for ongoing support? b. What do the coaches’ report as the challenges they face that impede their success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-wide survey • Master teacher interview – 2 • Master teacher interview - 3 • Observations of master teachers/Field notes journal • Coach logs

Researcher Role

As I gained access to the sites and participants in the study due to my role as regional training manager of the curriculum each district utilizes, it was necessary to separate these two

roles throughout the data collection period. Each day designated for the collection of observation and interview data was carefully scheduled to not coincide with a Tools of the Mind curriculum meeting or visit. Historically, my role within these districts has been identified as an ‘external curriculum consultant’ and therefore the focus of all previous visits had always been solely on assisting master teachers with their understanding of the components of the curriculum. My role within this study was to examine the entire scope of the master teacher’s roles and responsibilities, therefore expanding my focus of observations and interactions with master teachers. By collecting research data on days separate to my work as the TOM training manager I was able to keep these differing roles in check.

The idea of reflexivity “reminds the qualitative inquirer to observe herself or himself so as to be attentive to and conscious...of one’s own perspective and voice as well as, and often in contrast to, the perspectives and voices of those one observes and talks to during fieldwork” (Patton, 2015, p. 384). It is suggested to keep this reflexivity a researcher should continually keep questions from three perspectives in mind: your own as an inquirer, the people in the setting being studied, and the audience for the study (Patton, 2015). I kept a research journal throughout the process to assist me to ask these kinds of questions and keep any biases in check.

Data Analysis

As this study is a sequential mixed methods study, I combined quantitative data from a statewide survey and data from multiple case studies. I collected the survey data first, analyzing this separately, and then analyzed the data from the case studies. During the final phases of data analysis I then looked across all data sources, comparing patterns and themes. Below describes how I conducted the data analysis for each part of the study.

Statewide Survey

The data collected from the online survey was downloaded as a CSV file and transferred to an Excel program for analysis. Initial analysis began by entering the variables in the survey into the program and cleaning the data, relabeling or recoding some variables. I then ran descriptive statistics, calculating the means and percentages of each variable. This analysis provided a general idea of the number of participants who have answered particular questions and the averages of all responses. Next, correlations were done with some of the key questions in the survey. Aside from the demographic variables, the key questions employ ordinal scales or ranks. For this reason and for the presence of non-normality of data, I used the Kruskal-Wallis test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952), a distribution-free, non-parametric version of the parametric One-way Analysis of Variance. Computation was facilitated by SPSS to obtain χ^2 (Chi-squared) test values, as well as check the assumption of homogeneity of variances, and any post hoc comparisons of pairs of groups. The analysis examined various comparisons: the size of the district, the experience of the master teacher, education and age in relation to the master teachers' reported roles and responsibilities as well as reported challenges. I also examined the relationship between the curriculum the district utilizes and the reported challenges and professional development needs.

Case Study of Two Master Teachers

Data analysis for case studies consists of "examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study" (Yin, 2003, p. 109). The data collected from the multiple cases was first coded and analyzed separately. A second phase of analysis looked for various themes and

patterns across cases and sources. As Merriam (1998) proposes “the right way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection” (p. 162). Therefore, preliminary analysis occurred alongside data collection using memoing. As the master teachers submitted their coach logs monthly, researcher memos were added. These memos and reactions were able to routinely permit the researcher to make note of connections, questions, and initial themes. These memos were routinely shared with master teachers for their reactions.

The formal period of analysis began by taking the data collected and stored under each case (Teacher A, Teacher B) and coding each separately. The coding took on various phases of open, axial, and selective coding, generating categories, examining connections between the categories, then refining the core and sub-categories while validating relationships (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). Initial coding drew on the theoretical framework and logic/theory model, examining individual and organizational factors. Several phases of coding then examined the data in terms of the guiding research questions, looking at how the coaches define their roles and responsibilities, how they approach their work considering the activities and strategies they use, as well as the challenges and supports identified. Final coding then looked across these codes for larger relationships and themes. In the final phases of analysis, I looked across all data sets and drew comparisons between the cases and the larger survey sample. This process was then repeated for Teacher B. After each case was finalized, I then looked across the cases (Teacher A and Teacher B) examining for similarities and differences.

As the survey data and case study data was initially analyzed and coded separately, a final phase of analysis involved looking across the two sets of data (survey and case studies). This involved examining whether the two master teacher cases reflected patterns in the larger data set. For example, illustrating the similarities and/or differences between the reported roles

and responsibilities, challenges, and the professional development needs of the two case study master teachers with those of the larger sample of all master teachers. This mixed method analysis strategy provided a way to improve the quality of inferences that are drawn from both the quantitative data (survey) and qualitative data (case studies) by merging results to detect whether the sets of data are congruent or divergent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Validity

As Yin (2003) notes, “any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode” (p.98). Therefore, utilizing triangulation of multiple methods and multiple sources of data (Merriam, 2009) supported the validity of the findings of this study. True data triangulation occurs when the events or facts in the study are supported by multiple sources of information, providing higher construct validity (Yin, 2003). Therefore for a code to exist, I held that it must be evident in at least two sources of data.

There were various times throughout the data analysis process where I performed ‘member checks,’ asking participants to read transcriptions of the observations, my field notes, as well as supply input on any emerging themes. This allowed participants to confirm any preliminary interpretations and allow for comments, additions, and/or clarifications, thereby increasing internal validity of the data. This has been considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be an extremely powerful technique for establishing credibility of the analysis (Creswell, 2007).

I also utilized peer review, another external check of the research process. Creswell (2007) states that a peer review should be individuals who “keep the researcher honest, asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations” (p.208). As I am a doctoral candidate, I

participated in a doctorate support group with four other candidates. We met regularly (twice per month) and shared our writing, data, and thoughts. I utilized this support group to provide me with an external check of my codes and thematic analysis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

I'm not here to get you – I'm here to help you. I enjoy teaching. I enjoy what I do and I like to see you be better at it. Not even better at it, but there might be an aspect you can improve on and together we can work on it. (Natalie, NJ Master Teacher, Interview 2)

The work of coaching is aimed at improving teacher practice utilizing a job embedded format of professional development (Rush & Sheldon, 2011). Building on the notion that adults learn best with scaffolded guidance, instructional coaches collaborate with teachers supporting their efforts to learn and improve. As Natalie illustrates in the above quote, this collaboration is grounded by the relationship between teacher and coach. The current research on coaching has indicated there are a variety of factors that influence coaching success (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Howard et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2012; Ackerman, 2008) but to date there are only a few studies that examine the daily work experiences of instructional coaches (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004).

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the work of instructional coaching through the voices and experiences of coaches (master teachers) working in New Jersey's public preschool program. The chapter begins by using the survey data to illuminate findings associated with two of my research questions regarding the roles and responsibilities as well as the challenges faced by master teachers across the state of NJ. In the second part of the chapter, I describe the work of two instructional coaches in action. These case studies look more deeply into how these two coaches approach their work with teachers, the challenges they faced and the supports they received to perform their role. In the final section of the chapter, I make comparisons between the larger survey data and the case studies of two coaches with the aim of illustrating similarities and differences in how the position of master teacher is defined and enacted in various settings. Throughout this chapter I argue that coaching is more than a script; it is a relationship. As with

any relationship, there is no one absolute formula, therefore what comprises the work of instructional coaching is complex and multidimensional.

Being a Master Teacher

Roles and Responsibilities

In contrast to a content specific coach whose support is more focused in one area such as literacy or math, an instructional coach's support ranges across a variety of areas of teaching practice, including curriculum, setting up and assessing the environment, how to respond to particular student needs and assessment of children's learning. The roles and responsibilities of New Jersey's early childhood instructional coaches (master teachers) are outlined in a state job description. While the job description indicates the primary role of the master teacher is to visit classrooms and coach teachers, other responsibilities include communication with colleagues as well as planning and providing professional development. The success of such professional development requires an ongoing understanding of what each teacher's needs are as well as competence in delivering supportive adult learning opportunities. Therefore, an aspect of their job also requires master teachers to have a focus on their own professional growth.

Through the master teacher survey, I aimed to gather information about these three main categories of master teacher work: a) working with teachers, b) working with colleagues, and c) individual professional development. Participants were provided a series of statements within each of these categories that were derived directly from the state's job description. Using a 4-point scale (*Frequently*-a regular/daily part of their job, *Occasionally*-may only happen sometimes, *Rarely*-only happens every once in awhile, or *Not applicable*-not a part of their job), participants were asked to rate how frequently they performed each role or responsibility.

Working with teachers. An earlier time use study of NJ master teachers (Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004), found that direct classroom assistance was one of the two main areas where the coaches spent most of their workday. Echoing this finding, a majority of respondents identified that a large part of their work was comprised of responsibilities associated with preschool teachers. As can be seen in Figure 2, the majority of master teachers (86 - 93%) reported that the tasks they engaged in frequently were: “I visit classrooms,” “I provide feedback to teachers,” “I provide individualized support for each teacher’s level of development” and “I engage in the reflective cycle to improve teaching practices.” In contrast, “I plan small group meetings with teachers” was only cited by a little over half (58%) of the participants as a common aspect of their work and one-fifth of the participants who responded that this was rare or not a part of their job. This finding may indicate that a majority of the work master teachers do is interpreted as individual work, conducted one-on-one between teacher and coach.

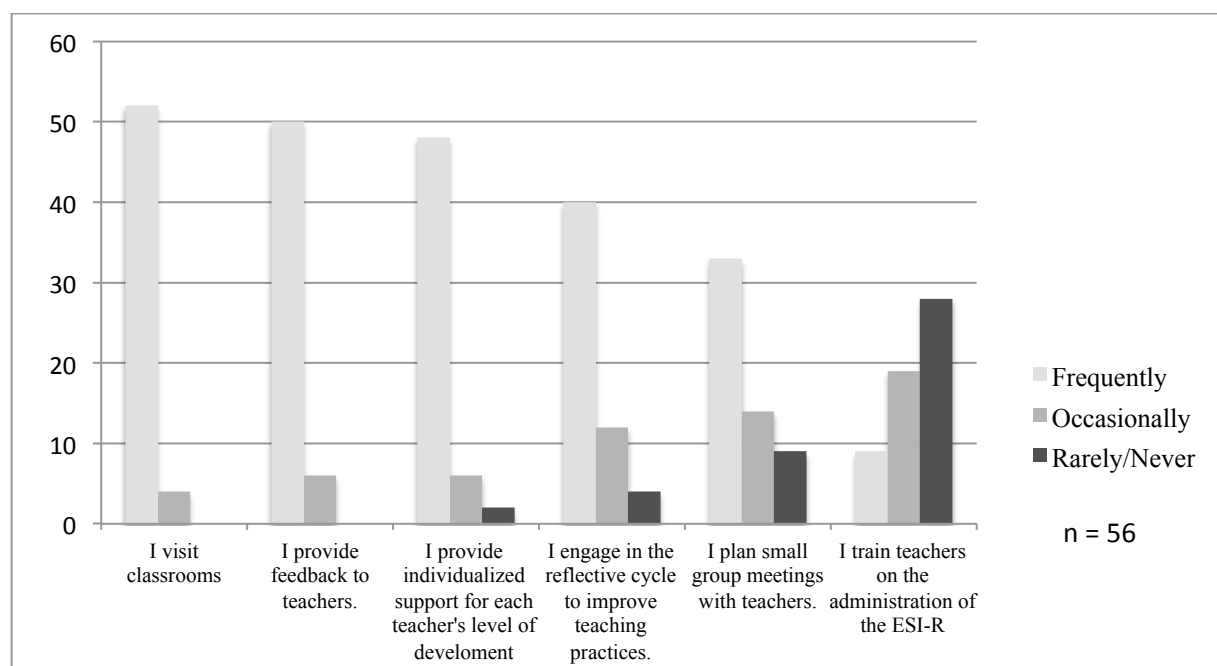


Figure 2. Roles and responsibilities - working with teachers.

The role of the master teacher provides a support system to achieve the main goal of the state pre-kindergarten programs, providing a high quality inclusive learning environment. Achieving this goal means that the early identification and support of children with specific needs is key. One of the tools districts utilize in this screening and referral process is the Early Screening Inventory–Revised (ESI-R). Classroom teachers typically perform the ESI-R, and then results are shared and discussed with the master teachers and members of the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT). The PIRT’s role is to assist in supporting children and families with special needs and/or behavior challenges and is a critical part of the early childhood support system. Therefore, all parties involved must be aware of how to utilize and administer this screening. But, as illustrated in Figure 2, half of the master teachers cited that they either rarely or never train teachers on the administration of the ESI-R. The survey questions were not able to supply more of a context for why this training is not taking place more frequently. It may be that the teachers in the districts who responded are already trained to use this tool, so it is a rare occurrence or it may be that other staff, such as the PIRT take on this role in the district.

Working with colleagues. Master teachers are part of a district team who all interface to support the teachers and students in early childhood classrooms. These colleagues include the Early Childhood Supervisor and/or Director, members of the PIRT and the Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS). The CPIS’s role is to support parent involvement activities and assist classroom teachers with home-school communication. The master teachers are expected to regularly coordinate, communicate and plan with these various parties to assist in supporting the goals of the program. As the master teachers are typically the most consistent support within the classroom environment, their ongoing understanding of the classroom context and teachers in

those classrooms is essential when planning and coordinating for student and family supports provided through the PIRT and CPIS. For example, the master teachers might share their assessment of the classroom environment (ECERS-3), the teacher's instructional strengths, or a specific focus area for families that may have a bearing on recommendations from the PIRT or CPIS for specific student's needs or family involvement strategies.

A focus of the state's early childhood department is the creation of a seamless and supportive P-3 transition plan whereby plans are crafted to assist students and families in understanding a district's vision within and across grade levels (<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psguide/transition.pdf>). The master teachers are seen as a key component of establishing and supporting this transition plan. Coaches are expected to communicate assessments and other pertinent information to kindergarten staff. Figure 3 illustrates the frequency the master teachers reported communication and planning with other colleagues. Overall, communication with some of these colleagues was represented well, with 83% of the master teachers (n=56) reporting they regularly communicate with early childhood supervisors, while 75% cited frequent communication with members of PIRT requesting assistance for children with challenging behaviors. Conversely though, over one-third (38%) responded that they felt communicating with kindergarten staff was not applicable to their role.

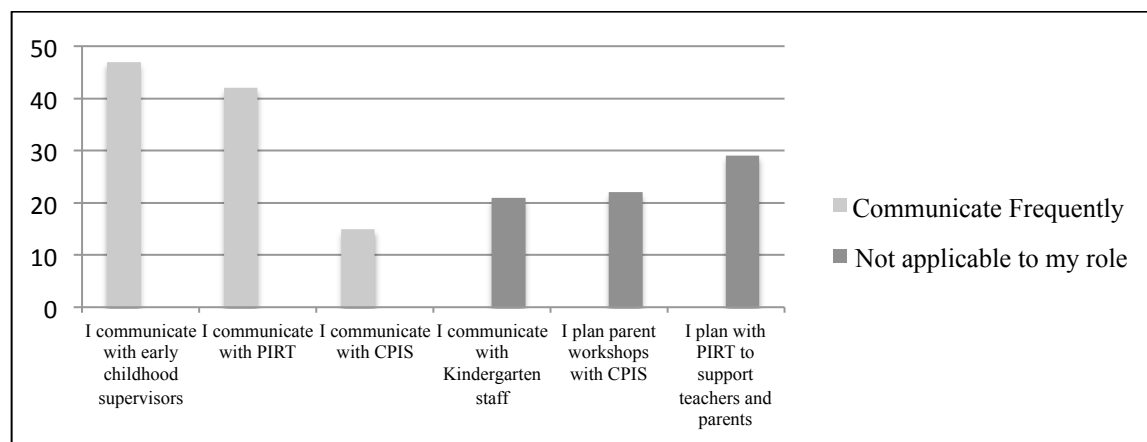


Figure 3. Frequency of communication and planning with colleagues.

But, surprisingly, even with such a reported high frequency of communication with PIRT, over half of the participants (52%) cited that planning with members of the PIRT to help support challenging behaviors was not applicable to their role. While the reasons for either planning or not planning were not able to be distinguished in the survey, it may be that the PIRT member(s) are seen as having more expertise with specialized supports and intervention strategies, as one of the requirements of the PIRT position is a solid background in special education. Conversely, the majority of master teachers are trained as early childhood generalists. This relates to the research on early childhood teacher preparation programs illustrating that the majority of programs lack content dealing with the range of diversity in today's classrooms, especially with special needs populations (Ray, Bowman & Robbins, 2006; Ryan & Lobman, 2007; Whitebook, 2014). Despite the growing focus on inclusive education in the early childhood classroom, research suggests that teachers feel unprepared to provide instructional support for students with special needs (Ray, Bowman & Robbins, 2006). Therefore, while master teachers are the teacher's main coach, without being given the training to assist with

special needs populations, they may defer to the PIRT member(s) for the development of specialized strategies and supports.

Along similar lines, while over half of the master teachers (64%) replied that they communicate with the CPIS either frequently (26%) or occasionally (38%), just over a third reported that planning parent workshops with CPIS was not applicable to their job. Akin to the PIRT, the CPIS have the specialized role of interfacing with the families and providing suggestions for home/school supports. Again, it may be noted that the master teachers may feel they should defer to the family specialist's expertise in this area, therefore not feeling a need to collaborate or plan together.

These contrasting reports indicate that while master teachers are communicating with PIRT and CPIS regularly; they may not feel that the actual planning of the support or assistance is within the scope of their job.

Challenges of the Work

Coaches must regularly interface with multiple teachers and support staff, requiring a level of understanding of adult learning methods. Current research has indicated that how the coach is prepared for the job (i.e. experience, education, training) influences the challenges faced by the role (Ackerman, 2008; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004), and how the coaching is structured (i.e. caseload, time management) has also been indicated to influence perceived challenges to the work (Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004; Domitrovich et al., 2008). Many NJ districts structure their preschool classrooms in a combination of provider-based locations and in-district classrooms, requiring some NJ master teachers to regularly spend time traveling between various sites. To examine what the NJ master teachers reported as challenges in their work, I drew on

the current research and the state job description to provide a list of ten descriptors illustrating areas that relate to the success of coaching. Participants were asked to rank these descriptors on a scale of 1-10, with 1 indicating, “most challenging,” and 10 indicating “least challenging.”

There were 54 participants who responded to this section and for each item their responses were totaled and then averaged, providing a mean score. Table 3 illustrates these mean scores ranked from all items and reported from most to least challenging. The top three challenges unsurprisingly related directly to the master teacher’s primary role of direct and ongoing classroom support. Master teachers must collaborate with multiple teachers, who all have their own unique personalities, classroom structures and routines. It was therefore not surprising that “Communication with challenging teachers” was ranked the number one challenge. As their work is based on building a relationship, the rapport established may be disrupted when faced with working with challenging teachers. There was no way through the survey to define what the master teachers meant by a “challenging teacher,” but this does relate to current research indicating that coaches require, and are often lacking in, training specifically for their role (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ackerman, 2008; Howard et al., 2013). Typical teacher training focuses heavily on the understanding of child development and instructional practices. While master teachers must have these core understandings, their training must also provide guidance in navigating working with a variety of adults.

