Spring 2011

Perceptions of the Impact of Coaching on Principal Performance

Gloria Suvon Talley
Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF COACHING ON PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE

by

GLORIA SUVON TALLEY

(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

The leadership abilities and competencies of school leaders matter more today than ever with increasing accountability, complex challenges, and dwindling resources. The purpose of this research was to examine the techniques, principles, structures, models, and impact of leadership coaching on principal performance. The overarching research question for this study was: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Findings represented principals' and Leadership Coaches' perceptions of the impact of coaching and principal performance. The methodology employed to conduct this qualitative study was focus group interviews with five Leadership Coaches and face-to-face semi-structured audio-taped interviews with seven principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States. Leadership Coaches and principals responded to protocol questions during the interviews to determine their perceptions of the impact of coaching on their leadership performance. The researcher also analyzed a secondary data source, monthly Leadership Coaching Reports, to glean potential insights into the coaching experience. Major findings of the study were as follows: (a) principals benefit from guidance, support and reflection of practice with an experienced and trusted Leadership Coach, (b) earlier identification and training of aspiring principals leads to a pool of highly qualified school leaders, and (c) principals learn best in collaboration with peers in settings of trust.

1

INDEX WORDS: Critical incident, Coaching, Reflection, No Child Left Behind, Protégé,

Mentor.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF COACHING ON PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE

by

GLORIA SUVON TALLEY

B.S., East Carolina University, 1973

M.Ed., University of North Carolina, Wilmington, 1987

Ed. S., East Carolina University, 1991

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2011

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF COACHING ON PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE

by

GLORIA SUVON TALLEY

Major Professor: Linda M. Arthur

Committee: Russell Mays
                   Paul Brinson

Electronic Version Approved:
April, 2011

5

DEDICATION

To my husband, Mike, my best friend and help mate, whose love and support is steady and uncompromising. Thank you for being there for me.

To Mama, Ronell and Larry, whose race I ran because they could not.

To Lucy and Ethel, who continuously teach me the gift of mentoring. Our friendship keeps me young, informed, and optimistic for future generations of leaders.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly (Thomas H. Huxley).

Pursuing and achieving this terminal academic degree has been a worthwhile and gratifying experience. There are many individuals who have supported and guided my path along the journey. I extend the greatest appreciation to my committee members: Dr. Linda M. Arthur who chaired my committee, whose encouragement, guidance, discernment and support contributed to this goal accomplishment; Dr. Russell Mays, whose integrity and commitment to the highest quality work, challenged my thinking and Dr. Paul Brinson, whose sound wisdom based on his work with principals ensured authenticity.

A special thank you is expressed to the principals and Leadership Coaches who participated in this research study. You took time out of very busy schedules to be interviewed and are outstanding men and women and promising leaders. I hold an unwavering respect for each of you and thank you immensely for all that you do every day for our nation's youth.

And finally, to my extraordinary family, who understand more than most my ongoing quest for knowledge and the sacrifices that entails. I am blessed to be your wife, mother, mother-in-law and MeeMee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

8

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

LIST OF TABLES

11

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

All schools need great principals, and low performing, high needs schools need greater principals. Leadership abilities and competencies matter more today than ever with increasing accountability, new challenges and dwindling human and fiscal resources. Public school administrators are now expected to be managers, coaches, legal experts, and, simultaneously, instructional leaders. Leadership is the most critical intervening variable in schools and can, indeed, be the determining variable in whether or not students are successful, especially those from diverse backgrounds or students of poverty. Typically, a "one size fits all" model of leadership preparation has equipped school leaders with a generic set of leadership competencies and skills. This may not be sufficient to meet the myriad of needs that exits in today's diverse educational arena.

Context matters in developing and sustaining top performance principal leadership.   For too long, professional development for principals has been long on seat time and short on practice. Wilhoit (2010) describes principal training best when he states:

> I would describe professional growth for principals as a potpourri of opportunities in which an individual in isolation may participate, and these options often are disjointed and short-term. I would shift that practice to a required professional development plan jointly determined by the leader and the district around a set of principles of quality practice and supported through embedded learning at the school site. Job-embedded

learning will require master leaders to coach and mentor other leaders. (as cited in von

Frank, 2010, p. 20)

Fullan (2002) and Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) reveal what

learning in context looks like. Fullan argues that most professional learning for principals occurs

outside of the systems in which they work. Professional conferences and workshops away from

the principal's work setting do not adequately provide an opportunity for real-world problem

solving and application of practice. Fullan notes that "Learning at work – learning in context –

occurs for example, when principals are members of a district's intervisitation study teams for

which they examine real problems and the solutions they have devised in their own systems" (p.

19). Moreover, Fullan posits the following:

Learning in context also establishes conditions conducive to continual

development, including opportunities to learn from others on the job, the daily

fostering of current and future leaders, the selective retention of good ideas and

best practices, and the explicit monitoring of performance (p. 20).

Likewise, Davis et al. argue for principal preparation programs that focus less on a

generic set of leader skills and competencies to a more explicit set of leadership skills that

address the specific needs of various school settings. These researchers proffer "that new

approaches to principal development often emphasize preparation programs having strong

relationships with specific school districts and preparation for specific leadership expectations

including such key leadership functions as instruction, community-building, and change

management" (Davis, et al., 2005, p. 15). The leadership abilities and leadership values of the

principal determine in large measure what transpires in a school, and what transpires in a school

either promotes and nourishes, or impedes and diminishes student achievement. The last five

years have seen an enormous change in public expectations associated with the role of

educational leaders (Elmore, 2000). Today the demands of school leadership are unique and

require not only a tremendous commitment but specific technical knowledge, competencies and

skills. Federal legislation that was signed into law in 2002 changed the landscape of public

education. Ravitch (2010) writes the following:

> No Child Left Behind – or NCLB – changed the nature of public schooling across
>
> the nation by making standardized test scores the primary measure of
>
> school quality. The rise or fall of test scores in reading and mathematics became
>
> the critical variable in judging students, teachers, principals and schools (p. 15).   More

rigorous curriculum standards, high stakes testing including achievement benchmarks, and other

unpredictable factors generate complicated conditions for schools and their leaders.

Consequently, the role of today's principal is undergoing a profound change. Wolk (2011)

describes the life of an urban high school principal as follows:

> Anyone who shadows the principal of a large urban high school for a day soon
>
> discovers that the "principal instructional leader" (like teachers) lives in real
>
> time, with little opportunity for planning or reflection and almost no time for
>
> instruction or collaboration with colleagues. In large schools, the principal, often
>
> with a squawking walkie-talkie in hand, patrols the halls herding students to
>
> class, peering into classrooms, and handling a variety of crises. As with
>
> teachers, universities' preparation programs do not prepare principals for the real
>
> world of schools and are often irrelevant to the reality the principal will face. (p.71)

The increasingly complex demands of today's schools calls for a new, different and bold style of school leadership to guide the reform needed to transform the nation's schools. The literature relevant to successful innovative organizations offered by Kouzes and Posner (1990), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Fullan (1988) reveal ways to promote effective leadership in school organizations. Bennis and Nanus note that "The new leader ...... is one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may convert leaders into agents of change" (p. 3). Kouzes and Posner's research examines leadership cases which involve some kind of challenge. They outline five specific practices that frame the work of effective leaders. Effective leaders engage in the following practices: (a) they challenge the process, (b) they inspire a shared vision, (c) they enable others to act, (d) they model the way, and (e) they encourage the heart. Kouzes and Posner conclude that "These practices are not like the private property of the leaders we studied. They are available to anyone who wants to accept the leadership challenge" (p. 8).

Similarly, Fullan's (1988) research addresses specific competencies and dispositions observed of today's school leaders. He purports that "the new emerging breed of school administrators are perpetual learners, constantly reaching out for new ideas, seeing what they can learn from others and testing themselves against external standards" (Fullan, p. 45).

Redesigning schools to meet the challenge of the next generation of learners is a formidable task. One critical change agent in a school is the principal. He is a social architect who understands his organization and shapes the way it works. However, poorly prepared principals lead schools nowhere. For too long sink or swim leadership development has been prolific. The greater travesty is that once on the job, newly minted principals encounter little

16

professional development that is authentic, job-embedded, continuous, reflective, or problem

based. What typically occurs in most school districts is that beginning principals are assigned a

mentor for support and guidance. Although the mentor is likely to be an experienced principal,

he has little time and, in most cases, little or no formal training on how to effectively mentor a

novice principal. Unfortunately, suggests research analyst Robert Malone, these mentorships

"are often ad hoc relationships, lacking any type of systematic implementation" (as cited in Hall,

2008, p.449). Bloom, Castagna and Warren (2003) admonish that "informal mentors are usually

tied to their own demanding jobs, and though they may have the best of intentions, they are not

fully available to their protégés" (p. 20).

Currently, there is a call to action from state and national policy makers as well as

institutions of higher education to step up and work in tandem with school districts to redesign

principal preparation programs that better prepare school leaders to lead school improvement.