Table 3

Average ranking of master teacher reported challenges.

Rank (Most to least)	Mean score	Descriptor
----------------------------	---------------	------------

1	3.87	Communication with challenging teachers
2	4.44	Enough time to visit classrooms
3	4.82	My caseload
4	5.50	Setting achievable goals for teacher growth
5	5.56	Specific areas of concern (i.e. ELL, special needs, behavior)
6	5.62	Administering assessments
7	5.90	Providing professional development for teachers
8	6.33	Coordination/communication with CPIS
9	6.51	Providing targeted feedback
10	8.00	Coordination/communication with PIRT

The challenges of the master teacher's caseload and having enough time to visit classrooms may be seen as connected. Those master teachers, who perceive that their caseload is too great, may have also cited that this influences how much time they have to visit classrooms. It is also not surprising that communication with both PIRT and CPIS are ranked as a minimally challenging given these responsibilities were identified as frequent aspects of the role (see Figure 2).

Ongoing Supports

While it is also asserted in the research that coaches require ongoing supports to mediate the challenges they face (Ryan, Hornbeck & Frede, 2004), there have been limited studies examining what coaches report as areas of need (Byington & Tannock, 2011). Research has illustrated that coaches are often asked to support a multitude of areas including curricula,

specific student needs, the classroom environment and scheduling (Ackerman, 2008). Therefore, the survey also examined what the master teachers report as their professional development needs as well as their current access to professional development resources.

Participants were asked to identify their top three professional development needs by choosing from a list of ten options. The choices were drawn from the research literature and mimicked the challenges that master teachers were asked to identify. In this way, the responses could be compared across these areas, examining if their reported challenges related to their professional development needs. Since the respondents were limited to choosing the top three out of ten choices, findings were generated for the items receiving any ranking (1, 2, or 3). Figure 4 below illustrates the top and bottom three choices. As can be seen, over half of the participants identified “Supporting teachers with special education students (61%),” and “Communication with challenging teachers (56%)” as the most pressing professional development needs. “Developing targeted goals” was the third most commonly identified with 41% of participants citing this as a need.

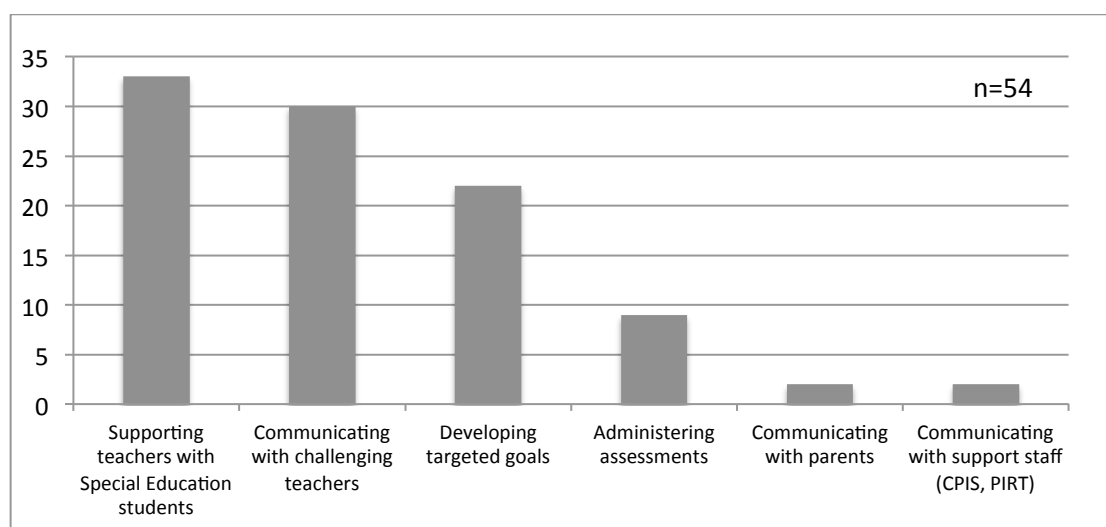


Figure 4. Ranking of professional development choices.

It was not surprising that the largest reported challenge “Communication with challenging teachers” also appears as a top choice for professional development. Interestingly, while providing feedback and developing targeted goals are undeniably linked skills there was a disparity in the results across these categories. Developing targeted goals for teachers was identified by 22% of the master teachers as a top professional development need and setting achievable goals for teacher growth was ranked 4th as a reported challenge. In contrast, providing feedback was overwhelmingly stated as a frequent role/responsibility as well as being identified as something with a limited challenge level (ranking 9th out of 10). This finding may indicate that while providing feedback is a regular part of their work, master teachers do not find this responsibility in and of itself to be challenging, but there is still a desired need for support to link this feedback with the development of targeted goals for teachers.

Highlighted in the state job description are a variety of ways master teachers should keep abreast of their own learning, including attending workshops, reading research articles and consulting with others. The survey asked participants how frequently they participate in these types of professional development. As can be seen in Figure 5 below, 74% of the master teachers (n=54) reported they frequently consult with others. This finding may be attributed to the ability that consulting with colleagues is a more readily available resource for professional growth within districts.

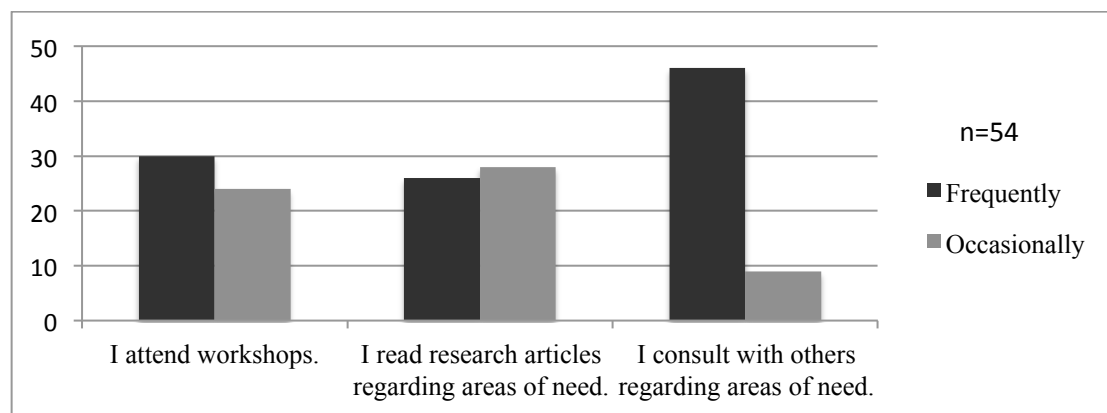


Figure 5. Frequency of accessing various types of professional development.

About half of the respondents also cited that they attend workshops and read research articles regarding areas of need either frequently or occasionally. The ability to attend workshops or have appropriate research articles may again be linked to their availability in the coaches' district or it may be a result of citing a preference for a particular professional development format.

Factors That Mediate the Work of Instructional Coaches

The current research on instructional coaching indicates both individual (attributed to the teacher or the coach) and organizational (attributed to the system the coaching is established within) factors influence coaching (Howard et al., 2013; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ryan, Hornbeck & Frede, 2004; Ackerman, 2008). To date, there have been limited studies examining which of these factors play a larger part in the success of coaching. Therefore, I looked beyond descriptive statistics to consider any relationships between master teacher demographics, the organizational contexts in which they work and the roles and responsibilities reported in the survey. To do so, I first utilized the Kruskal-Wallis test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952), a non-parametric version of the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) specific to data using ordinal

scales. Finally, I conducted a forward regression analysis to determine which variables are more predictive of the roles undertaken by master teachers and their reported challenges.

Individual factors

Relationship building is an important aspect of coaching (Howard et al., 2013; Domitrovich et al., 2008). Buysse & Wesley (2005) discuss that the initial work to form a coaching relationship is built on a foundation of trust, developing rapport, and a perception that the coach is someone who is capable and available. As the teacher and coach each bring his/her individual experience, knowledge, personality and approach to learning into the coaching relationship, some literature has asserted that these individual factors can directly influence the creation of a successful coaching relationship (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Heineke, 2013). Individual factors reported by the coaches on the survey included: race, gender, age, education, experience and certifications. As the participants in this survey were predominantly white (59%) and female (96%), I focused on the individual factors of age, education, certifications and experience. Age, education and experience were all found to be variables that influenced how master teachers identified what were the key roles and responsibilities and the reported challenges of the position.

The average participant in the survey was 30-40 years old with a master's degree. For the initial analysis, I grouped the participants' ages into two categories: under 40 years (n=18) and 40 years and over (n=37). It was found that participants under the age of 40 reported engaging less frequently in the reflective cycle to improve teaching practices ($p = .058$). Master teachers under 40 also reported less frequently planning specific goals for teachers to improve identified weak areas ($p = .007$).

Master teachers 40 and over ($n=37$) more frequently chose the item allowing them to type in a specific challenge area ($p = .018$). All typed responses were coded and organized into three categories: challenging behaviors, ELL/DLL, and special needs. Some responses indicated the master teacher felt the challenge was associated to the direct support of teachers (“supporting teachers in classrooms with challenging children”) while others noted related staffing and administration challenges (“understanding by administration of preschool special education” and “enough bilingual speaking staff for ELL students”).

To examine the influence of the master teacher’s education on their responses, I first grouped the participants into two categories: those with a bachelors degree ($n=15$) and those with a masters degree or higher ($n= 39$). Education was found to be the single significant predictor ($p = .034$) of participants citing that they frequently plan specific goals for teachers to improve weak areas indicating that the more education a master teacher had, the more frequently they were planning specific goals with teachers. Master teachers with more education also more frequently indicated a greater need for professional development in supporting teachers with special education students in their classrooms (more chosen as “1”).

Considering that the role of the master teacher is a complex and varied position, another individual factor thought to influence how respondents define their work was the amount of experience in the role. The categories of experience were collapsed into two groups: those in the position 6 years or fewer (novice, $n =27$) and those with over 6 years experience as a master teacher (experienced, $n=29$). Table 4 below illustrates that out of the 21 roles and responsibilities, novice and experienced teachers were found to significantly differ on 3. Experienced master teachers more frequently reported training teachers on the Early Screening Inventory-Preschool ($p=. 047$) as well as having more frequent communication with the

Community Parent Involvement Specialists ($p=.022$). Surprisingly, it was also found marginally significant ($p=.074$) that the more experienced master teachers reported less frequently planning training opportunities with teachers to improve weak areas.

Table 4

Individual factors predicting role and responsibility differences between novice and experienced master teachers

Roles and responsibilities	Mean rank ₁ (Novice)	Mean rank ₂ (Experienced)	χ^2	p
I visit classrooms.	29.61	27.47	1.216	.270
I provide feedback to teachers.	30.69	26.47	3.260	.071*
I provide individualized support for each teacher's level of development.	29.65	27.43	.700	.403
I engage in the reflective cycle to improve teaching practices.	29.76	27.33	.497	.481
I administer structured program evaluation instruments (e.g., ECERS, SELA, PCMI).	28.22	28.76	.028	.866
I plan specific goals for teachers to improve weak areas identified.	30.43	26.71	1.162	.281
I plan specific training opportunities for teachers to improve weak areas identified.	31.93	25.31	3.183	.074*
I plan small group meetings with teachers.	30.44	26.69	.955	.328
I support implementation of performance-based assessments.	29.91	27.19	.469	.494
I train teachers on the administration of the Early Screening Inventory–Revised (ESI-R).	32.80	24.50	3.940	.047**
I communicate with early childhood supervisors.	27.91	28.09	.004	.950
I communicate with the community parent involvement specialist (CPIS).	32.81	23.36	5.281	.022**
I communicate with the preschool intervention and referral team (PIRT) regarding requesting assistance for children with challenging behaviors.	27.61	28.38	.058	.810

I communicate results of preschool assessments along with other information with kindergarten staff.	28.09	27.91	.002	.965
I plan parent workshops together with CPIS.	28.94	27.09	.207	.649
I plan visits to kindergarten classrooms together with CPIS.	28.96	27.07	.230	.631
I plan with PIRT how to support teachers and parents with children who have challenging behaviors.	28.35	27.66	.034	.854
I provide technical assistance to district and provider administrators.	31.22	24.89	2.365	.124
I attend workshops.	28.50	27.52	.068	.794
I read research articles regarding areas of need.	29.04	27.00	.291	.589
I consult with others regarding areas of need.	28.59	27.43	.177	.674

*p \leq .10 marginally significant; **p \leq .05 significant

Organizational factors

Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory focuses on how an individual's experiences are interdependent with the organizational culture in which they work, forming what they term a 'community of practitioners' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This idea implies that the organization an individual works in has a direct impact on his/her learning. An important feature of this idea of a community of learners lies in how the context is structured and organized to support the adult learner. The organizational factors examined in the survey were the size of the district, curriculum used, and the caseload of teachers assigned to master teachers. All of these factors were found in some way to influence the reported roles and responsibilities, challenges and professional development needs of survey respondents.

As illustrated in Table 5 below, size was found to be the single significant predictor ($p=.061$) of coaches citing frequent engagement in the reflective cycle and providing feedback to teachers ($p=.082$) as key roles. The smaller the district (those with less than 5,000 total students), the more frequently the master teachers reported engaging in practices with teachers that require a more individualized approach. Caseload was also a significant factor in the frequency of planning specific training opportunities for teachers to improve weak areas ($p=.052$). These findings regarding size and caseload relate to the master teacher role of creating and providing professional development trainings for teachers based on observations and classroom assessments. As smaller districts may also have smaller caseloads, it may be that master teachers in those districts have more time to devote to the individualized practices to support classroom teachers.

Interestingly, the size of the district and the curriculum used were both found to be highly significant predictors of master teachers planning visits to K classrooms with CPIS. Curriculum was also noted as influencing how frequently the master teachers communicated information with the kindergarten staff ($p = .029$). Master teachers in smaller districts using either the High Scope or Tools of the Mind curricula reported planning visits to kindergarten classrooms more often as part of their work. This finding may be linked to the fact that both of these curricula emphasize the transition to elementary school within their framework and/or professional development. Tools of the Mind devotes a section of their Pre-K teachers manual to discussing transition to K, and actively works with districts that utilize their program to support this transition. High Scope's "elementary learning design" offers a comprehensive professional development program to support the transition from early childhood to kindergarten.

Table 5

Organizational factors predicting reported roles and responsibilities.

Role/Responsibility	Organizational factors	B	Std. Error	t	p (Sig.)
I visit classrooms.	Size	-.036	.049	-.734	.467
	Curriculum	.039	.030	1.316	.195
	Caseload	-.008	.010	-.862	.393
I provide feedback to teachers.	Size	-.102	.058	-1.776	.082*
	Curriculum	.050	.035	1.432	.159
	Caseload	-.013	.011	-1.134	.262
I provide individualized support for each teacher's level of development.	Size	-.111	.088	-1.258	.215
	Curriculum	-.048	.053	-.903	.371
	Caseload	.019	.017	1.112	.272
I engage in the reflective cycle to improve teaching practices.	Size	-.219	.114	-1.920	.061*
	Curriculum	.007	.069	.106	.916
	Caseload	-.011	.022	-.492	.625
I administer structured program evaluation instruments (e.g., ECERS, SELA, PCMI).	Size	-.061	.079	-.772	.444
	Curriculum	-.004	.048	-.090	.929
	Caseload	-.010	.015	-.652	.518
I plan specific goals for teachers to improve weak areas identified.	Size	-.046	.117	-.390	.699
	Curriculum	.007	.071	.104	.918
	Caseload	.015	.023	.679	.500
I plan specific training opportunities for teachers to improve weak areas identified.	Size	-.044	.108	-.408	.685
	Curriculum	.110	.065	1.691	.097
	Caseload	-.042	.021	-1.993	.052*
I plan small group meetings with teachers.	Size	.037	.144	.260	.796
	Curriculum	.047	.087	.542	.590
	Caseload	-.024	.028	-.862	.393
I support implementation of performance-based assessments.	Size	.150	.151	.997	.324
	Curriculum	.094	.091	1.027	.310
	Caseload	.012	.029	.420	.677
I train teachers on the administration of the Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R).	Size	.127	.198	.642	.524
	Curriculum	.076	.120	.632	.531
	Caseload	.030	.038	.784	.437

I communicate with early childhood supervisors.	Size	.063	.090	.701	.487
	Curriculum	.033	.055	.599	.552
	Caseload	-.012	.018	-.684	.498
I communicate with the community parent involvement specialist (CPIS).	Size	-.306	.172	-1.781	.081*
	Curriculum	-.064	.104	-.620	.538
	Caseload	.018	.033	.528	.600
I communicate with the preschool intervention and referral team (PIRT) regarding requesting assistance for children with challenging behaviors.	Size	-.030	.077	-.387	.700
	Curriculum	.035	.047	.742	.462
	Caseload	-.004	.015	-.294	.770
I communicate results of preschool assessments along with other information with kindergarten staff.	Size	-.286	.172	-1.660	.104
	Curriculum	-.236	.104	-2.259	.029**
	Caseload	-.020	.033	-.604	.549
I plan parent workshops together with CPIS.	Size	-.172	.165	-1.043	.302
	Curriculum	-.170	.100	-1.698	.096*
	Caseload	.016	.032	.497	.622
I plan visits to kindergarten classrooms together with CPIS.	Size	-.341	.149	-2.291	.027**
	Curriculum	-.283	.090	-3.137	.003***
	Caseload	.041	.029	1.403	.167
I plan with PIRT how to support teachers and parents with children who have challenging behaviors.	Size	-.174	.133	-1.304	.199
	Curriculum	-.055	.081	-.679	.500
	Caseload	-.001	.026	-.031	.976
I provide technical assistance to district and provider administrators.	Size	-.126	.171	-.736	.465
	Curriculum	-.131	.104	-1.262	.213
	Caseload	-.017	.033	-.502	.618
I attend workshops.	Size	-.030	.080	-.370	.713
	Curriculum	.087	.049	1.790	.080*
	Caseload	.062	.016	3.961	.000***
I read research articles regarding areas of need.	Size	-.015	.099	-.156	.877
	Curriculum	.054	.060	.896	.375
	Caseload	.007	.019	.368	.714

I consult with others regarding areas of need.	Size	-.194	.061	-3.180	.003***
	Curriculum	.057	.037	1.542	.130
	Caseload	-.003	.012	-.253	.801

*p \leq .10 marginally significant; **p \leq .05 significant; ***p \leq .01 highly significant

The responsibilities associated with master teachers' own professional development were influenced by all three organizational factors: curriculum, caseload, and size. As indicated in Table 3, both curriculum and caseload were significant factors in reporting attendance at workshops. This may indicate that as a master teacher's caseload increases s/he does not have time to attend workshops for his/her professional development. Size was also found to be a highly predictive factor of master teachers reporting consultation with others as a professional development resource ($p = .003$). This finding is not surprising given that size was the predictive factor of a majority of roles and responsibilities, and is associated with both master teachers' caseloads and the amount of time they have to engage in responsibilities.

In summary, it is not surprising that the individual factors of age, experience and education were shown to predominantly influence the reported roles and responsibilities of the NJ master teachers. This finding seems intuitive as the preparation and experiences the coaches enter the position with play a vital role in how they will approach their work. The organizational factors of size and caseload were also found to be significant predictors of the frequency of certain roles and responsibilities; but surprisingly curriculum played a noteworthy role especially with those responsibilities related to the communication and planning of the kindergarten transition. To more fully examine these factors in action, I conducted a comparative case study of two instructional coaches. These case studies provide a closer inspection of the daily lives of two New Jersey master teachers.

The Daily Life of Two NJ Master Teachers

Research to date offers a limited exploration of the daily work of coaches but the research suggests that the role is multidimensional and complex (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004). To build on this work and provide some context for the survey data, I followed two coaches, Natalie and Lydia (pseudonyms), observing their daily routines and interactions over 5 months, during the 2015-2016 school year. Both coaches also participated in three structured interviews throughout these months. The coaches were located in two separate districts within New Jersey both of which were utilizing the Tools of the Mind curriculum in their Pre-K classrooms. I begin by describing Natalie, the younger and less experienced of the two case studies. Natalie's case portrait is followed with that of Lydia, a seasoned master teacher. While the job description may be the same for each master teacher, they approach their work quite differently, in part, because of the contexts in which they work.

Natalie

It is a brisk day in early January, the third day back from the winter break. Natalie and I begin the day by signing in at the central office building, but immediately leave to travel to the first school. On our drive, she informs me of the day's schedule – a full morning beginning with a feedback meeting at one school and two scheduled classroom observations at another site. She tells me that the afternoon will most likely be back at the office doing paperwork.

We quickly arrive at the first school where Natalie has an 8:45 am meeting with a teacher to provide feedback from the ECERS -3 [Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – 3rd edition] she conducted earlier that week. After a brief and pleasant “good morning” to the

secretary, we sign in and enter the classroom to find the teacher by herself with students already arriving. The teacher tells Natalie that the assistant is delayed so she needs to stay in the classroom in order to serve breakfast. Natalie, observing how overwhelmed the teacher is, quickly begins helping by opening cereal containers and juice boxes saying, "The feedback can wait. Let's re-schedule, I could come in the afternoon today or during the students rest time." The teacher thanks her for the flexibility and they agree to do the feedback during the children's naptime later that day. We sign out in the office, after a brief friendly chat with the director and are off to the next school.

It is not too far of a drive to the next site where Natalie has two observations scheduled. We sign in at the office and enter the first classroom. The teacher meets us with a smile and friendly greeting, and Natalie briefly tells her why we are a bit early. The students are still in free choice/breakfast, so Natalie uses the time to ask if the teacher has any questions for her. They quickly discuss the next theme and questions the teacher has about some paperwork that was recently sent out by the supervisor. At about 9:30 am the teacher has the students clean up to get ready for Opening Group. Natalie sits on a chair at the edge of the carpet with a notebook in hand. After about 20 minutes, the teacher transitions the children to the tables for a handwriting activity, Graphics Practice. Natalie continues to record notes for a short time but then gets up from her observation post and begins rotating around the groups helping individual students, "Remember 'quack, quack' – hold your marker like this" and gets a new marker for a child whose marker ran out of ink. She continues to rotate and assist children at both the teacher and teacher assistant's tables and then motions to the teacher that she has to leave.

As we hurriedly walk down the hall to the next classroom, Natalie reflects on what she just observed making two comments aloud, "I need to look back at my notes because I know I

have talked about having classical music before" and "there's way too much wait time for the students." It is about 10 minutes after 10 o'clock and we immediately enter the second classroom. The students are already engaged in play planning. Natalie and the teacher smile and say hello as Natalie positions herself near the teacher's table and prepares to take notes. She doesn't stay seated for long though, and begins to rotate around the table looking at individual children's play plans while also jotting down notes. After about 15 minutes, the activity is finished and all children are now engaged in play. Natalie briefly asks the teacher about her ideas for transitioning to the new theme the following week. She listens to the teacher's ideas but also suggests: "well, you can try cafeteria, but being that the kids don't have direct experience going through a cafeteria line, like in-district classrooms do, it may need to be something different." She also states that she will email a resource with good ideas as well as some teachers' ideas from other schools. Before leaving, the teacher asks for suggestions and support for a specific student she feels will need to be referred for special services. Natalie schedules a time to return early the following week to observe the child. Prior to leaving the site, Natalie meets with the director briefly to confirm the date for the next staff meeting, get signatures on paperwork and discuss a new idea of doing staff bulletin board.

We arrive back at the district office around 11:30 am. Natalie immediately emails feedback to both teachers that were just observed. After working for about 20 minutes on emails, she takes a quick lunch break. We are then off again, headed back for the ECERS-3 feedback with the first teacher who was rescheduled this morning. We arrive at the site about 12:45 pm and the meeting with the teacher lasts about 45 minutes total.

It is now about 1:30 pm in the afternoon, we sign out and return to Natalie's car. As she checks her phone, she sees that the teacher who she is mentoring has left multiple messages

regarding her supervisor observation she had that morning. Natalie says that she is going to “stop by” that school, sharing that this teacher can get anxious if she doesn’t get back to her right away. We drive to the school, sign in and arrive to the teacher’s room as she is beginning to clean up from free choice. The teacher is happy to see Natalie and thanks her for stopping by, then briefly shares about her observation. Natalie asks if she can stay to observe the next large group literacy activity. The teacher invites us to sit down and transitions the class into the activity. As the teacher sets up, Natalie leans over and quietly shares with me that the last time she was observing this activity there was feedback about making tweaks in implementation and she wants to see if it has improved. We position ourselves near the teacher’s group and Natalie takes notes. As the activity winds to an end, Natalie checks the time and briefly motions a good-bye to the teacher, telling her she will see her later that week. Natalie enters the staff room down the hall saying, “I have just enough time to answer some emails before the day ends.” After a few minutes, we leave the school and return to the main office to sign out for the day.

This vignette illustrates a typical day for Natalie, one of six master teachers in North District, a large urban district servicing a total of 110 pre-kindergarten classrooms. During the time of this study, Natalie was in her fourth year as a master teacher. Prior to obtaining the MT position, Natalie taught Pre-K in the district for 7 years so she had a familiarity with the particular needs of the student population. Natalie supported 21 teachers across three different sites within the district.

On any given day, Natalie’s work included a variety of required tasks, such as classroom visits, providing feedback to teachers, and/or communicating with colleagues and teachers regarding specific children. Natalie felt that the main goal of the position was to support instructional improvement and consistently approached her work demonstrating a teacher-

centered view of the job. In her words, “Actually being in the classroom and being present with them [teachers]...I think that is really what is most important.” However, Natalie’s teacher-centered stance to the work was sometimes in tension with how the position was viewed and/or supported by administrators and colleagues in the district. In what follows I explain how Natalie enacted her teacher-centered view of coaching. I then explore the challenges she experienced in navigating district expectations with her quest to support teachers as professionals and collaborators in instructional improvement.

Enacting a teacher-centered approach to coaching. Adult learning theory suggests that legitimate participation must occur in the learning process, meaning the learner must have ownership of his/her learning, instead of being viewed as an object to be changed (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Natalie approached her work with teachers not only recognizing that her primary responsibility was to focus on teacher improvement, but also with the acknowledgement that the teacher’s point of view, feelings and opinions must be stressed for lasting change and growth. Natalie enacted her teacher-centered approach in several ways; by first and foremost building relationships with her teachers and then by coaching them through individualized observations and feedback and the use of active strategies such as modeling.

Relationship building. Current research has noted the development of good relationships and the ability to foster collaborative practices as a key component of successful coaching (Wilson et al., 2012; Howard et al., 2013) with interpersonal communication being highly ranked as an essential skill to assist in building this rapport (Howard et al., 2013). For Natalie, creating a relationship with her teachers meant that she had to plan to visit them regularly, be flexible enough to be an available and accessible resource, and be an active participant in their

classrooms. Although Natalie felt developing this rapport was a vital part of her role, she also acknowledged that building relationships was not always an easy task.

Planning and flexibility. In order to build relationships with her caseload, Natalie made sure she planned ahead to visit teachers regularly. “It makes it [the visit/feedback session] more intentional I think, to have it planned out.” This planning meant that both the schedule of the visits as well as the focus for each meeting was carefully decided. The NJ state job description states that classroom visits should take place at least once per month and coaches should utilize the reflective cycle to support these observational visits. Natalie followed this requirement, but also believed that some teachers required more frequent visits. In Natalie’s words, “I definitely base it more on the needs than just to get there.”

The idea of planning her observations for particular purposes is apparent in the vignette above as Natalie’s morning visits were specifically designed to observe the teachers conducting certain activities or to provide them with specific feedback from observations or assessment data. Natalie felt having a schedule and focus helped the teachers to feel prepared for the observation and develop trust in her. “I don’t just pop in...I write down who I am going to see and what I am going to see” because then they (the teachers) know and I can keep track and look back at my notes.

Although Natalie planned out her schedule in advance to make sure that she visited all the teachers on her caseload, she was also flexible and open to changing her schedule when needed. This flexibility with scheduling visits can be seen in the vignette above when Natalie chose to do a quick visit to her mentee after seeing several messages from her. Similarly, Natalie

did not conduct the observation of the teacher in the morning because the teacher was in a challenging situation and needed help.

Being available and accessible. Natalie believed that to achieve open communication the teachers needed to view her as an available, accessible and knowledgeable resource. One of the ways she made herself available was by sharing her cell phone number so teachers could email or text her with a question or concern.

All of them (teachers) have my email – and I give my cell phone out too – so lots of them will text a question. So, even if I am not directly in their classroom, we may be having conversations. We will even talk after school or early morning. They know when I am driving in and they know I don't mind talking to them on the phone. So, sometimes its not an actual visit – it might just be a conversation.

On multiple occasions, Natalie stressed her availability when speaking with the teachers. For example, as she was leaving a feedback session with a teacher she noted, “I am here next week for an ECERS, but if you need me or have a question, then text.... when its fresh in your mind its better to text me. And I will get back to you.” Multiple times throughout the observation period Natalie was heard telling a teacher as she was leaving, “Don't worry, I will send this to you in writing too” or “Email or text me your questions!”

Natalie acknowledged that building relationships with teachers was not always easy. A positive reception to ongoing coaching was something that did not occur immediately with all her teachers, it was something that was fostered over time and she knew she was responsible for working on building this relationship.

You can see the difference because when I first started there [one of her sites] and I would come in, it was like, “what do you want?” or “do you need something?” and now they [the teachers] are much more like, “oh, you are here! When are you going to see me?”

On one observation, Natalie stated that the site we were visiting was a new site for her that year. While it was already winter, she revealed that she had not really modeled or provided much feedback for these teachers as she told me, “I don’t have that yet – I don’t have that relationship.” In contrast, speaking about another site where she had consistently worked she stated, “The two centers that I have had for a couple of years, I feel comfortable. I feel I can talk to them about what improvements we can make... or work together.”

On any given day, Natalie also had to manage various temperaments, personalities and individual styles. Some teachers were easier to work with than others and Natalie expressed that this was one of the most challenging aspects of the position.

I think one of the hardest things for me and for the other new teachers is building that relationship. Especially when personalities don’t click or someone is just really turned off to me coming in. If I can’t build that relationship...if I can’t get to the teacher, how can [I] further that classroom or the needs of those students?

According to Natalie, there were a variety of reasons why she felt some teachers were challenging, “I have one [teacher] right now that looks at me as I am too young to be here. And she is older and been teaching forever...and she is just turned off to that [the coaching].” She also shared how over the years her most challenging teachers have been those who made her feel as though they did not want her to be in their classroom. When speaking about one of these

teachers she mentioned, “she tensed up and just wanted me gone and she was very sarcastic.”

For the most part, however, Natalie seemed to have built good relationships with the teachers on her caseload in part because she was a regular visitor and an easily accessible resource.

Being an active participant. Natalie also emphasized an “active observer” approach throughout her work with teachers that assisted in building trust as well as establishing herself as a qualified support. When in a classroom Natalie was not only a peripheral resource providing suggestions and feedback to the teacher, but she was also very participatory. Natalie’s active approach to her work is highlighted in the vignette that opened this case when multiple times throughout the day she was seen lending the teachers a helping hand (helping the teacher serve breakfast when the assistant was late) or assisting specific students (getting up from the observation to remind one student to hold the marker correctly and get a new marker for another student). During other observations she was seen routinely interacting with children during play, making cookies or being a customer in a children’s “store.” On one visit Natalie immersed herself in a behavior situation, putting down her observation notepad to attend to a child who was having an outburst, throwing toys and screaming. Natalie calmed the child to the point where he was able to lie in a center away from other children as the teacher and assistant finished the activity with the others.

It was clear from my observations that because Natalie took an active role within the classrooms the students also responded positively to her, identifying her as a member of their classroom communities. In every classroom Natalie walked into, she said “hello” to the students, using their names. Many times students ran up to her to say hello or give a hug.

*It was a blustery winter day and Natalie was observing a teacher at a site with multiple classrooms. We finished with the observation, signed out and were leaving. Directly outside the front door was the playground where another class was playing. The teacher on the playground waved and three students ran over to say hi to Natalie, also asking when she was coming to **their** classroom. Natalie pleasantly replied, “I’ll be back later this week. I will see you then!” The children cheered and ran back to the equipment.*

Natalie’s casual and friendly approach with the students in this vignette was observed on every day I shadowed her in the field. By knowing the students and them knowing her, Natalie was then able to “jump in” and provide more active support. Along with her willingness to help teachers with any task, Natalie’s engagement with students assisted her in gaining access, and being identified as a potential “partner” in the classroom.

Coaching teachers to change. For Natalie, having a flexible plan, being an available and involved participant provided the foundation from which she could actively coach for instructional improvement. To help teachers improve their practices, Natalie regularly observed teachers in their classrooms and provided individualized feedback. In addition, Natalie employed strategies such as modeling to foster a collaborative nature between all the teachers, even across sites.

Observations and individualized feedback. Observations were generally structured into two categories –general observations and ECERS-3 observations. During the general observations Natalie focused mainly on curricular elements coaching around a variety of components including the structure of the activities, schedule or the process and flow of the

instruction. The ECERS-3 observations were more structured and utilized a standardized evaluative instrument.

Natalie always had a plan for her general observations, “I always feel like I start with Opening Group and Play Planning because I think that is just such a big piece of it.” This plan was evident in Natalie’s coaching logs and the observations, especially concerning play planning as there were numerous teachers she was supporting with the development in this activity. While it was clear that Natalie had determined the area or activity that she was focusing on prior to the observed visits, she also expressed a desire for input from the teachers for planning the focus of the observations.

I also go by what they say because if they are telling me they are struggling with something and they are aware of it, I’m not just going to say ‘well, I’m just coming to see this and I’ll be back.’ Especially the teachers that do have things down and know what they are doing, I let them kind of guide me as far as what they need from me.

While this may be her goal, overwhelmingly there was more evidence in the observations that Natalie in fact chose the area of focus. It was only noted in a handful of observations when the focus was based on teachers’ requests. When this did occur they were generally pertaining to specific students. During one observation a teacher asked Natalie, “Can you come watch ____ (specific child),” as the teacher had concerns regarding the child’s language development and wanted Natalie’s opinion. On a separate day, as Natalie was leaving an observation another teacher caught her in the hallway saying, “I need feedback on what to do with ____ (specific child),” and requested that Natalie come out to do an observation and give her some suggestions on modifications to the activities.

The feedback Natalie planned following each observation varied depending upon the type of the observation as well as the individual teacher receiving the feedback. Some teachers received immediate feedback directly following the observation, others were scheduled to meet at a separate time, and still others received emailed feedback. Natalie stated, “usually it depends on the teacher and how much support they need” as her reasoning behind determining the timing and delivery of feedback. It was evident throughout the observations that Natalie chose to provide the more immediate feedback (immediately following the observation) to those teachers who she felt were struggling the most, while others who she deemed ‘less needy’ would receive their feedback at a later time (within 1-2 days after the observation) and sometimes only via email. In any case, Natalie felt it was important to provide this feedback as immediately as possible stating, “I try to give feedback within a day or two, whether it’s via email or in person.”

Throughout her work, Natalie actively discussed using the reflective cycle. Through the reflective cycle, the teacher and master teacher collaboratively establish goals, analyze the observed data together and make future instructional decisions (<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/pd/mt/reflective.htm>). There were distinctions made between providing feedback and using the reflective cycle with teachers.

There are some teachers that I have way more reflective cycles on than others because you are in there more or they just need more. Maybe there’s no need for a reflective cycle that specific time – you provide feedback and.... you don’t need to see it again.

This distinction with feedback via the reflective cycle was illustrated throughout my observations of her with some teachers. For example, when observing her newer and/or less experienced teachers Natalie often expressed that this was a “follow up” observation due to a goal the teacher

had for developing in a particular area, therefore allowing her to have repeated conversations with the teacher reflecting on a specific goal for improvement. It seemed as if the more seasoned teachers did not receive many “follow up” visits therefore feedback was provided without being tied to a continued goal.

The conversations Natalie had with teachers after her general observations were also followed up in writing, whether in her own coach log or as an email to the teacher. On one occasion Natalie left a classroom visit stating, “so I have learned to meet with her (the teacher) in person and then follow it up with an email about what we have discussed” because she felt the teacher had difficulty immediately processing her feedback.

Natalie often described her role using words such as “collaborator” and “facilitator” and at least once during every visit she commented that she felt most teachers value the collaboration. But, this approach meant Natalie often needed to put her initial comments aside and attempt to see a situation from the teacher’s lens.

Once they know me they know I am not just there to be like ‘oh, you are doing this wrong and its horrible.’ I ask them a lot... I say ‘I notice you did that, can you tell me why?’ I want to know what was the reasoning for it. Because sometimes they may have a reason and I just didn’t see. So, I just don’t come back and assume – ‘oh this is ridiculous.’ Because maybe there is a really good reason and I think ‘oh, that makes sense!’

An example illustrating Natalie’s individualized feedback to teachers occurred while Natalie was providing feedback to a teacher regarding her recent observation of a math lesson.

Natalie (N) had taken pictures of the observation and displayed them for the teacher (T) to see in order to frame the discussion.

N – Did you see me taking the pictures?

T – No! (Laughs)

N – This was an awesome activity! Your strength was definitely that all children were engaged. Do you have any questions for me?

T – Thanks, I just think my timing is still off. It's still hard.

N – Well, have you tried to do the smaller groups we talked about? Or maybe it's the transition to the activity.... what do you think?

T – Yea, the transition is hard. How do I get them all to carpet from various spots in the room? I have tried to do breakfast differently and I have done the songs. I don't know...

N – Maybe you could stagger the clean up? Like this?

She then quickly draws a picture to illustrate.