The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) has long argued for redesigned principal

preparation programs that provide strong internship experiences that include observing,

participating in and leading school improvement. The SREB (2007) conducted a literature

search of studies that surveyed perceptions of mentors cross-walked with interns' perceptions of

the quality of experiences during internships. The SREB found the following:

> Despite a widespread belief in the need for mentoring in principal internships and
>
> numerous definitions of the benefits, roles and functions, and ideal features of
>
> mentoring, there is scant empirical evidence of what interns actually experience or how
>
> mentoring affects their learning of essential school leadership competencies. (SREB,
>
> 2007, p. 19)

17

Furthermore, the SREB argues for internships that provide aspiring principals experiences that effectively prepare them for the role of a school leader including experiences in working with groups of teachers to solve problems. The SREB suggests the following:

Until there is collaboration between districts and universities, a serious disconnect will continue between what districts and schools need principals to know and do and what universities prepare them to do. As a result, many aspiring principals will receive outdated, "one-size-fits-all" training that is long on management theory but short on knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to ensure the academic success of all students. It is impossible to provide quality school-based experiences that engage aspiring principals in a development continuum of observing, participating in and leading teams in solving school problems without the district's commitment to principal preparation and the contribution of staff time and expertise. (SREB, 2004, p. 2)

Similarly, in their research, Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) found that all too often knowledge of what needs to be done frequently fails to result in action consistent with that knowledge; a term they coined the "knowing-doing gap." Said in a rather simple way, "The answer to the knowing-doing problem is deceptively simple: Embed more of the process of acquiring new knowledge in the actual doing of the task and less in the formal training programs that are frequently ineffective" (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, p. 27). Far too many educational leaders today are suffering from a knowing-doing gap. Educators fortunately have a plethora of knowledge about their field; however, that knowledge seldom results in action or doing, thus little or no change occurs in school improvement. Moreover, a new kind of professional development for school leaders that focuses on the application of practice, problem solving, reflection, peer

observation and feedback is needed to develop, enhance and sustain leadership performance.

Sharratt and Fullan (2009) assert that "leadership coaching is one approach to providing support

to leaders by offering opportunities to have a dialogue, seek advice, rehearse, and question key

instructional leadership decisions and actions" (p. 49). To that end, Davis et al., (2005) found in

their review of the literature that there are promising examples of ongoing professional

development that are effective. These include the North Carolina Principal's Executive Program,

the Gheens Professional Academy in Jefferson County, Kentucky, and other comprehensive

professional development initiatives tied to school reform.

One such successful coaching model that has reformed the way school leaders conduct

the work of school improvement is The Critical Friends Group or CFG. The CFG coaching

model was developed by the National School Reform Faculty, a program of the Annenberg

Institute. CFG's provide a vehicle for schools to provide time and a structure to examine student

work and professional practice. Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) consist of six to twelve teachers

or principals, or a combination of both, who agree to work together over a two-year period.

CFGs meet at least two hours each month to examine student work, discuss professional

dilemmas of practice, participate in classroom observations and share "best practices."A trained

internal or external coach, selected by the school teacher-leader or principal, facilitates each

CFG. Coaches commit to serving as a CFG coach for two years and attend a five-day institute as

well as two follow-up sessions. Of noteworthiness is the common practice of coaching that the

aforementioned programs and initiatives share. Coaching may take many forms, including peer

coaching partnerships that provide both a novice and experienced principals an opportunity to

work within a framework that supports reflection of practice, problem solving, honest two-way

dialogue, and critical feedback. This mirrors the model used by Elaine Fink, former

Superintendent of Community School District 2 in New York City Schools. Fink generated

much interest and acclaim during her tenure, as she was successful in developing principals as

instructional leaders by implementing a cognitive apprenticeship model. Fink recounts the

following:

> Using an apprenticeship model of continuous learning means that large parts of
>
> professional development – indeed, the most fundamental parts – take place in
>
> dispersed settings (mainly, the schools) and are site-specific and site-generated
>
> (i.e., geared to the specific circumstances of individual schools and the people
>
> working in them) (Fink & Resnick, 2001, p. 601).

An apprenticeship model is supported by the Center for Creative Leadership, one of the nation's

top leadership training organizations, which acknowledges that "people do not develop the

capacity for leadership without being in the throes of the challenge of leadership work" (Reeves,

2006, p. 50).

Elmore (2000) argues for dramatic changes in the way public schools define and practice

leadership. He states, "If public schools survive, leaders will look very different from the way

they presently look, both in who leads and in what these leaders do" (Elmore, 2000, p. 3).

Furthermore, Elmore (2002) insists that leadership is about learning and asking hard questions

about practice. Elmore posits, "Effective leaders ask hard questions about why and how things

work or don't work, and they lead the kind of inquiry that can result in agreement on the

organziation's work and its purposes"(Elmore, 2002, p. 25).

In sum, a review of the literature on principal preparation and support evidences that coaching is a research-based, viable practice that has the potential to enhance the competence and productivity of leaders through the provision of intentional support to identify, to clarify, and to achieve performance goals. Adopting an effective formal coaching model as a form of job-embedded professional learning for school leaders can have the potential for laying a new path of possibility for increasing inquiry, deprivatizing practice and increasing the instructional capacity of the nation's future school leaders.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Today's principals face a formidable task of leading and guiding their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment that is experiencing tough economic times. This type of leadership calls for a different kind of leader – one who encourages those with whom he works and engages in and models reflection in order to continue to develop and to improve his practice. The best way to improve practice is to embrace feedback from informed and trusted colleagues whose feedback provides a basis for improvement. Elmore (2000) submits that there are lessons to be learned from the work conducted in Community School District #2, New York City that inform practitioners about how to improve schools and school districts. From those lessons the most critical one is that working in isolation is not a promising practice for improved leadership performance. Elmore (2000) notes the following:

At all levels of the system, isolation is seen as the enemy of improvement, so

most management and professional development activities are specifically

designed to connect teachers, principals, professional developers and district

21

administrators with each other and with outside experts around specific problems

of practice (p. 28).

Therefore, a shift is needed in the way today's school leaders are trained. Professional development that is job-embedded in the daily work of school and is continuous, relevant, reflective and problem-based, provides promise for eradicating the "knowing-doing" gap and transforming knowledge into action that results in improving the nation's schools. A review of effective principal preparation programs reveals a common thread: leadership coaching. Leadership coaching is one way through which the effectiveness of principal preparation programs can be improved. The purpose of this study is to determine participants' perceptions of the impact of coaching on the performance of principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this study is to determine participants' perceptions of the impact of coaching on the preparation of principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States. The overarching question of the study is the following: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Secondary questions that will be explored in the study are as follows: (a) What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal leadership? (b) What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders? (c) What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study includes the contributions of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky's educational theory of constructivism, the guiding principles of learning in professional learning communities presented by Hord, Dufour, Eaker and Elmore, and adult learning research. The learning theory that has the most application for principal coaching is constructivism, which emphasizes the shared and social construction of knowledge (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Constructivism recognizes the construction of new understanding as a combination of prior learning, new information, and readiness to learn. Many theorists, including Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bruner, have contributed to the educational theory of constructivism. Although their ideas are unique, when they are combined, they define the theory.

The heart of constructivism embodies making meaning in collaboration with others. Individuals working with information, analyzing it, and solving problems fosters long-term recall of knowledge over a longer period of time than just listening, remembering, and reciting information. Moreover, individuals constructing their own meanings involves designing, making connections, finding relationships, and searching for patterns. Constructivist learning is a reciprocal process in which the individual influences the group and the group influences the individual (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, the context of learning is paramount to learning theory. Hord, Roussin & Sommers (2010) describe communities of practice as places where practitioners can immediately make connections between their learning and its usefulness in the context of their work. Hord et al. (2010) state that "In all kinds of adult learning, immediacy is a key motivator! That is, learners must be able to see the immediate usefulness of any learning content for them, in their own unique context" (p. 161). Likewise, Hargreaves

(2004) observes, "A professional learning community is an ethos that changes every single aspect of a school's operation. When a school becomes a professional learning community, everything in the school looks different than it did before" (p.48). This resonates with Elmore's (2004) observation that improvement above all entails "learning to do the right things in the setting where you work" (p. 73). The notion of constructing meaning in a social context corresponds with Dewey's (1916) belief that learning occurs as a result of doing or action. Dewey espouses that education is a social process; in other words, individuals learn best by doing. Other researchers following Dewey endorse the efficacy of adult learning by doing. Dufour, Dufour and Eaker (2008) support learning in a professional learning community. They summarize their research findings by stating the following:

> The message is consistent and clear. The best professional development occurs
>
> in a social and collaborative setting rather than in isolation, is ongoing and sustained
>
> rather than infrequent and transitory, is job-embedded rather than external, occurs in the
>
> context of the real work of the school and classroom rather than in off-site workshops and
>
> courses, focuses on results (that is, evidence of improved student learning) rather than
>
> activities or perceptions, and is systematically aligned with school and district goals
>
> rather than random. In short, the best professional development supports reflection
>
> (p. 136).

Therefore, the review of literature on the learning theory and the theory of constructivism takes place in professional learning communities." (Dufour et al., pp. 369-370) Finally, learning that is job-embedded is indispensable for enduring learning. Zepeda (2004) offers four attributes of successful job-embedded learning as follows:

- It is relevant to the individuals;

- Feedback is part of the process;

- It facilitates the transfer of new skills and practice; and

- It supports reflection (p. 136).