This conversation displays how Natalie consistently would strive to frame her support as a dialogue *between* teacher and coach, not just coach telling the teacher what to do. This style of interaction directly relates to adult learning theory that adults must be internally motivated and self-directed to truly learn (Knowles, 1990). Even if she had an opinion about improvements, Natalie wanted the teacher to provide his or her own insight (“what do you think?”) and talk through possible options. Then, when offering suggestions she attempted to make them practical, tied to the situation and non-threatening (“Maybe you could...” “Have you tried...”). Natalie did not want to just be viewed as providing “solutions to the problems” but rather initiating an open dialogue with the hope of facilitating the teachers’ learning.

I did not observe Natalie conducting any ECERS-3 observations but Natalie’s coaching logs illustrated that she was conducting at least one, often two ECERS-3 observations every week from December through April 2016. Each ECERS-3 visit was then followed up with a

formal feedback session to review with the teacher. It seemed standardized across all observations that Natalie began the ECERS-3 feedback session with the teacher being asked to read through the written form and then she provided a synopsis of highlighted areas. This synopsis was general in nature, “your interactions were great, there were no issues with supervision, the room arrangement was good.” Natalie then provided recommendations as to what practices and/or items the teacher should be improving upon as can be seen in the following vignette.

After arriving at the site promptly at 12:45 pm and signing in, we position ourselves at the back table of the classroom as all of the students are napping. Natalie provides the teacher with written feedback, allows her a moment to look it over and then begins the discussion asking, “So, do you have any questions?” The teacher brings up one specific girl in the classroom who she feels should be going to a self-contained classroom. Natalie offers a couple of suggestions for supporting this child with transitions and scheduling saying, “most important is following the sequence of the schedule.” Natalie asks, “Do you think she could have her own schedule?” The teacher says she has not tried this for this particular child but had done so for other children in the past. The teacher then proceeds to describe what she had done in the past while Natalie listens, shaking her head positively and says, “That sounds good. Why don’t you give that a shot with her?” After this interchange, Natalie then redirects the teacher back to the ECERS-3 form. As one of the lower scores on the ECERS-3 pertains to the teacher’s use of transitions and schedule, Natalie says, “I saw in the observation that there were a lot of transitions in the Opening Group – going from large group to small group then back again to large...when do you think you could find another time to do Share the News?” They discuss a few ideas and options as far as the schedule and the teacher takes some notes to begin to frame out a new schedule that

would assist her with better transitioning. Natalie asks the teacher a few more questions about planning for the upcoming theme. She listens to the teacher's ideas and provides some suggestions. The feedback session ends with the teacher saying "this was very helpful and I think looking at this schedule and trying something new will help." Natalie has her sign the ECERS-3 paperwork and then tells her she will be in touch to let her know when she can return again.

Whether giving feedback on an ECERS-3 or general observation, Natalie would begin each of her feedback sessions in a similar way, by first asking the teacher if they had questions for her. This prompt permitted the teachers to feel as though their questions, not Natalie's agenda, were of foremost importance. As can be seen above in the vignette, beginning with this question led to the teacher asking questions about a specific child, obviously not the focus of the meeting. While this strategy of supporting the teacher's viewpoint could lead to losing time and focus, Natalie mentioned there was a "balancing act" between her desire to discuss a particular need she noted in the observation and focusing on what the teacher expressed desire to have assistance with. From Natalie's perspective, "I go by what they say because if they are telling me they are struggling with something, they are aware of it...I let them guide me as far as what they need from me." In practice, Natalie was an active listener, keeping good eye contact, leaning in to the teacher as she spoke and phrasing her feedback in ways that required the teacher's input.

While Natalie attempted this open communication with all her teachers, she also acknowledged she had some teachers who were unreceptive to suggestions. Speaking about one of these teachers, she stated, "I just never got through to her." Natalie acknowledged that she tried various strategies with these teachers to foster the impact of her coaching. Describing a few

of these strategies she noted, “we started slow because...she’s one that was always talking over you,” “I always gave her something positive...never even really gave her a recommendation,” and “when I give feedback...I quote exactly what they said. I’m very specific.” But ultimately, she said she felt that she was discouraged by these teachers’ reactions and this lack of communication made it nearly impossible to continue her work. “I can’t stop and say ‘well it’s not going to matter.’ That’s just not me and it’s not my personality. So, I keep going in, but its hard – it’s definitely not easy.”

Use of modeling. In addition to observing and providing suggestions, Natalie also frequently utilized modeling as a strategy to improve teacher’s practices. Modeling is “an opportunity for the learner to observe the coach demonstrate or model a particular skill, technique, or strategy prior to using it him- or herself” (Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004, p.39). Natalie spoke about how she frequently utilized this hands-on strategy as she felt modeling built trust and respect as the teachers saw her as a knowledgeable resource. “It’s (modeling) not just for them, it’s for me too – because I am not directly in the classroom right now.... It’s so easy to come in and say you should be doing X, Y and Z ... but if you have never actually done it.” Many times she expressed that for the teachers to truly receive her feedback and suggestions she felt as if they needed to know “they are in it together” and she believed using modeling provided this opportunity.

At multiple points in her coaching logs Natalie mentioned scheduling times to model various activities for teachers or teacher assistants. One example of using this hands-on approach spontaneously occurred during an observation of play planning. Play planning is a daily curricular activity that provides a period of time where the teacher supports children to create individual written plans for their play in the centers. During the observation, the teacher was

struggling to have one student create his/her picture. The teacher looked up at Natalie and shrugged, signaling she was unsure of what to do for this child. Natalie seized the opportunity to ask the teacher if she could plan with the child and told the teacher, “just watch for a minute.” Natalie modeled a brief interaction with the child whereby they added a detail to her picture that then permitted the child to go off to the chosen center. The teacher smiled and said, “That’s it? I thought I needed to do so much more!” Natalie then stepped back into her role of observer and jotted some notes to refer back to when de-briefing with the teacher later.

Another example of modeling occurred at the end of a feedback session with a teacher. Natalie shared with me that this was a relatively novice teacher who had a fairly difficult group of students this year. She felt she was handling the challenges she faced well and wanted to offer as much support as she could. At the end of the feedback session, the teacher expressed that she would like Natalie to come back to observe a child she was having concerns about. The teacher reported that the boy was not effectively communicating with his peers or teachers. Natalie asked the teacher to point out the child and then requested that she join her in the block center with the child. Natalie and the boy played for approximately 15 minutes, as the teacher observed the interaction. Throughout the brief interaction, Natalie routinely modeled proactive ways to engage the boy in conversing with his peers in the center. At the end of the time, Natalie told the teacher she would be back soon to discuss some of the strategies and do a more formal observation of the boy.

Natalie also tried to extend her direct modeling in individual classrooms by using other teachers as models. On multiple occasions Natalie was seen showing or sending photographs from other classrooms as inspirations for theme ideas or to highlight practical strategies such as methods of organization. She described why she used this strategy as,

I will say to them, ‘that was really great, do you mind if I share that?’ or ‘that was helpful what you just did and I saw another teacher struggling, do you mind if I share?’ Our position is unique in that sense that we see so many people and even though they are all doing the same curriculum, it’s those little things like how teachers organize things that can help.

Throughout the observation period, Natalie continued to acknowledge both verbally and through her actions that she felt the development of collaborative relationships was key to her role. Natalie navigated her role in a teacher-centered way, embedding herself as an active observer and gaining a position of trust and respect with most of her caseload. Although Natalie approached her work in a positive, thoughtful and planned way, there were many times when challenges presented themselves and caused her to have to re-examine her expectation to be a teacher-centered coach.

Challenges and supports for the work. Studies of coaching have illustrated that the organizational context in which the coaching takes place influences the success of the coaching (Ackerman, 2008; Howard et al., 2013; Domitrovich et al., 2008). Despite having flexibility in how and when she worked with teachers, the way the master teacher role was structured in North District posed two distinct challenges to Natalie doing her job. The first of these was a lack of district protocol defining the role that caused problems in Natalie’s communication with the other MT’s and the PIRT members. These problems with defining the role and the impact on communication highlighted the importance that Natalie placed on everyone working towards the same goal and conveying the same message. The second challenge was the state and district mandated responsibilities that created a tension between how Natalie wanted to do her job and how she was supposed to do the job.

Multiple interpretations and enactments of the role. North District was a fairly large district with six master teachers and six PIRT members all supporting the preschool classrooms. Both the master teachers and PIRT team members visited the classrooms but not all of them viewed the role of the master teacher in the same way. These varying interpretations caused differences in how the role was enacted across the master teachers but influenced also how PIRT and the MT's communicated with each other.

Lack of protocol for master teachers. North District's early childhood administration did not have a protocol defining the master teacher position and describing expectations for how master teachers should approach their work. The administration did hold regular, monthly meetings with focused agendas with all six master teachers and Natalie reported, "[Director and Supervisor's names] are great with that. If there is something that comes up, we can go right to them." But, in contrast, there was no planned collaboration with the other master teachers. So, while they might get together following specific meetings "so we are all on the same page," there was no dedicated time where all master teachers met, discussed goals, or collaboratively planned. For Natalie a regular meeting, "would probably be helpful...if we did something like that. Just to sort of talk about what is going on and what we are seeing." However, with the way the job was currently structured, Natalie felt as though all the master teachers were saying and doing different things. From Natalie's perspective,

It would be nice if...we gathered together and said 'ok, this is what we all heard and how is that message going to go out when we go into the classrooms? Because it does happen where they [teachers] will say 'that's not what so-and-so said.'

One of the challenges for Natalie was the lack of consistency in the way the master teacher role was interpreted and communicated with classroom teachers.

I would like to see...us all being a little bit more uniform in how we go out and what the procedures and the protocol would be. That is what I struggle with – what is my role.

Because this one's saying this and this one's saying that. And I went to the master teacher thing (state provided training during first year) and I am pretty clear on what I am going to do but if other people aren't, what does that mean? So, I would like not just from the state, but from our district – what they expect.

From Natalie's perspective, teachers often received mixed or changing messages depending upon whom they spoke to within the district. While she acknowledged there are "sometimes our interpretations...and not everything is black and white...but it (messages about curriculum) shouldn't go out there as different things." On another occasion she shared that she felt this inconsistency negatively impacts the view the teachers have of the department.

I do think that if there were 'tightness' in what we do, it would really benefit – not just us but the teachers. I was on the "other side" (a teacher)...so I know that feeling and I don't think it looks good to come out with so many different people saying different things.

As there was not a consistent message from the administration about how master teachers should approach their work, Natalie reported that many of her colleagues were not regularly utilizing the more active participant strategies such as modeling. In her own words,

I think those kind of things (not using active learning strategies with teachers) are what the problem is because I have teachers say that 'I have been told ... 'I am a veteran

teacher so I don't need to get modeling.' I think that is silly because we all can use modeling sometime or another.

Natalie noted other master teachers viewed their role as more of a resource, visiting the classrooms and just asking the teachers "do you need anything?" She had strong feelings that this approach did not truly assess the teacher's needs or offer much information to focus the coaching of master teachers. In Natalie's words, "For me to have someone just come in and say 'do you need something?' No – I might not know what I need. Some of them (the teachers) don't know." Natalie explained that often teachers respond to this question with providing tasks such as laminating materials, therefore leading master teachers to view their role as a 'helper' instead of a 'coach.' She felt this was not how the role should be interpreted stating, "I would prefer someone to come in and provide me with some feedback. Some actual concrete things that would make my teaching better."

Natalie expressed ongoing frustration that the role was interpreted by some of her colleagues so differently that it became a dilemma when switching between master teachers. Some teachers new to her caseload had had very different experiences with previous master teachers and some interpreted Natalie's more active style as an infringement on their own autonomy in their classroom. Teachers have questioned her, "why are you here more...so-and-so wasn't?" or "why are you doing this (visits and/or observations)...when I had so-and-so this didn't happen?" She stated, "I think that (all the MTs doing things differently) is an issue because it sends a bad message to the teachers." Similarly, Natalie commented that she has some teachers that will still reach out to her even though they are assigned to another master teacher because they are not receiving the same support as she had provided.

I have teachers that will say ‘last year you were doing this and now that’s not happening.’ And I can’t – that is not right. If I’m not supporting you this year – I mean not that I’m not here – I can talk to you but I can’t pin people against each other too. Like ‘why is this person calling you when I am their support person this year?’ But I feel like if we were more the same...those issues wouldn’t arise.

Relationship with PIRT- a questioning of expertise. In the past, master teachers and the PIRT were assigned to schools/sites, but not necessarily the same ones. So, one master teacher might be communicating with three or more PIRT members about their various sites. The administration decided that this arrangement might be a root cause of the communication difficulties that were being reported. In an effort to improve communication and collaboration the administration paired each master teacher with a PIRT member, as there were 6 of each. These dyads were then assigned the same caseloads in an effort to tighten the communication and support loop. This collaboration was also supported with common planning time throughout the week for each pair. According to Natalie, “they (administration) tried to alleviate it (interruptions, frustrations) with common planning time so we can have more time for communication.”

Natalie and her assigned PIRT member, Rosalind (pseudonym), routinely spent time discussing their various teachers. I witnessed only a few of these conversations, but Natalie’s logs indicated that she would speak to Rosalind at least once, usually twice a week. She noted that she “briefly stopped by” or “checked in” with Rosalind regarding a particular case. Even though they shared common planning time, these check-ins were not scheduled as regularly occurring meetings.

In many conversations between Rosalind and Natalie they were in agreement that the teacher required certain strategies and support, but few of their conversations led to a definitive agreement as to what support to offer. This lack of a consensus or plan impacted the consistency of the messages and supports conveyed to the teachers. An example of one such encounter occurred during an observation when Rosalind (R) had just visited a teacher and wanted to share her impressions of the visit to Natalie (N). Rosalind began the conversation by saying that she just provided the teacher with feedback from her visit.

R - She took the feedback, my suggestions, but I don't think she is going to follow through.

Natalie agreed that this teacher lacked planning and intentionality with some of her choices.

R - Well, what have you done?

N - I've modeled...done numerous follow up observations after modeling...shared concrete examples...pictures to demonstrate the activities. She does things to do them but she is not understanding why she is doing them.

The conversation then shifted to discuss the scheduling dilemma that this teacher is having around her gross motor time.

N - I told her she is just going to take the hit on ECERS and do it in the afternoon, because there are so many other areas that need to get focused on.

R – I actually agree with her (the teacher). Those kids need gross motor in the morning.

Natalie shrugged and the conversation ended with Rosalind asking Natalie when she will be visiting that teacher again.

During this conversation, both Natalie and Rosalind respectfully shared their points of view about certain dilemmas with this teacher, but there was no discussion around a common plan to move forward. While Natalie and Rosalind agreed on some of the points each had made regarding this teacher, for example her inability to follow through on suggestions, it felt as if Natalie took on a defensive position at points in the conversation, attempting to justify what she has tried to work on with the teacher and what strategies she has utilized. There was an obvious disagreement on when the teacher should be having gross motor time. Natalie had provided the teacher with her suggestions, with the acknowledgement that this would impact the teacher's ECERS score in that area. But, Rosalind also had strong feelings about the gross motor time as a way to assist the social emotional health of the children and expressed on multiple occasions that she did not agree with Natalie on this point. Then, the conversation merely ended without a joint plan being discussed for how they will both move forward in their support of this teacher.

Acknowledging that the working relationship between her and Rosalind was at times challenging, Natalie shared a story illustrating a time when there had been disagreement about the advice offered to a teacher. During an observation, Rosalind had witnessed an incident with the teacher's assistant. She immediately cautioned the teacher, "is that what TPOT [Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool] would tell you to do?" But, upon hearing about the incident second-hand from the teacher and from Rosalind, Natalie was not convinced Rosalind had fully understood the context of the situation in terms of the curriculum and other perimeters. Natalie said, "it happens too often – a disconnect between what PIRT says and what I may say or think."

On another occasion Natalie spoke of having to “walk the line” with teachers to stay professional and not share all of her thoughts regarding the disagreements between her and Rosalind. There were numerous times when either the teacher or Natalie felt as though Rosalind was telling them what to do and did not see the full picture. Natalie also noted times when she felt Rosalind came to her with reports from classrooms that were not within her realm of concern. For example, she noted that she had come in to tell her that a teacher “wasn’t using the proper clean up song.” Natalie expressed that these “interruptions” were not productive as she felt they were merely “picky” comments.

The relationship between Natalie and Rosalind was strained by an underlying questioning of expertise. Many times it seemed the disagreement on suggestions or supports necessary for the teachers were not fully discussed or jointly decided upon between the Natalie and Rosalind. Therefore it became evident the teachers were being told two different, sometimes opposing things, from each person and the tension lay in whose advice the teachers should attend to. This lack of back and forth between the teachers and the PIRT member often caused a break down in communication between all parties.

Conflict between requirements and desired role. While on the one hand, Natalie struggled with the multiple interpretations and enactments of the role of the MT in her district, she also struggled with some of the required tasks of MTs and her teacher-centered approach to performing her role.

The first of these tensions arose because Natalie’s teacher centered approach to coaching was often in conflict with the requirement that she assess teacher performance by administering the ECERS-3. During the year of the study, the state of NJ switched to a revised form of

assessment for their early childhood classroom environments, the ECERS-3. Master teachers are responsible for conducting an ECERS-3 in each of their assigned classrooms prior to the spring, when state employees would then conduct a formal assessment. This requirement influenced how the master teachers scheduled and conducted their classroom observations as well as feedback sessions as they needed to finish an ECERS-3 and feedback in all their classrooms by early spring.

The ECERS-3 observations were planned differently as they were required to last a full 3 hours and required that Natalie witness a variety of activities conducted within that time. This observation was in contrast to how Natalie typically arranged her general observations that were 30-90 minutes and planned around specific time blocks or activities. Natalie did express the desire to make connections between the ECERS-3 feedback and her general observations, stating she felt the overall purpose of the ECERS-3 was to assist in highlighting areas of growth. “There are just certain things that are just not developmentally appropriate, just not good practice. And then you can show them through ECERS or through the curriculum.” But, often the ECERS-3 feedback was merely generalized ‘quality control’ monitoring. There was an apparent tension between providing feedback around instructional practices that required attention and providing feedback just to get a better score on a particular area of the ECERS-3. This tension left Natalie feeling that conducting an ECERS-3 observation in every classroom was not the best use of her time. In her own words, “they (standardized assessment tools such as ECERS) take up a lot of time. You need them, but sometimes there’s no time left to then discuss ... work together.”

Another comparison between the general observation visits and the ECERS-3 visits was the varying roles that Natalie took on in each, which impacted the way Natalie was able to perform her role. During an ECERS-3 observation, Natalie was required to be a passive

observer, not engaging in dialogue with teachers or students. But, during the general observations, Natalie fluidly moved between being a passive observer (sitting on the fringes, taking notes) to being a more active, participatory observer (interacting with teachers and students). Navigating this participatory role was evident throughout the months of observation, as Natalie appeared to readily enjoy “jumping in” and assisting with students. Therefore, the ECERS-3 observations challenged her participatory nature, as she had to stay more removed and passive. As these ECERS observations and feedback sessions were a significant percentage of her time throughout many months, Natalie often felt that she was not able to perform the role the way she desired. This tension of performing her role in a way counter to how she felt coaching should occur, often left Natalie feeling depleted, stating that she felt her role was only “going through the motions.”

Another conflict that caused a tension and disrupted Natalie’s ability to work directly with teachers was the administration’s reliance on using the master teachers to cover lunch periods. The master teacher’s main office was located in one of the district elementary school buildings. When asked in our first interview together if there were duties that she felt fell outside of her job description, Natalie noted that “sometimes” the master teachers were called to watch a classroom of students in order for the teacher to take her lunch period. Within a short time following that interview, Natalie commented that this duty had significantly increased and by late winter all master teachers were provided a set lunch duty rotation schedule. The schedule required each master teacher to cover classroom teachers’ lunch periods three days each week, typically for about an hour and a half in the middle of the day. Natalie provided a specific example of how this had impacted her ability to perform her role effectively.

This teacher asked me to come in to help her TA [teacher assistant] because she didn't know the curriculum. I offered to model what activities the TA wanted to see, but the only time I can do it for her is during their lunch/naptime. It has been hard because of the lunch coverage issues.

For Natalie, this middle of the day period was “prime time” to meet with some teachers, especially those teachers in the provider sites as they do not have a prep period so often naptime was the only downtime throughout the day. Natalie also shared that this situation was difficult because the master teachers do not necessarily know all of the students in the classrooms they are covering. This challenge was witnessed firsthand during an observation day when Natalie was required to cover the lunch period for the self-contained special education teacher in the building. Immediately upon entry to the classroom, the teacher left without speaking to Natalie other than a “bye, see you in awhile.” Natalie and I were left with seven special education four year olds and a substitute assistant. Natalie had limited knowledge of the children and the assistant had never substituted in a preschool classroom before, much less a self-contained classroom. This provided a challenge and frustration for Natalie, as she attempted to understand what the student's needs were without any assistance or information.

In summary while Natalie approached her work as a supporter of teachers, the challenges of navigating the ECERS-3 observations and feedback as well as being pulled to cover lunches made it difficult for Natalie to enact her role as effectively as she desired.

Conclusion. Natalie viewed the primary aspect of her job as collaborating closely with teachers to improve their instructional practice. To do so, she expressed the need to not only develop relationships with the teachers she worked with, but also sought to build the capacity for

teachers to collaborate with each other. While this teacher-centered view of coaching is admirable, and echoes both adult learning theories and current research on coaching, it can also be troublesome. Those teachers who Natalie found it difficult to form relationships with did not receive the same level of coaching/support as others. Natalie felt there must be a relationship prior to teachers making change; therefore without a relationship, the coaching was more challenging. Natalie also encountered some challenges pursuing the role including a clear district structure and protocol, the relationship and communication with PIRT and competing responsibilities that infringed on the time she could devote to the instructional coaching support in the classrooms.

It has been documented in the literature that one way to help coaches navigate their role as facilitators of adult learning is to provide them with specialized professional development (Ackerman, 2008). In Natalie's words regarding her own professional development she stated, "There's always room for improvement." However, Natalie reported that she had never received district-provided professional development for her role. While she acknowledged the state provided one to two days of training for master teachers per year, she felt these were often only focused on one topic and inadequate for the varied supports she felt necessary for the role. Hence, Natalie was navigating her role without any ongoing professional development, even though she expressed a desire to keep developing her own practice or learn new skills.

Lydia

It is a pleasant day in mid-December when I arrive at Southern Elementary School to meet Lydia. As we walk from the main office to an empty classroom down the hall, she informs me that we will be starting the day with a feedback session for a teacher whose classroom she

conducted an ECERS-3 on during the previous week. After a short time in the classroom, Lydia's colleague, Angela, meets us. Lydia tells me that she and Angela "work side by side – we share our caseloads." To my surprise, this means they conduct all their observations and feedback sessions together.

Lydia and Angela sit together at a small table. A little before 9am, the teacher arrives in the room and exchanges a couple of pleasantries with Lydia, Angela and myself. Lydia begins with "her section" of the feedback, explaining that she will go through each item one by one, state the score the teacher received and coach her on "how to get a better score." The teacher nods approvingly and tells Lydia that she is eager to hear what she needs to do. Lydia tells her, "Good thing about you is it isn't your teaching – it is all these other things that are easy fixes."

The ECERS-3 instrument has a variety of focal areas that are each rated on a scale of 1 to 7, including space and furnishings, interactions, program structure and personal care routines. Lydia provides the teacher with all of her scores, but highlights areas where the teacher scored low. In meals/snacks, Lydia points out that the low score was due to no snack offered in the observed time period. "Snack, you got a 1. But, you aren't getting money for food from the Early Childhood Department. This ECERS-3 is for all the poor, disadvantaged kids. Your kids are eating well and getting breakfast, so you don't have to worry about it." This same area also addresses a washing/sanitizing regimen. Lydia points out, "There were sanitizer problems too – you need soap and water THEN sanitizer. You need to have two bottles." Lydia quickly describes how to do this. A bit frustrated, the teacher tells Lydia and Angela that in reality this practice "eats up a lot of time" and asks how often does she really need to wash the tables. They all agree it is time consuming, but Lydia then points out "there is no percentage needed, but you need to begin doing this so it is not something new when the ECERS-3 raters are

here.” Lydia continues to list off more areas one by one that will need to be “addressed” stating:

Cozy has to be in literacy. They want it to be a mini library now. You need a space for privacy. You need to have print and numbers on your mind. You need to incorporate this throughout the day. Math materials must be in all activities – the big thing is to have items for all the math categories. You must use your fingers to represent numbers. You need diverse babies, multicultural menus, multicultural food and clothing.

The teacher shares her frustration that all of this will require her ordering lots of materials and asks if there is money available. Lydia says she understands and will talk to the supervisor to see what she can do. She then pulls up photographs from other classrooms with examples of simple suggestions for some of the areas, such as providing a representation of both a number along with its quantity in classroom displays. After showing a few examples, Lydia asks, “do you understand what I am saying? To get a 5 that day, you need to show children how to understand written numbers and use displays as teaching tools.” Lydia then tells the teacher that she has too much on her walls and, “You need to scan your room and take down some of that stuff that doesn’t count.” Angela then takes over and shares “her section” of the feedback that concentrates on looking over a sample schedule to fit in all the necessary components.

It has been nearly an hour and a half and the lengthy feedback session winds to an end with Lydia and Angela asking the teacher if she has any questions for them. They provide her with the written form illustrating all the scores and ask her to sign paperwork to keep a record of the visit. Lydia states, “our feedback will always be in this reflective cycle way – we won’t really

do anything with the whole group.” The teacher thanks both Lydia and Angela and leaves. Lydia glances over at me and exasperated says, “ECERS-3 is taking over all of our time!”

This vignette illustrates a typical day for Lydia, one of two master teachers in South District, a small urban district with a total of 34 classrooms. At the time of the study, Lydia had been a master teacher in the district for eight years. For seven years prior to obtaining this role, Lydia was a pre-K teacher in the same district, affording her the opportunity to have a working knowledge of the students, teachers, administration and curriculum. Lydia and her colleague, Angela (pseudonym), were provided some flexibility in interpreting their role and chose to navigate all of their responsibilities together. Until April of the study year, the master teachers in South District also assumed most of the responsibilities of the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT). This structure, combined with a heavy focus on the ECERS-3, appeared to influence Lydia to approach her work in a highly standardized manner.

A standardized approach to coaching. Coaching is defined as a professional development approach that requires a relationship, recognition of individual differences and commitment to working towards shared goals (Kise, 2006). Lydia described her job saying, “I want to help people. I want to help them understand early childhood.” While this underlying desire to help her teachers was expressed, it was also evident that from Lydia’s perspective most of her responsibilities of the position were requirements or orders she had to follow. She would often begin discussing her responsibilities stating, “the state requires...” or “we have to...” and there were limited times when she spoke about doing something with or for a teacher in an effort to change practice. While it is assumed that individualizing coaching to the needs of particular teachers leads to instructional improvement, Lydia tended to approach coaching in the same way with every teacher on her caseload. In her own words, “all of them (teachers) get one visit from

us and they all get the feedback forms.” Therefore, she enacted all of her responsibilities in a regulated and unvarying way.

This standardized approach to the role was evident in two ways. First, all of Lydia’s work was done in conjunction with Angela, the other master teacher in the district. This joint coaching model was the framework for all their work including observation and feedback sessions with teachers. Second, all of Lydia’s observations were standardized, whether they pertained to the ECERS-3 or were general observations. This standardization across various responsibilities influenced the interactions Lydia had with teachers causing the majority of feedback to be directive, evaluative and uniform across their caseload.

“I can’t imagine if we did everything separate.” Master teachers ‘sharing’ caseloads and performing all duties together was a unique concept to me, so I asked Lydia to explain,

In the beginning we were split up. Then, we were constantly needing to collaborate. Her office was on one side of town and mine was on the other and we were always trying to be together to collaborate. So, when we got the office together – the MT lab here (their joint office space) - it was so nice. We got together because we were the PIRT team too ...so we just needed to be together to figure out how we are going to just do all of our duties.

In the five observation days, I rarely saw Lydia work alone. During these visits, Lydia and Angela performed three ECERS-3 observations, two ECERS-3 feedback sessions and one general observation. Lydia explained how they structured the jointly conducted the ECERS-3 observations stating, “she (Angela) takes half the items, and I take half the items and we always overlap (some). The teacher doesn’t know that, but it’s more for reliability for us – to make sure

we are giving the same score.” Most afternoons of the observation days were then spent together in their office discussing what they had observed and writing up their reports together. All of Lydia’s coaching logs also illustrated that the majority of her responsibilities were conducted together with Angela. Therefore, co-coaching was the standard structure for all the work performed by the master teachers in South district and there was little variance from this structure.

There was only one occasion witnessed where Lydia conducted an observation without Angela. On this observation, Lydia was scheduled to be in referral meetings with parents at one of the early childhood buildings. She informed me early in the morning that she was going to step out of the meeting at one point and conduct an observation in a classroom for about 15 minutes. She requested that I not join her, explaining that this teacher was a “nervous Nelly” and the teacher has told her and Angela in the past that she gets nervous when both of them observe her together. So, she said she feels they have to “accommodate her.” While such individualization may be a desired component of coaching, this was the only observed evidence of such accommodation occurring.

Lydia felt the ‘joint coaching’ model strengthened her ability to coach and communicate with teachers. On many occasions she suggested that having two sets of eyes on an observation ensured that teachers got a more informed set of feedback. In Lydia’s words, “How do you become more effective if you are not collaborating with someone that is doing your same job? You can’t know it all.” From Lydia’s perspective, co-coaching was also a more consistent way to communicate to teachers. Lydia noted that if they did not visit classrooms together teachers might receive inconsistent communication, “what if she is telling a group one thing and I am telling a group another? We try to really be on the same page.” But, in practice this shared

approach to coaching had some observed disadvantages including the tendency to have more “off task” conversations within an observation and the amount of perceived “wasted” time. The co-coaching model also influenced the ability for each master teacher to build individual rapport with the teachers. The vignette below highlights typical interactions that occurred while Lydia and Angela performed their responsibilities together during an ECERS-3 observation.

I meet Lydia and Angela at the school at 9 am, sign in and walk immediately to the classroom. I am informed that we will be spending the whole morning in the classroom conducting another ECERS-3. We enter the room and the teacher is in Opening Group with the children. She nods to both Lydia and Angela and they both take seats at the back of the carpet. I sit at a table off to the right. Lydia and Angela immediately begin whispering and pointing to their ECERS-3 sheets, discussing what the scores should be for some of the items. They continue to whisper together throughout the entire 15 minutes of Opening Group. The teacher ends Opening Group and transitions the children into Play Planning. This activity is conducted at two separate tables, with the teacher at one and assistant teacher at another. Lydia and Angela get up from their chairs and begin to walk around the room, jotting down notes on their ECERS-3 sheets. After 15 minutes, the children are all engaged in their play and the teacher begins rotating around the centers. Lydia approaches the teacher at multiple times during the play to tell her how she could be getting a better score on the ECERS-3. Lydia says, “You need to get something live in Science... maybe a fish?” The teacher then tells Lydia and Angela a story of how she had bought a beta fish, it died and how she had planned to replace it but was not able to get to the store. During this approximately 6 minute conversation both coaches and the teacher are engaged with each other while the assistant is the only adult interacting with the children. Following the discussion, Lydia and Angela begin rotating around the room again, taking notes.

After a short time, they begin chatting privately with each other discussing some of the scores they have marked. “She would get a 5 for that, right?” asks Lydia. “Yes, but if she would have wrote down what that child said that would give her a 7,” replies Angela. Within another short time, Angela asks the teacher about a colleague who recently had surgery. They discuss how she is recovering, how much money they are collecting, and what the plans are for a gift. During this conversation, a boy approaches the teacher to have her come to the science center to see what he and his peers have done. The teacher just nods to the child, the boy walks away and Lydia, Angela and the teacher continue their conversation.

Throughout the three-hour observation highlighted in this vignette, Lydia and Angela repeatedly were chatting together regarding scores or students in the classroom. They also began conversations with the teacher throughout the observation, causing the teacher to attend to the coaches rather than her class.

Another instance of these ‘side conversations’ occurred on a separate occasion, again while conducting the ECERS-3. Lydia (L), Angela (A) and the teacher (T) were all involved in conversation. The conversation below was not one consistent conversation, but rather ‘sprinkled’ throughout the three-hour observation,

L - This class is much better then last years. Remember last years? (laughing)

T – How can I forget? (laughing)

The teacher and Lydia had taught together in Head Start program years ago. They relayed a few stories of previous staff, families and children they worked with.

A discussion between the teacher, Lydia and Angela then occurs regarding a current parent and the parent's desire to have the child classified.

T – They are just “over the top.” “I don’t know what to do with them!”

A – We will make sure he (the child) isn’t in your classroom next year!

T – I don’t think I could do it again!!

As can be seen in both examples above, Lydia and Angela consistently were in off task conversations with each other as well as the teacher in the classroom. This routinely was perceived as distracting to both the coaches and the teachers. Even when the teachers were not included in the conversations, and the discussion was grounded in the work they were doing, it could still be perceived as distracting. For example, in yet another visit, while observing a teacher in opening group, Lydia remarked quietly to Angela, “this looks like _____’s (another teacher’s name) room from last week. Remember that message?” They then continued for about 5 minutes out of the 15-minute observation to discuss this memory, failing to actively observe the teacher in front of them.

While Lydia relished the collaboration with Angela, as an outsider looking in, there seemed to be a series of wasted time as well as opportunities to provide individualized attention and develop a rapport with their caseload of teachers. Each ECERS-3 observation took three hours to complete, and were typically performed in the mornings when the majority of classroom instruction took place. Therefore instead of each master teacher doing 17 observations each, over 17 days, their co-coaching approach resulted in 34 days doing the ECERS-3. Some of this time could have been spent providing more targeted support to teachers if Lydia had conducted hers separately to that of Angela. Research suggests that the rapport that is established between the

coach and teacher influences the ability to make change (Domitrovich et al., 2008). While Lydia acknowledged that establishing a rapport with teachers was important, “it is the little things...just me being in the classroom...then they are very receptive and learn a ton.” But, she also noted some teachers responded better to either her or Angela, “sometimes it is a fine line...you want to have them (teachers) trust you...but sometimes it is hard.”

Standardized observations. Lydia discussed her primary responsibilities saying, “I would say a typical day we will be in the classroom observing...whether its curriculum or the ECERS scale.” These observations are noted in the state’s job description as the main way to support changes in practice. Adult learning theory and current coaching research suggest that the learner must be motivated and have ownership of his/her own learning (Knowles, 1990) and be encouraged to engage in self-reflection (Domitrovich et al., 2008). Lydia and Angela’s co-coaching and co-observation did not reflect this assumed approach to adult development but rather followed a standardized design and protocol for all observations. In one interview, Lydia describes this design saying, “All of them (the teachers) will get an ECERS...and they all will get one curriculum visit.” As mentioned previously, all master teachers in the state had to conduct ECERS-3 observations. The ECERS-3 observations were standardized in nature due to the instrument, as the observer was required to spend a period of 3 hours in the classroom utilizing a scoring system with 35 items. But, the focus for all general visits was also pre-determined by Lydia and Angela for the entire district for the year, meaning that teachers had little input into determining the focus or goals of the observation.

When asked what she felt was the *most important* role for her work she replied, “coaching in the classroom – on the ECERS and the self reflection forms (curriculum observation tools).” This quote emphasizes Lydia’s responsibilities of both general and ECERS

observations, but throughout the observation period (from December through early May) it was evident that the ECERS-3 instrument was the primary focus for all observations. Four out of the five observation visits and the majority of Lydia's coaching logs were consumed by ECERS-3 observations and/or feedback sessions. Lydia described the reasoning behind this focus saying, "the state wants a baseline of where they (the teachers) are this year and where they are next year. But, ideally, we will get to the point where we are not doing [ECERS-3 evaluations in] every classroom....then we will be able to get in the classrooms."

In only one visit did I witness an observation with a focus other than ECERS-3, observing specific activities from the Tools of the Mind curriculum. While on an observation in the winter Lydia noted, "I think after spring break – whenever we are done all of our ECERS we are going to start this year using the self-reflection forms (curriculum observation tools)." As highlighted by this quote up through mid-April the teachers were only receiving feedback concerning the ECERS-3 evaluation from the coaches. In Lydia's own words, "I just focus on that instrument (ECERS-3) because it's more data driven. Even though I know there are other areas we would need to work on."

Since the ECERS-3 consumed much of Lydia's time, the majority of her support for teachers focused on feedback surrounding the instrument. Lydia and Angela's feedback sessions for these observations were all prepared in a uniform way, with teachers receiving a written form illustrating their scores while Lydia and Angela walked them through the form item by item. The beginning vignette illustrated a typical ECERS-3 feedback session with a teacher. As shown, these sessions were lengthy and evaluative in nature. Regardless of the teacher or the program context, Lydia's observation and feedback style was fairly consistent as can be seen in the following example of another ECERS-3 feedback session.

Lydia, Angela and I arrive at the classroom during rest time. This was the only time the teacher had free to meet and Lydia commented that they would need to 'hurry' to finish up in the 45 minutes they had with the teacher. The teacher greets us with a quick "hello" and tells us to settle in at a table in the center of the classroom, as the children lie resting on cots around the room. Lydia and Angela sit on one side facing the teacher, while I am seated off to the side of the table and get right down to business. Lydia begins with "her section" as Angela is texting on her phone. "You need to do some spring cleaning, girl!" Lydia playfully comments as she tells the teacher that the piles of stuff the teacher has on the windowsills have to be addressed. The teacher solemnly agrees, "Yes, I will do that." Lydia begins to go down her list one by one stating the teacher's score and providing suggestions for improvement. "You need a 'space for privacy' sign." The teacher agrees that this space in her classroom isn't really obvious. "You need to take down the teacher stuff you don't need on the walls," stating that there should be more child-created artwork hanging throughout the room. She then notes, "The kids waited a long time in line to go to the bathroom. That can't happen." Lydia then proceeds to provide some suggestions from the curriculum that may assist the teacher in alleviating this wait time. "Try to do a finger play, or pattern movement (a curriculum activity) is a good one, or Simon Says. That will get you a higher score." The teacher nods and is quietly taking notes. "For this area (literacy) you got a four because you have to read more than one book during the observation. If you read more to the kids you will get a higher score." "You need to sing with the kids." Lydia provides some examples of when the teacher could sing and what songs may be good. One example she gives is Willaby Wallaby Woo, a silly rhyming song using children's names. "Then, to get a seven you need to then point out rhyming words."