Therefore, the review of literature on the learning theory and the theory of constructivism provides evidence of certain features that will impact the interview questions, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used to design this study. These features include that learning is a result of doing; humans create new understanding as a combination of prior learning; learning is optimal in the context of the actual work, and learners must be actively engaged in the processing of information.
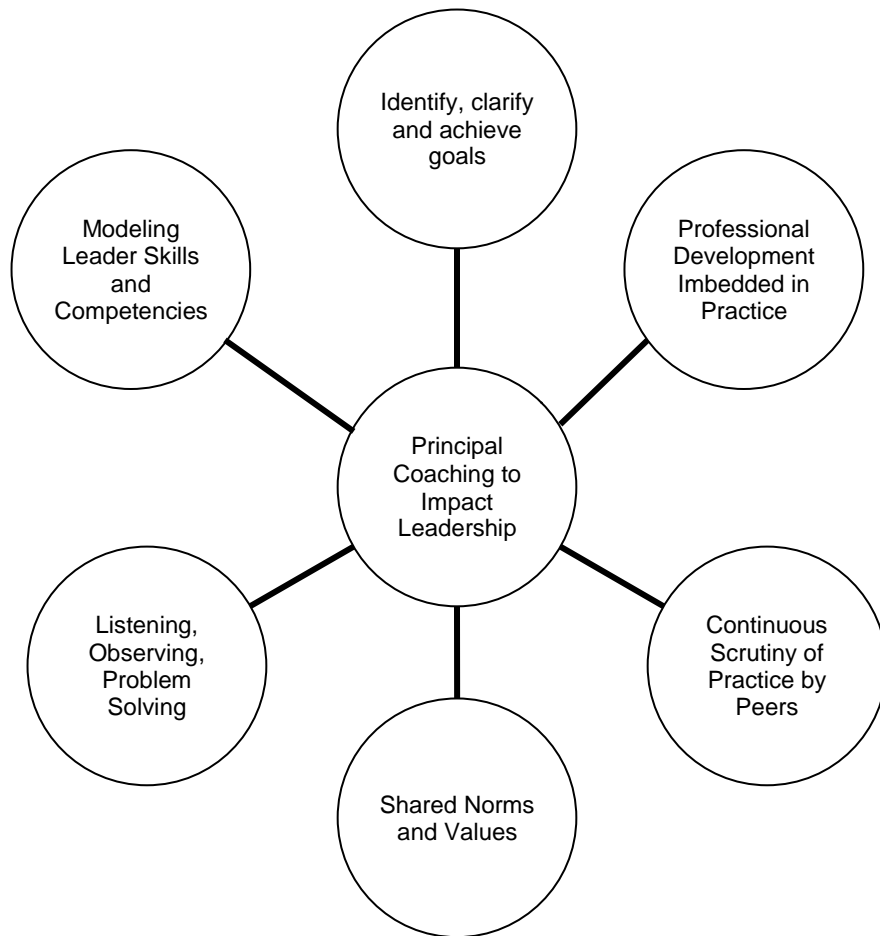
Figure 1. Visual Framework of Leadership Coaching

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is much interest today in principal leadership. This study examined the perceptions of participants who participated in a leadership academy and their perceptions of the connection between the effects of coaching and principal performance. Current models of professional development have been inadequate to equip today's principals with the skills they need to effectively lead today's schools. Researchers have noted that unlike other professions such as

26

medicine, engineering, business and architecture, school leaders have had little or no opportunity to learn their craft in real world settings and learn from observational feedback from peers. Far too many leadership preparation programs have few opportunities for application of practice, problem solving in real world settings, and continuous dialogue with colleagues.

Moreover, the study is important because it addresses the need to improve the current way principals are trained and supported to do their jobs effectively. The study reveals insights into the potential impact of formal coaching models as a form of job-embedded professional learning and its effects on principal performance. The study also informs institutions of higher learning, school districts, local, state and federal policymakers of a deeper understanding of ways to better prepare and provide principals ongoing training and support for the complex challenges confronting them in the 21st century.

Similarly, the study substantiates a rationale to leverage policy and decision makers to negotiate for a commitment to seek new ways to create low cost, no cost modifications in structures, resources, and processes of professional learning practices. These practices can lead to new and relevant ways of learning for school leaders that will result in new possibilities for themselves and the schools they lead.

PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research design for this study followed Creswell's (2005) spiral framework which informed the researcher to first identify the problem and to format the research to fit the researcher's desired intention.   The qualitative study employed semi-structured face-to-face

27

interviews (see Appendix A.) and focus group interviews (see Appendix B.) with seven

principals and five Leadership Coaches who participated in a formal coaching program in an

urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States. The interviews

were approximately 60-90 minutes in length and were tape recorded and professionally

transcribed. The researcher did a stratified purposeful sampling to ensure a strong representation

of principals with 1-5 years of experience. The researcher used open coding to identify common

and recurring themes in the data gleaned from interviews. This type of coding is a common

technique in qualitative research and allowed the researcher to make notes in the margins of

transcripts with a common code, most often a brief descriptive phrase, allowing for common

responses to be clustered and considered together. The rationale for using this type of research

method is influenced by the fact that semi-structured interviews allow for study participants to

respond to questions from their own frame and to not be confined by the structure of prearranged

questions. DeMarrais and Lapan (2004) support the use of qualitative interviews "when

researchers desire to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena,

experiences, or sets of experiences" (p. 52). Semi-structured face- to- face interviews allowed

for the researcher to probe with follow up questions for deeper meaning or additional insights on

the research topic. Furthermore, the researcher selected these methods of data collection, as they

were proven methods to collect data about phenomena that are not directly observable: inner

experience, opinions, values, interests, and the like (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

Data collection began following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval as well

<div align="center">28</div>

as district approval to conduct the research in the district. The method of establishing a researcher–participant working relationship with the selected participants was through a letter sent via email. This initial contact informed participants about the intent of the study, their role in the study, and the benefits provided for them. The IRB Application outlined detailed information about the data collection and analysis methods chosen. Participants who were asked to participate in interviews received information regarding background information of the study, procedures, voluntary nature of the study, risks and benefits of being in the study, confidentiality, and contact information. Study participants signed an informed consent form. Potential risks and benefits to the participants were shared. The researcher took steps to ensure that all information was kept confidential, such as using methodological procedures to protect the identity of participants in the study. All data collected were stored on the researcher's computer to which only she had access. Data file names and passwords were known only to the researcher. Once the researcher received a response from the study participants via phone or email that they would like to participate in the study, the researcher then set up a time for an initial meeting. If participants responded that they did not want to participate in the study, their name was removed and another selection was made. After the initial contact, the researcher set up a time to interview each participant at a mutually agreeable site. Before each interview was conducted, the researcher read and distributed the consent forms. Informed consent forms were signed before the interviews began. After consent forms were signed, the researcher assigned a code to each participant, which was used to identify all responses given by each participant. The researcher then conducted the semi-structured and focus group interviews that lasted approximately 60-90 minutes.

The researcher audiotape recorded interviews and conducted extensive note taking of all interview sessions. Tape recordings were professionally transcribed, and the researcher conducted a close, guided analysis of interview tapes and transcripts and coded the data using open coding. The researcher analyzed all data through a four-step process. First, she read and organized the raw data by filing, created a data base, and broke large units into smaller ones. Secondly, the researcher perused the data to get an overall sense of the information and recorded preliminary findings. Third, the researcher classified data by grouping all data into various categories, themes, patterns, and surprises and began making meaning of the data. Finally, the researcher synthesized all data and formed hypotheses or propositions, constructed tables that depicted what the data showed or did not show, and looked for information that answered the following research questions: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Secondary questions that were explored in the study were as follows: (a) What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal leadership? (b) What do principals who participate in leadership coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders? (c) What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?

Limitations

There were limitations that weakened this study. First, the short amount of time that a formal coaching program had been implemented in School District A was a limitation of the study. This short time span, two years, disallowed for implementation of a coaching program with fidelity, which weakened the study. Another limitation was that data collected from interview responses were subject to truthfulness or honesty of the interviewees.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to a small sample size, seven principals and five Leadership Coaches, in a large urban school district in the southeastern part of the United States, and that limited the scope of influence of the study's findings. The findings indicated only the responses of the participants in this study.

SUMMARY

The need continues to fill the pipeline for high performing principals for today's ever changing schools. Leadership coaching provides one practice for improving and enhancing the performance of principals and has potential in changing leadership practice. A new and different style of leadership – one that is bold and open to reflection, problem solving, and learning from peers, is required to marshal the reform needed for 21st century schools. This new model of leadership is congruent with current coaching models reviewed in the literature that have experienced success in impacting leadership performance. However, these models are insufficient to accommodate the growing need to recruit, train, support and sustain a cadre of highly capable, highly skilled and competent school leaders to address increasing complex leadership challenges. Adopting an effective formal coaching model as a form of job-embedded professional learning for school leaders has the potential for laying a new path of possibility for deprivatizing practice and increasing the leadership capacity of the nation's current and future school leaders.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

President Theodore Roosevelt, in a speech at the Sorbonne (1910) entitled "Citizenship in a Republic," spoke eloquently about the complex work of leadership when he said the following:

> It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.

These words appropriately apply to the nation's school leaders who rise each day to extraordinary challenges. Today's principals must be capable of delegating authority, building leadership capacity among school faculty and staff, and exercising visionary and community leadership. Moreover, principals must guide their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment. They must be adept at working with teachers to analyze student data, look for recurring trends, and to make decisions based on what is in the best interest

of all students. They need to be skillful at building and leading teams and need to focus on the core business of schooling – teaching and learning.

Rooney (2011) offers the following essentials that are correlated with the role of the principalship: principals must continue to learn, they must slow down, and they must build relationships. Rooney explicitly describes each component as follows:

> *Continue to learn.* Principals absolutely must be head learners. Carve out time – however painful – for professional learning. Build a community of learners with other principals. You will quickly become an anachronism if you don't vigorously pursue your own learning.

> *Slow down!* Dig deeply into who you are and what you are about. When the walls are caving in around you, shut the door, sit down, breathe deeply, and find your center. Continually running faster leads to poor decisions, mistakes, and forgetfulness – and ultimately wastes time.

> *Build relationships.* Strong relationships with students and colleagues bring success and meaning to your work. Enjoy students. Laugh with them. Celebrate their joys and sorrows. This, more than anything else, brings us back to essentials. Our work has always been and always must be about children (p. 87).

Therefore, one would think that with the rising tide of responsibilities facing today's school principals, the ongoing training and support for principals would be sufficient. Researchers question whether or not this is the case. Some argue that too many principals are ill

equipped to deal with the complex challenges found in today's schools. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005) found in their study of leadership in California that principal preparation programs are long on seat time and short on clinical experiences. They also concluded that the professional development currently afforded principals is inadequate. They state:

> And many professional development programs for principals have been criticized as fragmented, incoherent, not sustained, lacking in rigor, and not aligned with state standards for effective administrative practice. Thus, principals have frequently lacked assistance in developing the skills to carry out the new missions demanded of them, unlike career paths in many management jobs in business or in many other professions, such as medicine, architecture, and engineering that build in apprenticeships in the early years, along with ongoing professional development."(p 6)

Similarly, Portin, Alejano, Knapp and Marzolf (2006) acknowledge that "In the view of many people inside and outside education, continuing to lead schools as they have been led for a century simply won't do. Leading and learning have new dimensions that demand new skills, new knowledge, and well-examined core commitments" (p. 3). The demands of school leadership are unique and require not only a tremendous commitment but specific technical knowledge as well. Given the accountability movement evident nationwide, today's school leaders must be adept at dealing with the curriculum and instructional issues that give more students opportunities to learn rigorous Common Core State Standards that include new curriculum and assessment components. School leaders must work with faculty to create school and classroom experiences that result in more members of various student subgroups meeting

higher standards. The role of today's principal is undergoing a profound change. A central question that must be considered is what changes in professional practice driven by leadership coaching will result in support and strategies that equip principals to lead the next generation of students, teachers, and staff to success?

To address the rising need for better trained school leaders, the Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) recently launched a major initiative to change the way principals are currently recruited and prepared to run schools. The major goal of the initiative was to ensure that every school is led by an effective principal. In order to make this goal a reality, a shift must occur in the way principals are currently recruited, trained and supported. An example of one change from the current status quo is the requirement of the Alliance to Reform Educational Leadership (AREL) certification program that prospective leaders must complete a residency or mentorship program inside a school (Aarons, 2010). This type of change is in line with what others deem essential for improved principal leadership. For example, Blumer (2005) suggested that "at a minimum, to keep and retain principals, the following support should be provided: all new principals need and should have a mentor and a coach; the opportunity to participate in a principal's support group; and visits from the superintendent on a regular basis" (pp. 4-5).

Furthermore, Davis, Darling-Hammond, la Pointe and Meyerson (2005) conducted an extensive review of the literature regarding leadership development programs and concluded that "a distinct feature of successful programs was among other components, field-based internships or coaching that connects intellectual work with practical work under the guidance of an expert practitioner who can model good practice, coach another practitioner, ask probing questions to guide reflection, and provide feedback to guide the development of practice" (p. 7).

Leadership surfaced as a critical component in school effectiveness in the research of Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003). Their study consisted of a meta-analysis on student characteristics, school and teacher practices cross-walked with school effectiveness. The link to leadership, specifically the principal, and student achievement is well documented in their findings in *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement* (2003), which demonstrated that there is a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement. Specifically, Waters et al. found 21 specific key leadership responsibilities that significantly correlated to student achievement. Included in these were the following:

1. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

2. Optimizer

3. Intellectual Stimulation

4. Change Agent

5. Monitors/Evaluates

6. Flexibility

7. Ideals and Beliefs

8. Culture

9. Communication

10. Order

11. Input

12. Discipline

13. Resources

14. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

15. Focus

16. Visibility

17. Contingent Reward

18. Affirmation

19. Outreach

20. Situational Awareness

21. Relationships

In sum, Waters et al. set out to determine what school leaders need to know and to be able to do to improve academic achievement in schools. Their findings concluded that, indeed, leadership matters and that essential leadership responsibilities correlated with improved student achievement.

The job of leading the nation's schools is difficult and school systems worry about how to effectively and consistently attract and sustain high performing school leaders. Hargreaves and Fink (2004) studied change over three decades in eight U.S. and Canadian high schools based on the perceptions of over 200 teachers and administrators. The study results found that a key component to meaningful, lasting change is the sustainability of leadership. In other words, sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts. Furthermore, it is a shared responsibility that does not unduly diminish human or financial resources, and ensures that the right person is in the right place at the right time for the right reasons. Based on this research, school districts may do well to focus more on succession planning. This type of human resources management involves the long-term development of a pool of well-prepared contextually sensitive, dedicated leaders who are available for promotion wherever the need arises in an organization. Hargreaves and

Fink (2004) purported that "Sustainability leadership systems provide intrinsic rewards and extrinsic incentives that attract and retain the best and brightest of the leadership pool. Such systems provide time and opportunity for leaders to network, learn from and support one another, and coach and mentor their successors" (p. 11). These findings are congruent with Ainsworth's report (2010) of the recommendations proffered by former Superintendent Mike Wasta who oversaw, during his five-year tenure as Superintendent of Bristol, Connecticut, the implementation and sustainability practices of the district's improvement model that included developing a broad consensus of stakeholders, creating small groups at the top, going deep and not broad with the work, a willingness to admit mistakes, and involving everyone in the process from the superintendent's office to the school house. Wasta concluded his advice based on his experience by stating:

> Outside organizations and individuals can only advise leaders on how to do things and offer the benefit of their experience, but that cannot replace all of the stakeholders *making the process their own* by thinking about it, trying things, evaluating efforts, regrouping, stepping back when necessary, moving forward, etc. In my experience, places that fail to do so because they think that all that is needed are a few workshops, and then everyone will automatically get it and make it happen. No way. (as cited in Ainsworth, 2010, p. 303)

Similarly, Wolk (2011) maintains that training alone is not sufficient to deliver effective school leadership. He reported the following:

> Their working conditions must also be improved, and they must have authority

commensurate with their responsibility. Education leaders and state policymakers

must address these challenges as well. If every public school were led by a strong and

dedicated principal, some progress would surely result. But without major change in all

other aspects of the conventional school, the principal's influence for positive change will

be severely limited. (p. 73)

LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Levine (2006) conducted national surveys of deans of education, education faculty,

education school alumni and school principals to determine the program quality of leadership

preparation programs. The results, reported Levine, are disappointing. Levine states the

following:

The findings of this report were very disappointing. Collectively, educational

administration programs are the weakest of all the programs at the nation's education

schools. This is distressing not only because of the magnitude of the jobs that principals

and superintendents must perform, but also because of the large number of school leaders

who will need to be to be hired in the next decade. (pp. 13-14)

A residual of this report was a follow-up analysis of a leadership preparation program

outside of the United States worth examining. Levine (2006) reported that a journalist who

served as a site visitor in the *Educating School Teachers Study* recommended that Levine look at

the England National College for School Leadership (NCSL). The journalist reported that this

program had promise for others to emulate.

England's National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was established in 1990 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Described as a "War College" for school leaders, the NCSL has a single focus: to provide a single national focus for school leadership development and research, to be the driving force for world-class leadership in schools, and to stimulate national and international debate on leadership (Levine, p. 54). The program's 10 core principles are framed around school leadership "musts" as follows:

1. Be purposeful, inclusive, and values driven;

2. Embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school;

3. Promote an active view of learning;

4. Be instructionally focused;

5. Reach throughout the school community;

6. Build capacity by developing the school as a learning community;

7. Be futures-oriented and strategically driven;

8. Draw on experiential and innovative methodologies;

9. Benefit from a support and policy context that is coherent, systematic, and implementation driven; and

10. Receive support from a national college that leads the discourse on leadership for learning (Levine, p. 54).

SHIFTING ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

Today's principals must be capable of delegating authority, building leadership capacity among school faculty and staff, and exercising visionary and community leadership.

Additionally, principals must guide their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment. This type of leadership calls for a different kind of leader, a leader who encourages reflection in order to continue to develop and to improve his practice. Sparks (2009) suggested that "schools will improve by developing teamwork, real-time professional learning, and system and school cultures that allow new ideas and practices to grow and flourish" (p. 516).

Today' schools need the kinds of leaders with the commensurate leadership skills that will transform mediocre, low performing schools into schools of excellence. To that end, D. Reeves (personal communication, March 9, 2011) posited that the job of leading schools does not get easier and we need to be up front and honest about that with new principals. Reeves advises that principal coaching needs to occur in the domain of the work-in classrooms and schools. Reeves strongly urges "coaching up" and "skilling up" with beginning principals. Reeves advocated using a strength-based learning model when coaching principals. Reeves opined that professionals practice differently than amateurs. They work on the hard stuff because they do not mind taking risks. That is what transforms them from being amateurs into professionals. Furthermore, Reeves and Allison (2009) argued for clear, honest, and transparent feedback that comes from multiple sources to ensure a successful coaching relationship. They stated:

> Effective coaching is rich in feedback. If the coaching relationship is to be
> successful, the client and the client's organization must be absolutely open and
> candid with the coach. This candor requires, for example, disclosing the client's
> recent performance evaluations and previous personal development plans, as
> well as the elements of organization's strategic plans for which the client is

responsible (pp. 233-234).