During the ECERS-3 observation the teacher commented that she had songs on her Smart board and she uses that as a way for the children to move from the tables to the carpet. Lydia notes, “I wouldn’t do the animated songs on the Smart board when you are observed. Your song had ninjas in it – the observer is going to be very early childhood so you need to pick something more appropriate. Or only do one song – not all the ones you did.” Lydia finishes up her feedback and passes it over to Angela to do “her section.” The teacher continues to take notes, not asking many questions. The session ends after about 40 minutes with Lydia asking, “Do you feel like you have a good understanding of what you need to do?”

Although current research has illustrated that coaching is more successful when it is performed in a non-evaluative context (Heineke, 2013), the feedback Lydia supplied was mainly of a directive and evaluative nature providing suggestions for how to raise the teacher’s lower scores. Even though Lydia’s feedback in the above vignette had identified some valid areas that the teacher may need to work on to improve her instruction (i.e. an orderly environment and appropriate wait time activities), they are cloaked in the fact that she must make these changes to get a higher score on the ECERS-3 scale. The attempt to tie one of her suggested areas to a curriculum component (to use a finger play or pattern movement when waiting in line for the bathroom), was not consistently apparent nor does it stand out enough in the barrage of suggestions all aimed at achieving a higher score for the state evaluation. While research has highlighted the importance of allowing teacher and coach to collaborate on goals (Rush & Shelden, 2011), Lydia tended to take on a “telling role,” ensuring that the teachers met certain criteria (Heineke, 2013, p.428). As typical, throughout the feedback session, Lydia and Angela controlled the meeting and the teacher’s voice was rarely evident other than agreeing to change the suggested practices.

The ECERS-3 was also utilized by Lydia as a way of making group goals for teachers to work on together. Teachers in South District had PLC's (Professional Learning Communities) once a week. This was time built into their schedule to meet as groups in their respective buildings to discuss goals and/or problem solve solutions. Lydia reported that she and Angela will intermittently "go to their (the pre-k teachers) PLC time to go over whatever PD topics we need to do." I did not see this practice of Lydia attending PLC's in any of my observations but it was noted in her coaching logs twice throughout the month of April. During a discussion in an earlier visit, she spoke about her plan for connecting the ECERS-3 observations to these PLC's,

When we are finally finished ECERS at the end of spring break, we will probably then go to every single PLC in the district within a weeks time and just go over the general findings from us. What they need ... for PD for improvement on ECERS-3.

This heavy focus on the ECERS-3 instrument even influenced what Lydia determined should be an area for her own professional development. When asked in an interview what she would want training to focus on she stated,

I think it would be really important to collaborate about the ECERS-3. Because when the state comes out to evaluate us in the spring we know those scores directly effect how we coach the teachers.

While I only observed one general observation over the course of the 5 months, the standardized protocol for these visits was also evident. Lydia and Angela planned to observe every teacher throughout the district conducting the same activity. They also utilized the curriculum's self-reflection forms to provide a way to give the teacher's uniform feedback. In a conversation during the winter, Lydia spoke about the current year's plan for curriculum visits.

We are going to go out into every classroom and observe play planning and message of the day. Last year we did play planning only and then this year we are going to do one more.

Following a coach meeting that spring, Lydia and Angela decided to switch their focus to message of the day and story lab (the teacher led read aloud) for each teacher. The vignette below illustrates the only curriculum-based observation conducted during the last visit in the spring that highlights this standard plan for observing these two specific activities this year.

We began the visit by entering the classroom at 9:36 am to observe the teacher conducting Story Lab, a small group read aloud activity. The teacher is already at the table with her small group and we all take seats surrounding the table. Lydia and Angela face the teacher on either side of the table observing the lesson and taking notes using the curriculum's self-reflection forms until 9:57 am (21 min). I was surprised to hear that the class then had to leave for music, but Lydia and Angela say that they will return to watch Message of the Day after the class gets back at 10:25am. They return to their office down the hallway and discuss what was just observed. After hearing some of the suggestions they both offer, Lydia asks Angela, "well, what should we focus on for feedback?" They both return to the classroom at 10:35am. The children are all seated on the carpet and the teacher does her Message of the Day, a brief activity modeling the curriculum's writing component. Both Lydia and Angela sit at the back of the carpet actively taking notes on their notepads and self-reflection forms. At 10:43 am the message is completed and Lydia and Angela get up to leave saying to the teacher, "We will schedule a time later this week to talk about this." We return back to the MT lab and Lydia says, "We will need to get in there for feedback pretty quickly."

Throughout the district, there was no deviation from these chosen activities in any classroom and Lydia even had teachers arrange their schedules so she could see story lab and message of the day together. Lydia and Angela kept a sheet with all the teachers' names and "checked them off" following their curriculum visit to keep track that all teachers received this visit. This idea that all teachers are provided with the identical support also illustrates Lydia's view these visits were a "requirement" to be fulfilled.

In summary, Lydia's approach to her work was uniform and regulated, with Lydia and Angela in control of determining the focus as well as the amount of observation and feedback sessions every teacher would receive. Even though research suggests that effective coaching requires crafting a shared vision, whereby teachers and coaches are focused on attaining the same goals (Domitrovich et al., 2008), teachers in South District were offered little input around planning the focus of any observations. By Lydia and Angela always conducting their responsibilities together and choosing a pre-determined focus for all observations, Lydia both limited the scope of support the teachers were receiving and hindered the teachers' ownership of the feedback.

Supports and challenges. South District had one Early Childhood Supervisor who oversaw the structure of the program and was the master teachers' direct supervisor. Lydia reported she not only felt very supported by the administration in South District and eagerly shared various support groups the coaches and supervisor had established. In Lydia's own words, "We have a wonderful early childhood supervisor that totally gets early childhood. And we have the principal next door that is just the principal for early childhood. So, support-wise I don't think we could get any better support." Speaking about the other building principals Lydia identified that they would do 'whatever was necessary' to support the program. "They are very

supportive of us. Like if we say, this is what we need you to do because ECERS-3 is coming. They are just going to listen to what we have to say. They don't fight us."

Lydia, Angela, and their supervisor held regular, monthly meetings that are "probably a 3 hour meeting because we cover so much. We collaborate, we talk, we plan, we figure out what PD needs to be given...I would say without those meetings we wouldn't run efficiently!" Lydia stated that the supervisor wants to know what activities the master teachers are working on as this assists her in her own work with the teachers.

Before we go out to the PLC's (Professional Learning Communities) and do the PD with them, she (Supervisor) wants to sit down with us and hear about it. She wants to know because when she does her formal observation and they (the teachers) get their formal evaluations, she wants to be on the same page as us too.

Lydia also acknowledged several committees of teachers, administrators and community members that met regularly to support the ongoing success of the township's early childhood program. Once a month, Lydia and Angela host an "Early Childhood Task Force" meeting comprised of a teacher representative from each building. The focus of these meetings is to discuss "mostly about their day-to-day and what is going on and what needs improvement. The things we talk about here then they (the teachers) go and disseminate in their (weekly) PLC's."

Despite what seemed a supportive organizational context, the biggest challenge observed and reported related to the way in which the administration extended the role of master teacher to include being the PIRT.

The challenge of navigating both the master teacher and PIRT roles. When asked what she thought her primary role was Lydia replied, "PIRT, right now." Just as with her work as a

coach, Lydia's responsibilities with PIRT were conducted jointly and followed a standardized framework. While neither coach had a special education degree, they both determined their roles with the PIRT support based on their perceived strengths. Lydia explained,

Angela does the factual anecdotes – the observation of the kid. She doesn't look at the request for assistance (RFA, teacher's request/recommendation). The RFA has all the details why the teacher's concerned, where she is struggling throughout the day...there's [also] some child history. She goes in, observes the kid, types up exactly what the kid did that day....how he acted...whatever he did. She includes a couple of pictures and some factual information. Then I look at the RFA...I look at where the teacher is struggling...what she is concerned about...any parent input. Angela and I will go back and we'll talk about what she saw...and then I'll come up with suggestions and strategies and then we email them to the teacher.

Lydia described how she navigated both the role of PIRT and role of master teacher saying,

As far as when we go into the classroom for curriculum verses a child observation (PIRT role) – we keep it separate. I feel like when a teacher's asking us to come into her room to watch a child, even though I may see an activity that is not right, I don't feel like I can comment because I want them to want us to come to their room and just focus on that (the specific child).

While this process provided the initial framework for evaluating a child who may require special services, Lydia approached the responsibilities of PIRT in the same directive and evaluative manner as she did ECERS observations. When explaining the role she often used

terms such as “we tell the teachers what to do...” or “I give them suggestions...” and “we tell them what to correct or do differently...” The teachers would then in turn “report back” to Lydia and Angela if the suggestions or strategies worked. Therefore the role appeared to be one-sided and directive with Lydia being the teacher’s instructor rather than a coach who is working collaboratively with the teachers.

While I did not observe much of the PIRT role during the five observations, it was evident in Lydia’s coaching logs and our conversations together that the PIRT role consumed much of her time and attention. In her own words,

When the PIRT stuff takes up almost half of our position we don’t have much time to focus on those other areas of concern. I have been out of the classroom for 7 years and because we’ve been mostly PIRT, I haven’t focused on curriculum much.

Therefore even though Lydia may have felt that working with teachers to support the curriculum was a part of her role, the requirements of the PIRT role, combined with the heavy focus on ECERS-3, left little time to make these connections.

At the start of the study, Lydia was eager and hopeful to learn that the district would be hiring another PIRT member by early spring. “PIRT takes about 50% of our time. So when that is not there anymore we are really going to be able to do much more coaching in the classroom.” Lydia regularly noted that she had to consciously make decisions about what required her attention and focus and that general coaching was actually the least prioritized. Following one of the observed ECERS-3 observations, Lydia explained this decision-making process in relation to a teacher we had just observed.

She is an ‘old-school type’ of teacher. She needs lots of support in lots of areas and unless I am in there on planned visits sometimes it’s hard to address all of those things. When the PIRT stuff takes up almost half of our position we don’t have as much time to focus on those.

Once the new PIRT member was hired, Lydia also immediately expressed interest in finding time to go over the curriculum activities, “now that [new PIRT member] is hired, we won’t have to do that anymore and we will have time to work more on curriculum.” Lydia joked that she had become ‘rusty’ with the curriculum because that was not her focus for so long and didn’t want to tell the teachers how to do something incorrectly. She expressed this statement as a challenge because she felt she needed a “refresher” on some of the curriculum components. This feeling also relates to how Lydia approached all of her work, as she often felt her role was that of the teacher’s instructor, telling them what to do and what not to do. Lydia explained, “Certainly I don’t want to ever be a perfectionist, but I also don’t want to be instructing someone (wrong)...I feel like I need to know something inside and out before I instruct someone else.”

In summary, Lydia’s work was undeniably shaped by the way the master teacher role was structured in South District. Despite ongoing support from the administration, the requirements of the position were such that Lydia had to navigate both the coach and PIRT roles, necessitating prioritizing responsibilities outside of coaching teachers.

Same Job Description, Differing Interpretations

Despite a clear job description from the state for the master teacher role, looking across the case studies of Natalie and Lydia, there were differences in how they enacted their work. In fact, the approaches of both master teachers to coaching could be seen as in polar opposition to

one another. While Natalie was teacher-centered and individualized how she interacted with teachers in her caseload, Lydia worked with all of the preschool teachers in the same standardized way. These differences were clearly connected to the districts in which each coach operated as each district structured the master teacher's responsibilities differently, expecting master teachers to engage in other competing requirements in addition to their coaching. Both districts also afforded their master teachers some flexibility in interpreting the role.

These variations and flexibility inevitably influenced how Natalie and Lydia performed their role. Reflecting on the data it was evident that Natalie saw her role as supporting individual teachers to change therefore she approached her work in a teacher centered way. However, For Natalie, having flexibility to craft her work the way she chose also posed a challenge because all the master teachers were not saying and doing the same things. These inconsistencies led to confusion among teachers about the purposes and responsibilities of the master teacher role. Natalie perceived this confusion as influencing some of the relationships with her colleagues as well as presenting the department as disorganized. Lydia, on the other hand, because of her supportive district administration was able to conduct all her responsibilities in conjunction with her colleague. Whereas Lydia saw only benefits to being able to co-coach with someone else, as an outside observer I witnessed over again how time and opportunity was wasted that could have been used to scaffold teachers' learning.

The desire and need for professional development specific to the master teacher role was also recognized across both case studies, which coincides with other research findings (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ackerman, 2008). Natalie and Lydia both expressed similar perceptions throughout the observation period, noting that they had received limited ongoing professional development specific for their role working with a variety of adult learners. Another area both

coaches found challenging was navigating their role in conjunction with the PIRT. For Lydia, this was due to the district requiring her to perform both master teacher and PIRT responsibilities concurrently. For Natalie, the challenge lay with how communication was fostered and supported between the MT and PIRT member.

The case study data echoes some of the patterns found in the survey responses. In the next chapter I investigate the findings of both the case studies and survey data together in relation to the literature to consider what they suggest for policy and practice.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Coaching has become a desired model for helping teachers to improve their practices. It is now possible to find literacy coaches, math coaches, curriculum coaches and instructional coaches throughout the field of education. While coaching has expanded as a commonly used professional development approach, the research base has to keep pace. Most of the research on early childhood coaches tends to be focused on content specific coaching and little is known about the daily work of instructional coaches in early childhood. This study aimed to enhance the research base on early childhood coaching by more closely exploring the role of NJ's master teachers. Data was gathered through a statewide survey and two case studies, focusing on how the MT's define and approach their role and responsibilities and what factors mediate their work. In this chapter I discuss the findings of this study in relation to the literature on coaching followed by offering implications for practice. To provide a context for this discussion I begin with a brief overview of the design of the study.

The Research Study

The master teacher's primary role is to provide teachers with feedback on their instructional practices and encourage self-reflection in order to improve instructional effectiveness (<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/pd/mt/reflective.htm>). Therefore, the theoretical framework guiding this study incorporated two specific adult learning theories that have their foundation in Vygotskian principles of social development and co-construction: Andragogy (Knowles, 1990) and Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Together, these theories underpin the importance of learners being given the opportunity to engage collaboratively with others and actively apply their knowledge within a social community.

As instructional coaches, the NJ master teachers have a varied and complex position, as they must be able to help teachers improve their instruction across a variety of areas. In order to examine this varied role, I conducted a mixed method comparative case study. A survey (see Appendix C) was distributed to the population of master teachers within the state of New Jersey (n=125), with 64 responding. The survey was comprised of various sets of questions gathering demographic information, asking participants to identify and rank challenges in their daily work, and to identify their professional development needs. Participants were also asked to rate various statements taken from the state master teacher job description as to the frequency they perform this aspect of their work, using a 4 point rating scale of ‘frequently’, ‘occasionally’, ‘hardly ever’ and ‘never.’

Initial analysis began by entering the variables on the survey into an Excel program and cleaning the data, relabeling or recoding some variables. I then ran descriptive statistics, calculating the means and percentages of each variable. Finally, correlations were done with some of the key questions in the survey using the Kruskal-Wallis test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952), a distribution-free, non-parametric version of the parametric One-way Analysis of Variance. This analysis examined various comparisons including: the size of the district, the experience of the master teacher, education and age in relation to master teacher reported roles and responsibilities as well as reported challenges. I also examined the relationship between the curriculum the district utilized and the reported challenges and professional development needs.

Two case studies were then purposefully selected from 2 distinct districts within NJ to provide a deeper investigation of master teacher responsibilities, challenges and approaches to coaching. These two coaches, Natalie and Lydia, (pseudonyms) were observed for a period of five months along with participating in three structured (one-hour) interviews (see Appendices

D-F). The master teacher's coaching logs were also collected throughout the observation period. Transcriptions of the interviews, observations, and logs went through a series of reiterative coding. Several phases of coding examined the data in terms of the guiding research question. I first looked at how the coaches define their roles and responsibilities, how they approach their work considering the activities and strategies they use, as well as the challenges and supports identified. I also coded deductively for individual and organizational factors shaping the coaches' work. I then looked across these codes for larger relationships and themes.

In the final phase of analysis, I looked across all data sets and drew comparisons between the cases and the larger survey sample. I now turn to a discussion of the major findings of this study across the data sets.

Findings

"It's not like I am coming in and running it...it is just a discussion...I'm the facilitator."

(Natalie, NJ master teacher)

The findings from this study echo the current research on instructional coaching, whereby both organizational factors and individual factors were found to influence how the coaches define and approach their role (Ackerman, 2008; Neuman & Wright, 2010; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ryan, Hornbeck, & Frede, 2004; Domitrovich et al., 2008). The above quote from Natalie illustrates her interpretation of the coaching role. It was found that the structure in which a coach works influences their interpretation as well as providing supports to carry out his/her responsibilities accordingly. Individual factors of age, education and experience along with the organizational factors of size and curriculum were noted as mediating the master teacher responsibilities. Organizational factors, particularly how the district structured and defined the

role was seen as a prominent influence in how Natalie and Lydia approached their work. The complexities of communicating with teachers and other colleagues, was found to be an overarching pattern in both the survey and case study data.

Individual factors mediating coaching. Adult learning theory suggests that the any learning that occurs is influenced by what the teacher and learner bring to the experience (Knowles, 1990). As coaching is a relationship-based professional development model whereby coaches are working closely with the teachers to foster change, the research has noted that individual factors (i.e. age, education, experience, ethnicity and/or gender) can influence the success of the coaching (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Heineke, 2013; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004). Specifically, current research has identified that coaches do not automatically gain credibility in their position (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004), but rather it is through the interpersonal relationship between coach and coachee that is established which fosters successful coaching (Domitrovich et al., 2008). As the overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey were white females, the individual factors examined in the data were age, education and experience.

Age was found to influence the frequency of particular responsibilities including engagement in the reflective cycle and planning specific goals with teachers. The younger the respondent, the less likely s/he was to report these as frequent responsibilities. The case studies also reflected this pattern. Natalie, the younger of the two case studies, reported that her perceived age influenced her work with some teachers. In her words, “I have one [teacher] right now that looks at me as I am too young to be here.” It seems that the younger a master teacher may appear to be, s/he is less likely to be seen as having adequate expertise by some teachers.