Transformational leadership was the focus of the overarching research question explored by The Wallace Foundation's 2008 study, *A Mission of the Heart: What Does it Take to Transform a School?* The Wallace Foundation has a long-standing commitment to examining, reinventing and supporting effective leadership in the nation's schools and school districts. To this end, Wallace asked Public Agenda to conduct a small scale qualitative study to determine what it takes to transform a troubled school into one where students excel. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with principals and superintendents from high-needs schools. Special areas of inquiry included the following: (a) What do transformative leaders actually do? (b) What kinds of skills do they need? (c) Where does one look for leaders who have the requisite talent and skills? (d) How does one sustain and support them?

A second study, *Opening Doors: Promising Lessons from Five Texas High Schools,* was published in 2001 and was based on interviews and observations conducted in the 1999-2000 academic year by the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin. This study focused on five high-poverty high schools in Texas that had attained and sustained high levels of student achievement on selected academic indicators, the Texas Learning Index (TLI), Algebra I End-of-Course Examination, or Advanced Placement enrollment and course offerings. The goal of this study was to understand how these schools accomplished distinctive academic performance, to identify strategies that could inform other high needs school leaders how to meet the challenges of improving performance and how to increase educational opportunities for all students. Both the Wallace Foundation Study and the Charles A. Dana Center Study focused their research on high-needs schools and districts. Likewise, both used the methodology of focus

groups and one-on-one interviews. Wallace completed five focus groups with principals and

sixteen one-on-one interviews with superintendents and other high-ranking administrators. All

interviews followed a systematic interview guide revolving around two broad questions: (a)

What makes an effective leader in a high-needs school? (b) How can we attract, train and

support more effective leaders of this kind? (Clubine, Knight, Schneider, & Smith, 2001).

Data from the Charles A. Dana Center Study was collected from observations and

interviews with administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents and district

administrators. The Dana Center studied five schools with the following characteristics: (a) the

majority of the school's students qualified for free or reduced-lunch, (b) the school was located

in a large district (over 5,000 students), (c) the school served students in grades 9-12, (d) the

school did not have selective admission policies, (e) the school had a state of Texas

accountability rating of Acceptable, Recognized, or Exemplary; and (f) student achievement on

at least one of the following three academic indicators was higher than the state average as

reported for "all students": the Texas Learning Index, the Algebra I End-of-Course

Examination, or Advanced Placement enrollment and course offering (Clubine, et al. 2001).

Both studies found that the schools they studied were led by school leaders who set and

articulated clear, measurable goals and high expectations for student achievement. The Wallace

Study categorized school leaders into two types: "transformers" vs. "copers". There were

distinct patterns reflected in the "transformer" and "coper" principals. For example, the

"transformers" had an explicit vision of what their school might be like and brought a "can do"

attitude to their jobs (Public Agenda, 2008). In contrast, the "copers" were typically struggling

to avoid being overwhelmed (Public Agenda, 2008). Another common finding of both studies

was the time commitment school leaders gave to the task of school improvement. Transformers in the Wallace Study talked about doing paperwork before and after school hours to allow time during the school day to walk the halls, observe classroom lessons, and be in the lunchroom. "You can't be a closed door administrator," was how one of the transformers put it. "You can't go in and hide" (Public Agenda, 2008, p.4).

In contrast, the "copers" in the Wallace Study were overwhelmed with the task of transforming a low achieving school into a high-performing one. One study respondent reported, "You have to do so much. At any given time you could be walking down the corridor, and you get seven different things hitting you at one time, and you were initially going to a classroom…" (Public Agenda, 2008, p. 4). Findings in the Dana Center Study indicated that teachers and administrators gave freely of their time, both before and after school, to help students with specific learning objectives (Clubine, et al. 2001).

Other commonalities between the two studies were the utilization of data to improve student achievement and collaborative leadership. Both studies reveal that reviewing data on student performance is a means to an end – a way to set goals, analyze problems, and allocate resources where they can do the most good (Public Agenda, 2008). Similarly, both studies found that consensus-building and creating an environment where teachers feel appreciated, supported and valued is critical to the success of genuinely transforming a school. Findings from the study revealed that collaboration is paramount to school success. School administrators worked in partnership with teachers to identify and solve problems related to student achievement; placed priority on the needs of classroom teachers when making budgetary and other decisions;

provided teachers with the time and resources needed for instruction and planning; and

responded to teachers' suggestions for school improvement (Public Agenda, 2008, p. 20).

There were important findings in the Wallace Study regarding school leadership that

were not found in the Dana Center Study. For example, interview responses for how to recruit

more exemplary candidates for high needs schools suggested that the best source was young

teachers or assistant principals already in school districts. There was a strong consensus from

respondents that recruits should come from within the education ranks instead of from the

corporate world. One principal reported the following:

> The difference is, in the corporate world, if you're shipped a box of defective blueberries,
>
> you can always send them back. In education, if you have a defective child – per se, for
>
> the sake of what I'm saying - you can't send them back. You must educate the child. You
>
> have to know how to get a defective child to the point of proficiency, as opposed to
>
> defective blueberries, send them back. Teachers too, we can't send back. (2008, p. 8)

This correlated with Skrla, Erlandson, Reed and Wilson's (2001) insights on promising

practices for recruiting and developing future school leaders. They stated the following:

> One of the most promising practices for recruiting and developing future leaders can be
>
> accomplished at the school district level. A number of successful programs have been
>
> implemented in which the school districts begin grooming future principals long before
>
> they are needed, thereby developing a pool of qualified candidates from which to select
>
> the very best. Many districts use aspiring principal development programs as an
>
> opportunity to develop school leaders with the specific skills necessary for their

population of students and as an opportunity to recruit and develop minorities for campus leadership positions (p. 97).

Both the Wallace Study and the Dana Center Study provided insights into the type of leadership necessary for transforming low- performing schools into high-performing schools. Findings from both studies supported a collaborative leadership style, frequent examination of multiple forms of student data, clearly articulated goals and expectations, and a tireless quest for student achievement of all.

THE PRACTICE OF COACHING

Richard Elmore has long argued for a new way of working with school leaders to improve their practice. Elmore (2000) asserted that "Leaders must create environments in which individuals expect to have their personal ideas and practices subjected to the scrutiny of their colleagues, and in which groups expect to have their conceptions of practice subjected to the scrutiny of individuals. Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement" (Elmore, 2000, p.20).

Moreover, Elmore (2000) argued that a key role of today's school leader is continuous learning in school environments. Elmore stated the following:

The existing institutional structure of public education does one thing very well: It creates a normative environment that values idiosyncratic, isolated, and individualistic learning at the expense of collective learning. This phenomenon holds at all levels: individual teachers invent their own practice in isolated classrooms, small knots of like-minded practitioners operate in isolation from their colleagues within a given school, or

46

schools operate as exclusive enclaves of practice in isolation from other schools. In none

of these instances is there any expectation that individuals or groups are obliged to pursue

knowledge as both an individual and a collective good. (p. 20)

Elmore's argument for more, not less, collaboration among school leaders echoed what

Reeves (2009) suggested relative to the merits of coaching as a model for school improvement.

Reeves (2007) posited that collaboration is often thwarted by bureaucratic trappings and states

the following: "the amount of time wasted in administrative meetings is staggering, particularly

considering how much of it is devoted to the delivery of information that would be efficiently

and accurately delivered in print" (p. 241). Reeves warned the following:

If we expect a culture of collaboration to develop in schools – and collaboration is at the

very heart of professional learning communities that are committed to fair and consistent

assessments – then leaders must reallocate time from the least productive parts of

administrative meetings to collaboration." (p. 241)

Both Reeves and Elmore see value in collaborating with experienced coaches.

Further, Reeves (2009) offered a caveat to consider when selecting a leader coach.

Reeves (2009) compared two models of coaching to determine coaching usefulness. One

model's implementation, he suggested, is a waste of time if the coach is an untrained friend or

confidante who is merely serving as a therapist. On the other hand, a coach who is skillful in

assisting a principal with real world issues in his building, who understands the complex work of

schooling, is worth his weight in gold. Reeves (2009) described such a scenario of a Nevada principal:

> [She] needed practical advice on making immediate changes in schedule, student interventions, and faculty support. With the guidance of her coach, she created flexibility in the schedule to provide literacy intervention, made long overdue changes in teaching assignments by providing strong teachers to students with the greatest needs, and communicated clearly and consistently to her supervisor from the district office." (p. 74)

Similar to the aforementioned Nevada principal, principals new to their roles often need assistance simply learning the culture of the school community and school system politics. In other words, they need to know how things are done within the culture. Lovely (2004) advised that "As school districts explore coaching options, assistance should be targeted to lead new principals through the cultural, emotional, and political conflicts they encounter on a daily basis" (p. 62). However, all too often in school districts, particularly larger ones, district personnel and other peers are too overstretched with responsibilities and replete with time that prevents them from serving as a coach. This creates a limited pool of qualified, trained and capable coaches with a deep understanding of the coaching process and an understanding of the ultimate goal of changing adult practice that leads to improved leader performance. Reeves (2007) found in his research that more often than not, school districts hire retired administrators to coach new principals. Often there may be no evidence to substantiate that the principal coach was successful as a principal. Moreover, Reeves (2009) warned that insufficient research has been conducted on whether or not coaching is a good use of time and resources leading to changed performance. He

reported that even though there are numerous vendors who provide coaching services, albeit the most prolific are geared toward business and life coaching; "until more education coaching meets that research-based standard, let the buyer beware" (p. 77).

Furthermore, Reeves (2010) asserted that a distinction should be made between performance coaching and evaluation. Reeves stated:

> Some feedback, particularly which will come from a detailed design such as our Leadership Performance Matrix, will inevitably lead to the conclusion that the leader is imperfect. This is a startling finding when one is accustomed to traditional evaluations, in which anything short of "superior" is a dagger in the heart. If you introduce a two-step process that starts not with matters influencing contract renewal or the ability to pay the mortgage, but rather with the broad question of "How can we help you to be a more effective leader?" then I think you'll have better results. Moreover, the inevitable tension between the state department of education and individual school systems can be mitigated if you treat the initial leadership evaluation not as a "gotcha!" but as a means to provide assistance. (p. 135)

The practice of coaching has historically permeated the world of athletics where, from the novice athlete to Olympic champions, the services of coaches are highly sought. In the educational sector, coaching typically has focused on supporting principals in their leadership roles and on teachers in implementing new curriculum content or instructional strategies (Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2010). Saphier & West (2010) advocated for coaches and teachers to engage in professional learning in a public way not traditionally seen in schools. This included

individual planning conferences, group planning meetings to look at student work, debate around best instructional strategies, lesson study and demonstration teaching.

Specific to leadership coaching, Lambert (2003) asserted that instructional coaching has been around for many decades, but very little attention has been given to *leadership* coaching, in which questions are meant to expand the respondent's focus from being a reflective practitioner to being a leader (p. 34). Lambert offered that:

> Being listened to carefully and listening carefully to others has an almost magical effect on what we say: issues and problems are held at arm's length and examined from all sides, instead of being subjected to quick opinions and ready solutions. (p. 34)

Similarly, Sharratt and Fullan (2009) posited that leadership coaching is "one approach to providing support to leaders by offering opportunities to have a dialogue, seek advice, rehearse, and question key instructional leadership decisions and actions" (p. 49). Relative to principal support, Fullan (1993) discouraged principals from limiting their professional development to the confines of their school, but he encouraged principals to become a part of a large learning environment and to cast a larger net for participating in learning activities. He advocated:

> Participating in peer coaching projects among principals; working with other principals and administrators and the board to improve professional development for principals; visiting other schools outside as well as inside one's board; spending time in the community; figuring out about the latest practices as reported in the professional literature and disseminating ideas about one's own school

practices through speeches; workshops and /or writing. It will be necessary to be

selective, but ongoing involvement outside the school, in some form, is essential

for perpetual learning and effectiveness. (p. 88).

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Washington (Portin, 2004) focused

on the types of schools that leaders lead and their corresponding training relative to preparation

for the job. The study examined twenty-one K-12 public and private K-12 schools in

Washington, Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin to determine what it takes to lead schools in such

challenging times (Portin, 2004). This study was guided by the following research questions:

(a) Do all principals play certain core roles regardless of the types of schools they lead? (b) How

do these roles vary across traditional public, magnet, charter, and private schools? and (c) Do

current training programs adequately address the demands of the job? (Portin, 2004, p. 15).

Researchers identified seven common functions of leadership in all types of schools as follows:

(a) instructional leadership, (b) cultural leadership, (c) managerial leadership, (d) human

resources leadership, (e) strategic leadership, (f) external development leadership, and (g.)

micropolitical leadership (p. 17). The findings of the study concluded that indeed participants

reported that their principal preparation programs did not adequately prepare them for the myriad

of challenges they would face in their roles as school leaders. In fact, participants revealed that

"Their preparation programs seemed to offer little value; principals often described the programs

as theoretical and disconnected from the real challenges they encountered" (p. 18).

A disconnect between theory and practice is one area addressed through peer coaching.

Coaching incorporates reflective thinking about practice and performance. Rich and Jackson

(2005) offered that one way of encouraging and supporting principals in their efforts to engage in

reflective thinking is to pair novice principals with experienced principals in a peer-coaching

arrangement. Given that the challenges of the principalship continue far beyond the first year or

two on the job, a peer-coaching partnership provides both the novice and experienced principal

an opportunity to work within a framework that supports reflection on practice, thinking, and

foundational beliefs (pp. 30-31).   Riddle and Ting (2006) recommended six fundamental

principles that should guide the coaching process. These include: (a) creating a safe but

challenging environment, (b) working in tune with the coachee's agenda, (c) facilitating and

collaborating, (d) advocating self-awareness, (e) promoting sustainable learning from experience,

and (f) modeling what you coach.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

The practice of coaching requires specific skills and competencies. Hargrove (2008)

purported that "coaching requires having both the toughness and the compassion to skillfully

intervene in people's learning processes" (p. 129). Coaching, at its core, involves

transformation. That is to say, because of another's influence over one's current state, one is

transformed to a different place. Hargrove (2008) continued:

> A successful coaching relationship is always a story of transformation, not just of
>
> higher levels of performance. It is a story that takes people beyond their
>
> immediate passion and pride and helps them to come to grips with the fact that to
>
> reach what is really possible and achievable for them, they must be willing to
>
> fundamentally question who they are, what they do, and why they do it"
>
> (Hargrove, 2008, p. 129).

This type of deep transformation is rooted in honesty and trust. McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, and McDonald (2003) maintained that educators who are serious about changing their practice are willing to go public with their work. In other words, they invite the scrutiny of peers. McDonald et al. posited the following:

> Educators educating themselves rely on each other's honesty, insight, and experience. Going public with their work, they let each other in on what they are doing, thinking, learning, and hoping. They invite one another's perspectives in the expectation that these will be valued. They invite the collective experience of the group to serve as the arbiter of their own growth. All of these efforts require a trustful situation. (pp. 17-18)

Therefore, there is substantial evidence to suggest that coaching connects to leadership and has potential possibilities for transforming leadership performance. Crane (2010) made this connection with the concept of transformational coaching.   He offered an operational definition of transformational coaching as follows: "The art of assisting people enhance their effectiveness, in a way they feel helped" (p. 31). Crane developed nine characteristics of transformational coaching as follows: (a) data based, (b) performance focused, (c) relationship focused, (d) slower, not faster, (e) requires dialogue, (f) requires more heart, (g) requires humility, (h) requires balance, and, (i) requires self-responsibility (pp. 37- 40).

Furthermore, Crane offered a job description for transformational coaches that includes seven key elements that a transformational coach must implement as follows:

1.   Invest time to get to know people as people;

2. Understand people's roles, goals and challenges on the job to be helpful;

3. Set clear context and GRRATE (Goals, Roles, Resources, Accountabilities, Timeframe, and Empowerment) expectations;

4. Observe people's work closely enough to have relevant and substantive feedback;

5. Provide timely, candid and specific feedback regarding what you observe and interpret as the impact on yourself, other people and performance;

6. Stimulate learning, growth and performance improvement by asking effective learning questions, offer suggestions as necessary; and

7. Leave people feeling supported and empowered to contribute at increasingly higher levels.

The aim of coaching is to transform performance for long-term results. This goal embodies the philosophy that an organization has a culture conducive to coaching. Lindbom (2007) described a culture of coaching as one in which the regular review of performance and just-in-time feedback is expected. He continued that "a culture of coaching requires commitment, consistency, and dedication from leadership. It requires every manager to make receiving regular feedback a day-to-day expectation and giving feedback a fundamental job requirement of supervisors" (p. 102).

A study conducted by Kombarakaran, Baker, Fernandes & Yang (2008) involved surveying 114 executives who, through a company acquisition, faced transitions to new positions of greater responsibility with a new company. A program was put into place to provide performance coaching from forty-two experienced coaches who conducted 12 coaching sessions over six months. The 114 coached executives and forty-two coaches were surveyed to determine

the program's effectiveness relative to the impact of executive coaching on performance (Kombarakaran et al, 2008). Their research posited that coaching effected positive executive change in five areas: (a) people management, (b) relationship with managers, (c) goal setting and prioritization, (d) engagement and productivity, and (e) dialogue and communication (p. 89).

PROMISING COACHING MODELS

Across the country there are a growing number of successful coaching programs designed to support and to improve the performance of school leaders. One such program is the Leadership Initiative for Transformation, LIFT, in the Chicago Public Schools. This program provided monthly workshop sessions during the school year for new principals and a veteran principal coach who is paired with two new principals who meets with them individually and as a team between workshop sessions (Anderson, 2001). This type of professional learning was geared towards keeping the work of school leadership authentic by grappling with real school issues, problem solving with peers, and developing a level of trust and transparency that results in improved technical skill of the principal as a reflective learner. Reeves (2006) offered examples of reflective leaders throughout history – Ghandi, Churchill, Roosevelt, King – all who understood the importance of reflection before making decisions. Reeves proffered that "reflective leaders take time to think about the lessons learned, record their small wins and setbacks, document conflicts between values and practice, identify the difference between idiosyncratic behavior and long-term pathologies, and notice trends that emerge over time" (p. 49).