In addition to age, the educational backgrounds of master teachers were found to mediate how they approached their work. Nearly all of the respondents in the survey (88%), as well as Natalie and Lydia, also reported having a P-3 or N-6 early childhood certification. Findings from the survey also indicated 72% of participants held a master's degree or higher. These coaches reported more frequently planning specific goals with teachers. The case study data did not support this finding as both Natalie and Lydia held bachelor's degrees in education. Natalie took a very teacher-centered approach to her work with her caseload and was observed multiple times planning goals with individual teachers.

Along with education, experience is an individual factor noted by the research as mediating successful coaching (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004). Experience on the survey was attributed to questions related to length of time in the MT position, length of time in the district, as well as length of time in the early childhood field in general. Both Lydia and Natalie not only had experience in their role, but also within their districts as they were both employed as teachers prior to obtaining the master teacher role. Similarly, the majority of participants in the survey were employed by the district over 10 years and in the master teacher position for at least 6 years (54%). Regardless of this experience, Natalie and Lydia still reported difficulties interacting with challenging teachers. This finding can relate to the fact that coaching is a relationship between facilitator and learner. The learner's motivation, orientation to learning and readiness to learn as well as how s/he perceives the learning experience and his/her facilitator can also influence the success of any coaching relationship (Knowles, 1990). As this coaching relationship is complex and coaches are typically making the shift from working with children to mentoring adults, this finding reiterates the research that beyond experience and educational background there is a need

for ongoing professional development specific to the coach role (Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Ackerman, 2008).

The desire or need for professional development is particular to the individual (i.e. related to education or experience). The primary professional development need found by the survey data was supporting teachers and students in special education classrooms with those MT's over 40 more frequently desiring this opportunity. Research on teacher preparation has also identified this need, illustrating that many early childhood teachers do not have extensive or ongoing training to adequately prepare them for teaching in diverse classrooms (Ryan & Lobman, 2007). As coaches are typically trained as early childhood teacher generalists, there is a distinct need to facilitate more training opportunities to provide strategies and supports for the diversity of students in the preschool classrooms they support. Communication with challenging teachers and developing targeted goals (see Figure 4) were also reported as top professional development needs. Both Natalie and Lydia echoed these findings and reported that there was a lack of professional development specific to their role. These findings mimic the current research on coaching that illustrates coaches often do not have sufficient job-specific and ongoing training opportunities to support their role as an adult educator (Ackerman, 2008; Ryan & Hornbeck, 2004; Howard et al., 2014).

Organizational factors mediating coaching. The focus on organizational factors reflects Lave & Wenger's (1991) theory illustrating that the system in which the learning occurs presents a unique set of possibilities that enable the success of the learning. Several studies highlight that the context in which the coaching occurs influences how coaches approach their work (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007; Howard et al., 2014). This study found that organization was a key component of how the coach role was interpreted and enacted. The

survey data found district size, the curriculum being employed, and caseload were organizational factors that impacted how master teachers perform their role. Despite a clear job description from the state for the master teacher role, looking across the case studies of Natalie and Lydia, there were also distinct differences in how they approached their work. Natalie approached her role in a teacher-oriented manner, while Lydia's approach was more standardized. These differences were clearly connected to the districts in which they both operated as both North and South district offered the coaches some flexibility in how they interpreted their role and responsibilities. For example, while Lydia coached in the smaller of the two districts, her caseload was actually larger due to the structure of the co-coaching model she utilized. This chosen structure of a shared caseload was found to influence how she approached her role.

Unsurprisingly, the survey found that the size of the district and the master teacher's caseload to influence how often the coaches were engaging in certain primary responsibilities. The smaller the district the more frequently coaches reported engagement in the reflective cycle and providing feedback to teachers. Master teachers with a larger caseload reported less planning of professional development opportunities. Given that the second top reported challenge for master teachers was not having "enough time," there is a connection to consider between the caseload of coaches and how effectively they can provide individualized supports. Howard et al. (2014) similarly found a connection between coach caseload and the challenge of not having enough time to adequately work with staff.

Another organizational factor found by the survey to mediate the work of coaches was the curriculum that the districts chose to utilize. Surprisingly, while communication with kindergarten staff was noted by over a third of the respondents as not applicable to their role, depending upon the curriculum a district utilized, master teachers reported more frequent visits

to kindergarten classrooms and more communication with kindergarten staff. Specifically, those districts using the High Scope and Tools of the Mind curriculum reported engaging in these responsibilities more regularly. Curriculum is not an aspect identified or discussed in other research as influencing the coaching role. As the factors influenced were all related to a specific area of the master teacher role (interactions with kindergarten), it may be considered that the High Scope and Tools of the Mind curriculum provide more resources and/or supports for coaches to discuss and/or conduct this transition work between pre-k and kindergarten.

Analysis of the two case study teacher data illustrated further how district administrators interpret and used the master teachers in quite varied ways. Research shows that there is a correlation between the amount of time spent in direct coaching work and the improvement in teacher practice (Gamse et al., 2008). In both North and South districts the master teachers were used for duties outside of their job description, mediating how often they could work collaboratively with teachers on improving their practices. Findings from Ryan and Hornbeck's case study (2004) similarly illustrated a reported challenge of the requirement for the MT to navigate various district related tasks, often not associated with her primary duties. North district utilized their coaches to provide coverage for teacher's lunch periods, a time when Natalie would have preferred to be meeting with teachers to work on their goals. South district expected its two master teachers to also be the PIRT for a considerable portion of the school year, a job that they were not qualified to do and that took their attention away from working on instructional improvement with teachers in their caseload.

Finally, the issue of professional development spans both individual and organizational factors. While the desire or need for PD can be linked to the individual, the opportunities provided for continued professional growth can be identified as an organizational factor

mediating coaching. It was not only that Natalie and Lydia discussed their desire for PD opportunities, but also the fact that neither of their districts had ever supplied them with training specific for their role.

Complexities of working with PIRT. Master teachers are one member of a larger early childhood team in the district. Both survey and case study data highlighted inconsistencies in how master teachers interacted with PIRT team members. The survey data identified coordination/communication with PIRT as the least challenging responsibility. Even though the survey illustrated most master teachers frequently communicating with the PIRT, many also reported that planning with PIRT was not applicable to their role. This means that while the two roles may be speaking to each other, many times they are not coordinating a plan for supporting the teachers. As the main responsibility of the PIRT role is to provide suggested interventions for teachers struggling with particular students (<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psguide/prereferral.htm>), this role mirrors some of the work of the master teacher as well. Contrary to the survey finding, Natalie found communication with the PIRT member a challenging aspect of her work. While North District had attempted to relieve this challenge by organizing the master teachers and members of PIRT into dyads and providing common time to communicate and plan, for Natalie this remained an ongoing trial.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study suggest several implications for those who employ or work with instructional coaches in early childhood education.

First, the administration's interpretation of the role of master teacher was found to greatly influence how Natalie and Lydia approached their work. Both districts structured the role

differently and both required duties that competed with the responsibilities of the coaches' primary role. As the administration had some flexibility in determining the individual needs of their district and therefore had their own unique interpretation of the master teacher role, one implication is that the state should provide more guidance surrounding the primary responsibilities of the master teacher. The state should actively work together with early childhood supervisors to ensure that the role is being defined and implemented more consistently across the various districts. This consistent communication with district administration will help ensure that policy is being followed, the duties assigned are acceptable for master teachers, and will also enable monitoring of the factors influencing success of the coaching.

Second, as the master teachers are part of several early childhood staff who need to collaborate to support instruction in the classroom, I suggest looking into building the capacity within these teams to work more efficiently together. Ideally, the PIRT members, master teachers, and teachers should have ongoing discussions regarding specific students. This ideal communication loop should be framed utilizing the resources and guidance provided by the district and the state, such as the NJ Pre-K standards, the curriculum, and assessment tools such as ECERS and TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool). In the ideal format, all parties would have consistent communication with one another as well as the ability to jointly create plans that take all of these resources into consideration to inform their decisions. While North District attempted to assist in facilitating communication between MT's and the PIRT, the result was not promising. This may imply that this issue is beyond just the need for common planning time, but rather the need for a concentration on defining how the roles should interact. Each role brings their own expertise and the local leaders, along with state support must foster the

awareness and appreciation for what each contributes to the success of the early childhood program.

Third, there is an underlying assumption that since coaches are experts in their field, they automatically know how to impart their knowledge to other adults. However, all of the master teachers in this study reported wanting and needing professional development in various areas. It is suggested that further attention and research be placed on creating and sustaining a professional development network for the master teachers serving the NJ early childhood program. This network could supply varied opportunities for master teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge while providing a necessary support system for dealing with the challenges coaches must navigate. Since the culmination of this study, I have piloted an example of this ongoing support specific to providing curriculum assistance for master teachers. I have commenced a “master teacher collaborative” group with a small group of master teachers within one county in New Jersey. This group meets monthly to discuss questions, concerns and share resources. As all the coaches are from districts choosing the Tools of the Mind curriculum, the focus is on reviewing activities but also supporting how the master teachers can best facilitate and support teachers. So far, there has been positive feedback from the master teachers who have participated. This model could be replicated, but expanded beyond just curriculum support, to provide coaches with small cohorts that serve as a way to facilitate regular and ongoing discussions regarding topics of interest and specific challenges that master teachers face.

As I work with and support a cadre of trainers who work directly with the master teachers in several districts throughout the state of NJ, this study has implications directly related to my own role. Being able to understand the organizational factors that need to be addressed and highlighted when in communication with district administration assists in planning a more

unified training. For example, entering into communication with new clients regarding suggested plans for how to provide ongoing support of the district's staff including teachers, master teachers, PIRT and family workers.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited to observations and interviews of only two master teachers in action. While supporting data from the larger survey sample was included, this sample consisted of only approximately half of the entire population of NJ master teachers. It is suggested that future research be conducted on a nationwide pool of instructional coaches to provide further insight on their work and factors contributing to them doing it well.

The case study data was also limited to the contexts of the specific participating districts and the master teachers themselves. While the survey provided a sample of master teachers working with the variety of curricula endorsed by the state, the case studies were both focused in districts utilizing the Tools of the Mind curriculum. Every curriculum has its own system of training and supports for districts, and it is not clear how the curriculum chosen interplays with the ways master teachers approach their roles. Given the survey data, it does seem that curriculum is shaping some aspects of the work master teachers do but further studies are needed to look at the interactions between master teacher roles and responsibilities and the curriculum used in a district or region.

The amount of time spent observing each master teacher (only once a month) as well as the reliance on self-reported data in coaching logs limits how much I could verify whether what master teachers say they do was what they actually did. With intermittent observations, I was also only capable of witnessing a snapshot of the master teacher's daily lives. Although I have

been fortunate to have a relationship with these master teachers prior to the study and have some background knowledge on their daily work, I did not see a full and prolonged picture over the course of just five months. Further case studies are needed that look at the work of coaching in action, from the perspectives of coaches, and in ways that can provide thick and rich descriptions of strategies they use to engage in the art of instructional improvement.

Furthermore, the findings of both Natalie and Lydia proved to be so dichotomous that it is difficult to craft generalized implications. To account for this limitation, future case studies should be conducted to examine the work of coaches who have a more similar approach to their role. This strategic sampling would allow for a more focused examination of the various factors influencing the actions and impacts of coaching.

Despite these limitations, this study adds to the current research base on instructional coaching in early childhood settings. As one of the few statewide studies of instructional coaching this study provides insights into how policy is translated into practice. This study also provides a fuller picture of the variations and interpretations that occur due to how the role is structured and supported within each individual district.

Conclusion

“I have never gone in and been like, ‘I know more.’ It’s more of a collaboration and ‘let’s see what we can do.’ It’s OK to say, ‘this is obviously not working’...because we are both learning.” (Natalie, North District master teacher)

Coaching is individualized professional development. It requires the coach to not only be an expert in the field of early childhood in general, the curriculum, assessments, and a multitude of other areas, but also requires them to be able to work with a variety of adults and foster

relationships. For the past 6 years I have worked closely with many coaches across the state of NJ as well as in other states. I could definitely identify a ‘good coach’ when I saw one. But, by conducting this study I was able to take a closer look at what factors mediated the work of that ‘good coach,’ exploring how coaches can approach their work so differently, because of who they are and the contexts in which they work. While coaching is often implemented as a mechanism for teacher support, I feel it is often taken for granted. By conducting this study, I have learned that for coaching to be successful there must be a commitment to supporting both individual coaches as well as the system in which they are performing their roles. As Natalie points out in the above quote, coaching is a collaboration – between coach and the teacher, but also between the coach and the educational context in which they work.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, D. (2008). Coaching as part of a pilot quality rating scale initiative: Challenges to- and supports for- the change making process. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 10 (2), p. 1 -11.
- Amendum, S.J., (2014). Embedded Professional Development and Classroom-Based Early Reading Intervention: Early Diagnostic Reading Intervention Through Coaching. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 30 (4), 348-377, DOI: 10.1080/10573569.2013.819181.
- Barnett, W.S. (2003). Better teachers, better preschools: Student achievement linked to teacher qualifications, *Preschool policy matter*, 2. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER.
- Barnett, W. S. (2008). Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications. *Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit*. Retrieved September, 2015 from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/preschooleducation>
- Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Squires, J.H., Clarke Brown, K., & Horowitz, M. (2015). *The state of preschool 2014: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Squires, J.H., Clarke-Brown, K. (2014) *The State of Preschool 2013: First Look* (NCES 2014-078). United States Department of Education, Washington D.C., National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

- Barnett, W.S., Jung, K., Youn, M., & Frede, E.C. (2013). *APPLES: Abbott preschool program longitudinal effects study: Fifth grade follow-up*, New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- Bean, R.M., Draper, J.A., Hall, V., Vandermolen, J., Zigmond, N. (2010). Coaches and coaching in Reading First schools: A reality check, *The Elementary School Journal*, 111 (1), p. 87-114, DOI: 10.1086/653471.
- Bueno, M., Darling-Hammond, L., Gonzales, D. (2010) *A matter of degrees: preparing teachers for the pre-k classroom*, Washington, D.C.: Pre [k] now, The PEW center on the states, Education reform series.
- Burchinal, M.R., Cryer, D., Clifford, R.M., and Howes, C. (2002) Caregiver training and classroom quality in child care centers. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6 (1), 2-11.
- Chu, M. (2014). *Developing mentoring and coaching relationships in early care and education: A reflective approach*, Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Crewell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crewell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dagen, A.S. & Bean, R.M. (2014). High-quality research-based professional development: An essential for enhancing high-quality teaching. In Martin, L.E., Kragler, S., Quatroche,

D.J., & Bauserman, K.L. (Eds.), *Handbook of professional development in education: Successful models and practice, PreK-12* (pp. 42 -63) New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., Chung Wei, R., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009).

Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad. National Staff Development Council, retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf>

Donegan, M.M., Ostrosky, M.M., & Fowler, S.A. (2000). Peer coaching: Teachers supporting teachers. *Young Exceptional Children*, 3(3), 9-16.

Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). *“Coach” can mean many things: five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Early, D.M., Maxwell, K.L., Burchinal, M., Bender, R.H., Ebanks, C., Henry, G.T., ... & Zill, N. (2007) Teachers’ Education, Classroom Quality, and Young Children’s Academic Skills: Results From Seven Studies of Preschool Programs, *Child Development*, 78 (2), p. 558 - 580

- Espinosa, L.M. (2002). High-quality preschool: Why we need it and what it looks like. *NIEER Preschool Policy Matters, 1*, p. 1-13, New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- Gamse, B.C., Jacob, R.T., Horst, M., Boulay, B., & Unlu, F. (2008). *Reading First impact study final report* (NCEE 2009-4038), Washington, DC: National center for education evaluation and regional assistance, Institute of education sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Ganz, J.B., Goodwin, F.D., Boles, M.M., Hong, E.R., Rispoli, M.J., Lund, E.M., & Kite, E. (2013). Impacts of a PECS instructional coaching intervention on practitioners and children with autism, *Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 29* (3), p. 210-221. DOI: 10.3109/07434618.2013.818058.
- Gaylor, E., Spiker, D., Fleming, J., and Korfmacher, J. (2012). *Illinois Preschool For All (PFA) Program Evaluation*. Erikson Institute, Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy.
- Gupta, S.S. & Daniels, J. (2012). Coaching and professional development in early childhood classrooms: Current practices and recommendations for the future, *NHSA Dialog, 15* (2), 206-220.
- Head Start: An office of the administration for children and families early childhood learning and knowledge center (ECLKC). (2015) Head Start program facts, fiscal year 2014, <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/factsheets/docs/hs-program-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>

Heineke, S.F. (2013). Coaching discourse: Supporting teachers' professional learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113 (3), p. 409-433.

Hindman, A.H. & Wasik, B.A. (2012). Unpacking an effective language and literacy coaching intervention in Head Start. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113 (1), p. 131-154.

Howard, E.C., Rankin, V.E., Fishman, M., Hawkinson, L.E., McGroder, S.M., Helsel, F.K., et al. (2013). *The descriptive study of the Head Start early learning mentor coach initiative*. OPRE Report #2014-5a, Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

Howard, E.C., Rankin, V.E., Fishman, M., Hawkinson, L.E., McGroder, S.M., Helsel, F.K., et al. (2012). *Descriptive Study of the Head Start Early Learning Mentor Coach Initiative Volume 2: Appendices*. OPRE Report #2014-5b; Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

Howes, C., Hamre, B.K., & Pianta, R.C. (2012). *Effective early childhood professional development*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

International Coach Federation (ICF). *Core Competencies*, Retrieved from www.coachfederation.org.

Jaquith, A., Mindich, D. Chung Wei, R., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2011). Teacher professional learning in the U.S.: Case studies of state policies and strategies. A Learning Forward summary report, www.learningforward.org, p. 33-39.

Jenkins, D. & Englander, K. (2016). Quality ratings and improvement systems in early childhood education: Promising approaches for Pennsylvania. A PACER Policy brief by Research for Action, <https://www.researchforaction.org/rfa-releases-new-policy-brief-early-childhood-education/>

Joyce, B. & Calhoun, E. (2010). *Models of professional development*. CA: Corwin

Kise, J.A.G. (2006) *Differentiated coaching: A framework for helping teachers change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Knowles, M. (1990) *The adult learner: A neglected species, (4th edition)*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

Kretlow, A.G., Cooke, N.L., & Wood, C.L. (2012). Using in-service and coaching to increase teachers' accurate use of research-based strategies. *Remedial and Special Education*, 33(6), 348-361. DOI: 10.1177/0741932510395397.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lloyd, C.M. & Modlin, E.L. (2012). *Coaching as a Key Component in Teachers' Professional Development: Improving Classroom Practices in Head Start Settings*. OPRE Report 2012-4, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration

for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/cares/reports/coaching_key.pdf

Long, R. (2014). Federal investments in professional development: What do 50 years of experience tell us about what it takes to make a difference? In Martin, L.E., Kragler, S., Quatroche, D.J., & Bauserman, K.L. (Eds.), *Handbook of professional development in education: Successful models and practice, PreK-12* (p. 22-41) New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*, Retrieved from www.naccrra.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2009) *NAEYC Standards for early childhood professional preparation position statement*. Retrieved www.naeyc.org/positionstatements.ppp

National Reading Technical Assistance Center (NRTC). (2010). *How does coaching affect classroom practice?* Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/coaching32010.pdf>.