Another model of professional development for leadership coaching is the Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) developed by the New Teacher Center at the

University of California Santa Cruz, in collaboration with the Association of California School Administrators. CLASS prepares individuals to coach new and experienced school principals, and supports the establishment of programs for principal induction and ongoing professional development (Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003). Bloom et al. noted that the CLASS coaching model is based on the following precepts:

- The coach is a "different observer" of the coachee and her context. Bringing a different perspective to the relationship, the coach can see both circumstances and possibilities that the coachee cannot;

- The coaching relationship is based on trust and permission;

- The coach moves between instructional and facilitative coaching strategies based upon assessment of the coachee's needs and in pursuit of agreed upon goals;

- The coach's fundamental commitment is to student success, and the coach will appropriately push the coachee to that end; and

- Professional standards such as ISLLC and CaPSELs are a framework for goals setting and ongoing formative assessment (p. 21).

Still another coaching model in its tenth year is the Atlanta Public School's leadership training program, the Superintendent's Academy for Building Leaders in Education, SABLE. Devised jointly by Atlanta educators, outside consultants, and experts in organizational development, the unique two-year experience is designed to produce principals and other leaders who focus on Atlanta's overriding goal: improving student achievement, (Mezzacappa, Holland, Willen, Colvin, & Feemster, 2008). Mezzacappa et al. reported the following:

SABLE achieves this goal by helping participants figure out who they are, what

they value, how they lead, and what they can do to tailor their gifts to the needs of Atlanta schools. The program encourages reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and communicating, all qualities that have not always been prized in the traditional "I'm-in-charge" mode of school leadership (Mezzacappa et al., 2008, p. 6).

SABLE participants analyze school data, synthesize case studies, view and critique teaching videotapes, and attend weekly sessions to learn new strategies to improve their craft. Program participant LePaul Shelton, a 35 year-old Morehouse College graduate who was promoted after one year in SABLE to lead the Ed S. Cook Elementary School, reflected on his experience:

"SABLE reinforced a lot of my ideas and thought patterns, and I was able to add things to my tool box" (as cited in Mezzacappa et al., 2008, p. 10). "It made us look at leadership through different frames – the business, human, and political side – and helped us understand the vast responsibilities of being an instructional leader. The bottom line was always improving student achievement" (as cited in Mezzacappa et al., p.10).

Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall, in a speech at the Strategic Management of Human Capital National Conference, credited her district's collaboration with The Wallace Foundation for improving principal leadership. She stated: "Thanks to our work with the Wallace Foundation, our principals function as coaches and educational leaders and not just as administrative managers." (Hall, 2009). Hall continued, "Central office support leaders also spend time developing transformational coaching skills to influence others to work toward

our organizational goals. Moreover, their professional learning includes strategic planning and change management using project management methodology."

Bloom and his colleagues (2005) have engaged in extensive fieldwork on blended coaching at the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz and posed the following question: Can people learn new ways of being, or are our personalities, dispositions, and interpersonal skills fixed? (Bloom, Claire, Moir, & Warren, 2005, p. 84). They go on to answer this question by reminding those who serve in the role of coach that the answer to this question must be clear. To that end, effective coaches believe firmly that people are capable of making fundamental internal changes (Bloom et al., 2005).

Similarly, Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) offered the notion of *principal readiness* Their study explored the dual goal of principal preparation programs to prepare candidates to assume placement as school leaders immediately after program completion but to also engage in lifelong learning. Browne-Ferrigono & Muth stated the following:

> We define this dual goal for programs and individuals as *principal readiness.* We further suggest that principal making does not end when a program graduate assumes leadership responsibility of a school. Principals must grow and change throughout their careers to meet changing demands and new expectations. Likewise, they must also identify, recruit and mentor future principals (p. 290).

 Said another way, principals who have experienced effective mentoring, coaching and support may sense an obligation to mentor other aspiring principals.

A final performance coaching model is the Leadership Preparation Performance

Coaching (LPPC) Program developed in 2005 by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School

Improvement (GLISI). This coaching model is a national model for performance-based training

and coaching and provides a solution to leader performance and supply challenges faced by

schools and school districts. The LPPC training is itself performance-based, ensuring that each

candidate demonstrates mastery of coaching skills prior to actual use in a school district (Georgia

Leadership Institute for School Improvement, 2010).

The aforementioned coaching programs and models focus on improving the skills and

dispositions of today's school leaders so that they are equipped to meet the ever increasing

demands found in school communities across the nation. The potential of coaching is addressed

by Hargrove (2008) who noted that performance coaching transcends individuals beyond passion

and pride and forces them to question what is really possible and achievable for them if they are

willing to "fundamentally question who they are, what they do, and why they do it" (p. 129).

SUMMARY

We live in a time of unprecedented change; leading schools today is, without

question, challenging and complex work. It is more paramount than ever that today's school

leaders have the ability to learn and to relearn quickly to affect change in ever-changing school

and community environments. Feltman (2001) purported that "Those who are best able to

expand their possibilities for effective action through learning will be the successful leaders of

our businesses, our communities, and our governments" (p.3). Leadership is the most critical

intervening variable in schools and can, indeed, be the determining variable in whether schools

are successful or not with their students, especially those from diverse backgrounds or students

of poverty. The leadership ability and leadership values of the principal determine in large

measure what transpires in a school, and what transpires in a school either promotes and

nourishes or impedes and diminishes student academic achievement. To this end, Stein and

Gewirtzman (2003) suggested the following:

> The work of training future principals should be embedded in the actual job
>
> of leading a school. Since we are training leaders to work in specific organizational
>
> systems, we must determine what responsibilities those systems will hold schools leaders
>
> accountable for and give future principals opportunities to practice meeting those
>
> responsibilities" (p. 21).

Groups working together collaboratively on their craft produce more and better new

learning experiences than a single person on his or her best day. Individuals learn the most about

practice when they are working on real work: their own and that of their close colleagues.

Therefore, adopting an effective formal coaching model as a form of job-embedded professional

learning for school leaders has the potential for laying a new path of possibility for deprivatizing

practice, increasing the instructional capacity of the nation's future school leaders, and providing

the nation's youth the educational opportunities they deserve. In these challenging times, if

schools are to remain viable institutions of learning, competent and skillful school leaders with

the confidence to lead the important work of school improvement must be the norm, not the

exception. An analysis of the research on school leadership reveals that leadership coaching

provides a promising tool to improve and enhance the performance of principals and has tremendous potential in changing leadership practice, the long-term effects on retention of principals, and the impact of leadership on student achievement.

A new, different and bold model of school leadership is needed to marshal the reform needed for 21st century schools. Fullan (2009) predicted that new leadership paradigms (and new leaders exemplifying them) are emerging at the same time – paradigms that are especially suited to leading system reform. The new paradigm has humility; listen to others, including those with whom you disagree, respect and reconcile differences, unify opposition on a higher ground, identify win – win scenarios, be hopeful and humbly confident no matter what (Fullan, 2009). This new paradigm of school leadership was congruent with using leadership coaching as a strategy to improve leadership performance.

A review of the literature on principal preparation programs and existing support of the nation's school leaders evidence the need for principals to possess specific skills and dispositions in order to transform schools from ordinary to extraordinary. No Child Left Behind calls for greater accountability and high stakes testing. Being a successful school principal today is not easy. Indeed, the job requires specific leadership skills and competencies and has become increasingly more complex with changing demographics, dwindling resources, a rising tide of accountability, and pressure to produce immediate results. Multiple research studies revealed that a number of principal preparation programs lacked opportunities for field-based experiences that included participating in and leading the work of school groups. Additionally, few school leaders learned how to lead schools in a collaborative setting, and many report feeling unprepared to lead a school once they have graduated from a leadership program that is heavy on theory and short on practice. Said another way, new principals reported a "knowing doing gap."

Moreover, a review of the literature indicated that there are leadership programs both in the United States and internationally that have promise for developing future school leaders. These programs were structured around a framework of leadership standards and dispositions, included solving authentic problems within a learning community, included internship and clinical experiences, and promoted learning about practice while under the scrutiny of peers. Additionally, ongoing professional development rooted in practice and in the context of where educators work reportedly had merit for the success of future school leaders. Finally, the practice of coaching has the potential of transforming the leadership performance of today's school leaders so that they are equipped to meet the ever increasing demands found in school communities across the nation.

Table 1

Review of Literature Matrix: Coaching and Principal Performance

Author(s)	Topic of Research	Methodology	Findings
Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPoint & Myerson (2005)	Principal pre and in-service programs	Qualitative: Case Analysis	Licensing requirements include a requisite set of knowledge, essential skills and leader dispositions, effective programs are research-based and provide authentic field-based experiences, are structured in cohort groupings and pair novice with a mentor/coach, have strong partnerships between programs and school districts, and nonprofits, and policy reform needed to finance and implement successful programs.
Kouzes & Posner (1983)	Leadership Practices	Mixed Methods: Quantitative: survey and Qualitative: in-depth interviews.	Leaders exhibit certain key practices when they are performing their personal best. These include challenging the process, inspiring a vision, modeling the way, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart.

Table1 (continued)

Author(s)	Topic of Research	Methodology	Findings
SREB (2005)	University/District Redesigned Principal Preparation Partnership	Case Study	Strong university/district leadership development programs require a focus on school improvement, joint intentional recruitment, selection, and preparation of candidates with a strong background in instruction, willingness of university partner to work as an equal partner with a school district to design program coursework, and external funds to ensure program success.
Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson (2005)	Leadership Development Programs in California compared with leadership development policies in other states	Quantitative: Surveys	Strong leadership programs feature research-based content on teaching and learning, data analysis, organizational development, change management, and leadership skills, a set of standards that frame leader competencies, problem-based learning that connects theory and practice, field-based internships, cohort models of learning and close collaboration between school districts and university partners.