Neuman, S.B. & Wright, T.S. (2010) Promoting language and literacy development for early childhood educators: A mixed-methods study of coursework and coaching, *The Elementary School Journal*, 111(1), p. 63-86.

N.J.A.C. 6A:13A, Elements of high quality preschool programs, retrieved from <http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf>

Patton, M.Q. (2015) Qualitative research and evaluation methods: integrating theory and practice, 4th edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication, Inc.

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Schaaf, J. M., Hildebrandt, L. M., Pan, Y. & Warnaar, B. L. (2015). *Children's kindergarten outcomes and program quality in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program: 2013–2014 Statewide evaluation*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

Pianta, R.C. (2006). Standardized observation and professional development: A focus on individualized implementation and practices. In M. Zaslow, & I. Martinez-Beck, *Critical issues in early childhood education professional development* (pp. 231-254). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Co., Inc.

Pianta, R.C. (2006). Standardized observation and professional development: A focus on individualized implementation and practices. In M. Zaslow, & I. Martinez-Beck, *Critical issues in early childhood education professional development* (pp. 231-254). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Co., Inc.

Polly, D. (2012) Supporting mathematics instruction with an expert coaching model.

Mathematics Teacher Education and Development, 14(1), 78-93

Ray, A., Bowman, B., & Robbins, J. (2006). Preparing early childhood teachers to successfully educate *all* children: The contribution of four-year undergraduate teacher preparation programs. Report to the Foundation for Child Development. Chicago: Erikson Institute.

Rudd, L.C., Lambert, M.C., Satterwhite, M. & Smith, C.H. (2009). Professional development + coaching = enhanced teaching: Increasing usage of math mediated language in preschool classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37, 63-69.

Rush, D.D., & Shelden M. (2011). *The early childhood coaching handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Ryan, S., Hornbeck, A., Frede, E. (2004). Mentoring for change: A time use study of teacher consultants in preschool reform. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 6(1).

Ryan, S., & Hornbeck, A. (2004). Mentoring for quality improvement: A case study of a mentor teacher in the reform process. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 19(1), 79-96.

Ryan, S., & Whitebook, M. (2012). More than teachers. In R. Pianta, (Ed.), *Handbook of early childhood education* (pp. 92-110). New York: The Guilford Press

Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. (2005). *The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 40: Summary, conclusions, and frequently asked questions*, Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope educational research foundation.

Showers, B. & Joyce, B. (1996). The evolution of peer coaching. *Educational Leadership*, 53 (6), p. 12-16.

State of New Jersey Department of Education. (2013, June 5). Professional development in NJ, Retrieved from <http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/def.pdg>

State of New Jersey Department of Education. (2014, June 14). Educator Evaluation in NJ, Retrieved from <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/Intro/TeachNJGuide.pdf>.

State of New Jersey Department of Education. Preschool guidance and materials: The role of the Master Teacher. Retrieved from <http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psguide/master.htm>

Stephens, D., Morgan, D.N., DeFord, D.E., Donnelly, A., Hamel, E., Keith, K.J, Brink, D.A., Johnson, R., Seaman, M., Young, J., Gallant, D.J., Hao, S., Leigh, S.R. (2011) The impact of literacy coaches on teachers' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 43(3), 215 -249. DOI: 10.1177/1086296X11413716

Teemant, A. (2013) A mixed-methods investigation of instructional coaching for teachers of diverse learners. *Urban Education*, 49(5), 574-604. DOI: 10.1177/0042085913481362

Tout, K., Zalsow, M., & Berry, D. (2006). Quality and qualifications: links between professional development and quality in early care and education settings. In M. Zaslow, & I.

- Martinez-Beck, *Critical issues in early childhood professional development* (pp. 77 - 110). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1994). *The Vygotsky Reader*. Van der Veer, R. & Valsiner, J. (Eds.) Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, p. 338-354.
- Warren Little, J. (2006). Professional Community and Professional development in the learning-centered school, *National Education Association*, Washington DC
- Wiersma, W. & Jurs, S.G. (2009) *Research methods in education: An introduction, 9th edition*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Whitebook, M. (2014, September 1). Building a skilled teacher workforce: Shared and divergent challenges in early care and education and in grades K-12. *Institute for Research on Labor and Employment*, Retrieved from http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Building-a-Skilled-Teacher-Workforce_September-2014_9-25.pdf.
- Whitebook, M., & Ryan, S. (2011). *Degrees in Context: Asking the rights questions about preparing skilled and effective teachers of young children*. NIERR Preschool Policy Brief, 22. New Brunswick, NIEER

- Whitebook, M., Austin, L. J. E., Ryan, S., Kipnis, F., Almaraz, M., & Sakai, L. (2012). *By default or by design? Variations in higher education programs for early care and teachers and their implications for research methodology, policy, and practice*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.
- Whitebook, M., Gomby, D., Bellm, D., Sakai, L., & Kipnis, F. (2009). Teacher preparation and professional development in grades K-12 and in early care and education: Differences and similarities, and implications for research. *Part I of Preparing teachers of young children: The current state of knowledge, and a blueprint for the future*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California at Berkeley.
- Wilson, P., Dykstra, J.R., Watson, L.R., Boyd, B.A., & Crais, E.R. (2012). Coaching in early education classrooms serving children with autism: A pilot study. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 40, 97-105. DOI: 10.1007/s10643-011-0493-6
- Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: design and methods, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Zan, B. & Donegan-Ritter, M. (2014). Reflecting, coaching and mentoring to enhance teacher-child interactions in Head Start classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42, 93-104. DOI: 10.1007/s10643-013-0592-7
- Zaslow, M. (2006). Charting a course for improved professional development across varying programs and policies. In M. Zaslow, & I. Martinez-Beck, *Critical issues in early*


childhood professional development (pp. 351-353). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Zaslow, M., Tout, K., Halle, T., Whittaker, J.V., & Lavelle, B. (2010). *Toward the identification of features of effective professional development for early childhood educators, Literature review*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of planning, evaluation and policy development.

Zigler, E., Gilliam, W.S., & Barnett, W.S. (2011). *The Pre-K debates: Current controversies and issues*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.


Appendix A

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION


Superintendent of Schools
*Assistant Superintendent of
Curriculum & Instruction*

September 18, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter granting my permission for Amy Hnasko to collect data within  School District for her dissertation study in the Ed.D. program at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. It is my understanding that Mrs. Hnasko will be conducting observations and interviews of one master teacher in the district's Early Childhood Department. I have been informed that the collected data and all research will be confidential.

The purpose of this qualitative comparative case study has been communicated to me as providing a rich description of the organizational and individual elements necessary in successful coaching models. As the data collected will be openly shared with the parties involved, the possible benefits for the district have been illustrated as providing information for our continued reflection and improvement of our coaching model.

It is my pleasure to support Amy Hnasko in this endeavor and I look forward to our continued relationship over the coming months.

Sincerely,



Assistant Superintendent

Appendix B



October 14, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter granting my permission for Amy Hnasko to collect data within  Public School District for her dissertation study in the Ed.D. program at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. It is my understanding that Mrs. Hnasko will be conducting observations and interviews of one master teacher in the district's Early Childhood Department. I have been informed that the collected data and all research will be confidential.

The purpose of this qualitative comparative case study has been communicated to me as providing a rich description of the organizational and individual elements necessary in successful coaching models. As the data collected will be openly shared with the parties involved, the possible benefits for the district have been illustrated as providing information for our continued reflection and improvement of our coaching model.

It is my pleasure to support Amy Hnasko in this endeavor and I look forward to our continued relationship over the coming months.

Sincerely,



Appendix C

State of New Jersey Master Teacher Survey

Introduction

Hello! My name is Amy Hnasko. I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. program at Rutgers University Graduate School of Education. My dissertation study is focusing on coaching in early childhood. As part of my data collection, I am conducting a statewide survey of all New Jersey master teachers. This information will provide a comprehensive view of the roles and responsibilities associated with the position as well as some of the challenges that NJ master teachers face. The hope is this data will supply information to better support the position. Your participation is vital and much appreciated! The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Below is a link to this survey. By clicking on this link, and completing the survey you are acknowledging you are a willing participant and consent for me to use the data. All information collected is confidential.

First, please provide some information about the district you work for and your position:

1. In what NJ County is the district you work for?
 - a. [Dropdown list of all NJ counties]
2. How would you categorize your district?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
3. How would you categorize the size your district? Large = 10,000 or more students, Mid-sized = 5,000 -9,999 students, Small = under 5,000 students
 - a. Large
 - b. Mid-sized
 - c. Small
4. How long have you been employed in your current district (in any capacity/position)?
 - a. Under 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4-6 years
 - d. 7-10 years
 - e. Over 10 years

5. How long have you been in the position of master teacher?
 - a. Under 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4-6 years
 - d. 7-10 years
 - e. Over 10 years
6. How many teachers do you support this year?
 - a. [Type in answer]
7. What preschool curriculum does your district utilize?
 - a. Creative Curriculum
 - b. Curiosity Corner
 - c. High Scope
 - d. Tools of the Mind
 - e. Other – please specify (type in box to supply answer)

Now, please answer some questions regarding your roles and responsibilities in your position.

The role and responsibilities of the Master Teacher are identified by the state of New Jersey and identify various areas such as curriculum, professional development and support. As you read the statements below, choose the amount of time that you feel this role or responsibility is part of your job.

The scale should be identified as:

Frequently = this is a regular/daily part of my job

Occasionally= this is a part of my job, but may only happen sometimes

Rarely = this is a part of my job, but only happens every once in awhile

Not applicable = this is not a part of my job

Working with teachers

I visit classrooms.

I provide feedback to teachers.

I provide individualized support for each teacher's level of development.

I engage in the reflective cycle to improve teaching practices.

I administer structured program evaluation instruments (e.g., ECERS-R, SELA, PCMI).

I plan specific goals for teachers to improve weak areas identified.

I plan specific training opportunities for teachers to improve weak areas identified.

I plan small group meetings with teachers.

I support implementation of performance-based assessments.

I train teachers on the administration of the Early Screening Inventory–Revised (ESI-R).

Working with other colleagues

I communicate with early childhood supervisors.

I communicate with the community parent involvement specialist (CPIS).

I communicate with the preschool intervention and referral team (PIRT) regarding requesting assistance for children with challenging behaviors.

I communicate results of preschool assessments along with other information with kindergarten staff.

I plan parent workshops together with CPIS.

I plan visits to kindergarten classrooms together with CPIS.

I plan with PIRT how to support teachers and parents with children who have challenging behaviors.

I provide technical assistance to district and provider administrators.

My professional development

I attend workshops.

I read research articles regarding areas of need.

I consult with others regarding areas of need.

8. What would you consider the largest challenge you face in your role? Rank the 10 descriptors below with 1 being the MOST challenging and 10 being the LEAST challenging.
- a. Administering assessments
 - b. Communication with challenging teachers
 - c. Coordination/communication with CPIS
 - d. Coordination/communication with PIRT
 - e. Enough time to visit classrooms
 - f. My caseload
 - g. Providing professional development for teachers
 - h. Providing targeted feedback
 - i. Setting achievable goals for teacher growth
 - j. Specific areas of concern (i.e. ELL, special needs, behavior) [type in description]

Finally, please provide a little background information about you:

9. Gender – please select one.
- a. Male
 - b. Female
10. Please select what best describes your race/ethnicity.
- a. African American or Black
 - b. American Indian or Alaskan
 - c. Asian American
 - d. Caucasian or White
 - e. Hispanic American
 - f. Multiple ethnicity/Other (please specify below)
11. What is your age category?
- a. 20-29
 - b. 30-39
 - c. 40-49
 - d. 50-59
 - e. 60-69
 - f. 70 and above
12. What is your highest level of education?
- a. Bachelor's
 - b. Bachelor's + credits
 - c. Master's
 - d. Master's+ credits
 - e. Doctorate
13. In what field do you hold degrees? (check all that apply)
- a. Education Administration/Leadership
 - b. Elementary Education
 - c. Early childhood

- d. Other (please specify)
14. What credentials/certifications do you hold? Choose as many as apply.
- a. P-3
 - b. K-5
 - c. N-6
 - d. Supervisor
 - e. Bilingual
 - f. Special education
 - g. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - h. Other (please specify)
15. What year did you achieve your teacher's certification?
- a. [Type in year]
16. How long have you worked in the field of education?
- a. [Type in years]
17. What degree/credentials were required as per your job description upon hiring? Choose all that apply.
- a. P-3
 - b. K-5
 - c. N-6
 - d. Supervisor
 - e. Bilingual
 - f. Special education
 - g. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - h. Other (please specify)

Appendix D

Master teacher Interview 1:

Intro: Thank you so much for taking the time today for this interview. It will only take about an hour. My questions are aimed at gathering some specific information about how you came to your position as master teacher and the roles and responsibilities associated with the job. I will be asking questions that require you to provide your interpretation of this role and your responsibilities, so there are no right or wrong answers. At times, I will be asking you to describe scenarios or examples from your daily activities to illustrate your interpretations. I ask that you be as detailed and descriptive as possible. This interview will be recorded so I may transcribe the information at a later date. I will provide you with a transcription within a short time following this interview so you can make any additional comments.

Job History

Let's start by setting the stage – I would like to get some information about your job history

1. Take me on a walk through your career path to becoming a master teacher.
Probe:
 - How long have you been employed in [current district]?
 - How long have you been in the position of master teachers? Explain further if necessary.
 - Briefly describe your education and experience?
 - What kind of preparation did you receive to be a MT?

Roles and responsibilities

Now, let's take a walk in your shoes

2. Take me through a typical day as a master teacher in [district name].
Probe:
 - Pretend I am a visitor from another country who knows nothing about NJ schools and give me a descriptive scenario of your average day.

If possible: Gather district job description ahead of interview and provide interviewee for review. After providing a few minutes to look over the job description, ask:

3. What is your reaction to reading this job description?
Probe:
 - Do you feel this description accurately portrays your daily roles/responsibilities?
 - If so, provide examples of some of your duties that match.

- If you feel it does not accurately portray – why? Provide examples of a duty that falls ‘outside’ of the description.

If no written job description is available, then ask:

4. As a master teacher, you have a multitude of duties/responsibilities. Please describe all of your responsibilities associated with that role.

Probe:

- If you had to describe your position to someone else, what would you say?
5. Do you feel there are some duties you perform that do not fit with your job description? Provide some examples.
Follow up probe, if necessary:
 - Is there anything else you feel is essential to know about your role as master teacher and the responsibilities associated with that role?
 6. So, considering all of these roles and responsibilities associated with your position, tell me which one you feel is your primary role in the district.

Probe:

- What role do you feel is most important for your work?
- What do you see as the primary responsibilities associated with this role?

Doing the Work

7. It seems as though a main part of your job is working directly with the teachers. Tell me about a teacher with whom you have had great success?

Probe:

- What were your interactions with the teacher like?
- Describe the situation /time in detail – who was involved? What occurred? Why did you feel great success?
- What are some activities/strategies you did/used with the teacher or during the time involved?

8. Conversely, tell me about a teacher that you have found challenging to work with?

Probe:

- What were your interactions with the teacher like?
- Describe the situation /time in detail – who was involved? What occurred? What contributed to the challenge? Was it resolved and how?
- What are some activities/strategies you did/used with the teacher or during the time involved?

Before we end, is there anything else you would like me to add in terms of our discussion about your roles and responsibilities as master teacher? I want to thank you very much for taking the time to do this interview with me.

Appendix E

Master teacher Interview 2:Introduction

During our first interview together we discussed your roles and responsibilities associated with your position. You shared with me some examples of success in your role, and also times when you found it to be challenging. This interview will be aimed at further discussing some of the organizational factors that are present in your district to support your role as master teacher. I will be asking some questions that require you to provide your opinion of the supports you feel are necessary to your position and describe some of the challenges you face. There are no right or wrong answers. At times, I will be asking you to describe scenarios or examples from your daily activities to illustrate your opinions. I ask that you be as detailed and descriptive as possible. Just as the last time, this interview will be recorded so I may transcribe the information at a later date. I will provide you with the transcription within a short time following this interview so you can make any additional comments.

Let's begin with talking about your experiences as master teacher.

1. What are the biggest challenges in your role?

Probe:

- Give me an example of a big issue you have had that has been hard to resolve

2. When you have a problem or challenge, whom do you typically go to for assistance?

Probe:

- Describe a scenario that you needed help with, who did you ask for help?

Supports

Let's discuss some of the supports provided for your own PD.

3. The state of NJ provides ongoing professional development and meetings for all master teachers. How often do you participate in this professional development?

4. What are your thoughts regarding these PD experiences?
Probes:
 - Talk about the aspects of the PD you found effective.
 - Describe some aspects of the PD that you would have changed.
5. Describe your last district –provided professional development specific for your role as master teacher.
Probes:
 - Who organized the PD?
 - Was the PD in response to a need expressed by you or your colleagues?
 - Did you feel it was beneficial to your role?
6. So, if you were in charge of planning professional development for all the master teachers in your district, what would you include?
Probe:
 - What would your areas of focus be?
 - Are there things that you wish the district had in place to support your role that you would add?

Organization and Structures

To plan and support ongoing professional development, you must take into consideration factors concerning the organization and internal structures necessary for success. With this in mind, let's discuss the organization and structures the district has developed that support your position.

7. In addition to any organized professional development experiences, how do you feel the district provides organizational factors to support you in your role?
Probes:
 - Tell me about set days/times for regular meetings.
 - Describe any protocols to communicate needs to your administration.
 - Describe the district 'vision' for the early childhood department.

Before we end, is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion about your professional development or the district's organization that supports your role? I want to thank you for taking the time for this interview.

Appendix F

Master teacher Interview 3:Introduction

This will be our final interview together. I want to thank you in advance for all the time you have provided for this study. This interview will be very brief, with the purpose being a culminating reflection on our experiences together for the past five months. In our previous interviews we have discussed your roles and responsibilities, the successes and challenges you routinely encounter and the supports you are provided for your ongoing professional development. This interview will be asking for your feedback and reflection in some of these areas. As with all other interviews, this will be recorded and I will supply you with a transcription so you are able to review and comment at a later date.

From the interviews and observations over the past several months, I have learned a lot about the work you do. Let's discuss some things you think could be done to help you do your work better.

1. If you could change anything about the master teacher position, what would you change and why?

Probe:

- Describe a challenge you face and what you see as a way to change the situation for the better.
- What role or responsibility do you feel is unnecessary?
- What role or responsibility would you like included?

2. What supports do you feel would help you do your job better?

Probe:

- What structures are not present (i.e. time, communication, protocols) that if present would make your job easier?

3. What recommendation would you make to the state and/or district regarding policies surrounding your position?

Probe:

- If you were asked to make changes to the policy around your position, what would you recommend be added, deleted or modified?

This concludes the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add? Once again, I thank you for all the time you devoted to this study.