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Topic of Research	Methodology	Findings
A Mission of the Heart: What Does it Take to Transform a School? Wallace Foundation (2008)	Competencies of Leaders of High Needs Schools and	Qualitative: Focus Groups and interviews	Improve principal training to reflect relevancy of the job, change conditions in school districts that cause principal burnout, recruit potential principals from within districts vs. the corporate world, and provide support to do the job.
Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006)	Job-Embedded Learning	Qualitative: Cross cohort comparative study involving Reflective writing prompt responses and interviews	Prior school leadership experience is an influencing factor for principal readiness, principal candidates need to learn in authentic school settings, full-time principal internships is recommended, and field-based learning experiences guided by skilled mentors have great potential for developing the needed technical leadership skills of principals.
Portin (2004)	Examination of 21 Schools and their leaders	Qualitative	Identified 7 common functions of leadership that resulted in success

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Topic of Research	Methodology	Findings
Waters, Marazno, & McNulty (2003).	Leadership Responsibilities that impact student learning	Quantitative Meta-Analysis	Analyzed studies since the early 1970's that examined the effects of leadership on student achievement and identified 21 key leadership responsibilities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 outlines procedures and design for a small scale qualitative research study that examined participants' perceptions of the effects of coaching on principal performance. The purpose of the study was to examine the techniques, principles, structures, models, and perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance. The literature has evidenced the great need for high-performance principals to lead today's schools that are rife with complex challenges and subpar conditions. Moreover, a review of the literature suggested that a shift in thinking about how institutions and other agencies successfully prepare, support and sustain principals is long overdue. A broader view of principal preparation suggested that principal preparation should be job embedded, collaborative, problem based, and should provide ongoing opportunities for application of practice and feedback.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews to obtain participants' perceptions of the following overarching research question: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Secondary questions that were explored in the study were as follows: (a) What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal leadership? (b) What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders? (c) What change occurs in professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study followed protocol outlined by Creswell (2005) by first identifying the problem and formatting the research to fit the researcher's desired intent. Qualitative study is used when the researcher desires to gain insight and knowledge from participants about a certain phenomenon or experiences. Creswell (2005) states that "qualitative research gives the participant a voice and seeks to find a 'key concept, idea, or process that repeats among participants" (p. 45).

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

The researcher collected data conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with seven principals using stratified purposeful sampling. The stratified purposeful sampling ensured a strong representation of principals with 0-5 years of experience. The principals had participated in a year-long coaching program in an urban school system in the southeastern portion of the United States. The researcher additionally conducted focus group interviews with five Leadership Coaches who were retired from the principalship in large urban school districts and provided year-long leadership coaching to principals participating in a new principals' leadership academy. The small size of the sample was indicative of the number of participants currently involved in the new principals' leadership academy. These coaching positions were funded through federal stimulus money for two years. Coaches were assigned to principals based on feedback from the Area Assistant Superintendents and the Division of Instruction of the participating school district. Coaches provided continued support to principal leaders based on the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) Eight Roles of Leadership

(see Appendix C.) Each leadership coach had over 30 years experience in education and leadership and had participated in intensive training and development in leadership coaching and principal development through a partnership with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI). Moreover, each coach was familiar with instructional and program initiatives within the participating school district.

INSTRUMENTS

The researcher developed semi-structured interview questions to use when collecting data from principals who had participated in a year-long coaching program. Semi-structured interview questions for principals were as follows:

1. Think of a time when coaching had an impact on your leadership performance and tell me about that.

2. How would you rate the time allotted to coaching?

3. Tell me about strength or strengths you have developed as a result of the coaching process.

4. How would you benefit from additional coaching?

5. Having participated in the coaching process, what recommendations would you give your coach for improvement of the process?

6. Think back to the beginning of the coaching process and tell me what you expected or anticipated at that time.

7. Describe your current expectations/impressions of the coaching process.

8. Tell me about the preparation for the coaching process you received before you met your coach.

9. Is there anything you would like to tell me about the coaching process that I have not asked?

Semi-structured interview questions allowed for study participants to respond to questions from their own frame and to not be confined by the structure of prearranged questions. This type of interview also allowed for the researcher to probe with follow-up questions for deeper meaning or additional insights into the research topic. The researcher also developed semi-structured interview questions to ask five principal coaches in a focus group format. Focus group questions for principal coaches were as follows:

1. Think back to a challenge you have faced during the coaching process and tell me about that.

2. Tell me about the training you received.

3. What was the BEST thing about the training you received?

4. If you were designing the program now, what training would you provide for coaches?

5. Tell me about any surprises you encountered that might have been avoided by having more information about the principal before beginning.

6. Is there additional information about the principals you coached that would have been helpful to you in the coaching process? If yes, what?

7. What did you learn from the coaching experience?

8. Is there anything you would like to tell me about the coaching process that I have not asked?

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection began following the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval at

Georgia Southern University and approval from the participating school district's Research and

Evaluation Department to conduct the research in the district. The IRB Application outlined

detailed information about the data collection and analysis methods chosen. The researcher sent

an email to the selected study participants. This email included two attachments: a letter

informing participants about the intent of the study, procedures, voluntary nature of the study,

risks and benefits of being in the study, confidentiality, and contact information and an informed

consent agreement to participate in the study. The researcher took steps to ensure that all

information was kept confidential by guaranteeing anonymity of participants' responses. Once

the researcher had received a response from study participants via phone or email that they

would like to participate, the researcher then emailed participants confirming a time and location

mutually agreeable for interviews. If they responded that they did not want to participate, their

name was removed and another selection was made. Before each interview was conducted, the

researcher collected the informed consent forms, which were signed before the interviews began.

After consent forms were signed, the researcher assigned a code to each participant, which was

used to identify all responses given by that participant. The researcher then conducted the

interviews using the interview guide. Interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes.

VALIDITY

"Validity pertains to accurately assessing the construct that the inventory purports to

measure" (Heppner & Heppner, 2004, p. 118). Construct validity in the study was established by

linking the interview items to the GLISI Eight Roles of School Leadership and the

Transformational Coach's job description (Crane, 2010). The researcher conducted a detailed

analysis using the interpretational analysis method. The study did not lend itself to long term

observations or triangulation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher audiotape recorded interviews and conducted extensive note taking of all

interview sessions. Tape recordings were professionally transcribed, and the researcher

conducted a close, guided analysis of interview tapes and transcripts and coded the descriptive

data. The researcher analyzed all data using a four-step interpretational analysis method. First,

she read and organized the raw data by filing, creating a data base, and breaking large units into

smaller ones. Second, the researcher perused the data to get an overall sense of the information

and recorded preliminary findings.   Third, she classified data by grouping all data into

categories, themes, patterns and surprises and began making meaning of the data. Finally, the

researcher synthesized all data and formed hypotheses or propositions, constructed tables that

depicted what the data showed or did not show, and looked for information that supported the

significance of the study.   Additionally, the researcher read and analyzed a secondary data

source, monthly Leadership Coaching Reports, to glean potential insights into the coaching

experience.   The following chapter summarizes the findings of the data analysis relevant to

participants' perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine participants' perceptions of the impact of coaching on the performance of principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States. The population for the study included five Leadership Coaches and seven beginning principals who had participated in a year-long formal coaching relationship as part of a new principals' leadership academy. Participants were asked to participate in focus group interviews (coaches) and face-to-face semi-structured interviews (principals). The data were analyzed by the following four dimensions: (1) strengths developed as a result of coaching, (2) examination of a "critical incident" facilitated by coaching, (3) future training needs of new principals, and (4) recommendations for improvement of the coaching model used in the participating school district.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching question for this research study was the following: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Secondary questions that were explored in the study were as follows:

1. What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal performance?

2. What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders?

3. What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative design, which yielded data from five Leadership Coaches and seven beginning principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States, was used for this research study. The phenomenon under investigation in this research was the perceptions of new principals and Leadership Coaches of the process of coaching and its impact on principal performance. Focus group interviews and semi-structured one-on-one interviews were used to collect qualitative data. A secondary data source, individual monthly Leadership Coach Reports, was also reviewed.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were selected through a purposeful selection process. Participants included seven principals and five principal coaches in an urban school system in the southeastern portion of the United States. Participants in the study included nine females and three males. Principals in the study had a range of experience as a principal from 1-5 years, experience as assistant principals from 2.5-14 years and were serving as principals in either elementary or secondary schools. Leadership Coaches had a range of 18-24 years of principal experience in elementary, middle and high schools and had 2-6 years experience as a leadership coach. Table 2 provides characteristics of the participants in the study. This information was gathered at the time of the face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

Table 2

Participants' Characteristics

Respondent	Gender	Ethnicity	Principal Experience	A.P. Experience	Coach Experience	Level
C1	F	B	24 years		2 years	
C2	F	B	18 years		2 years	
C3	F	B	19 years		2 years	
C4	F	B	16 years		6 years	
C5	F	B	24 years		2 years	
P1	M	B	1 year	8 years		HS
P2	F	B	2 years	14 years		ES
P3	F	B	2 years	4.5 years		ES
P4	F	B	2 years	6 years		ES
P5	M	B	5 years	3 years		HS
P6	F	B	1 year	2.5 years		HS
P7	M	B	2 years	6 years		HS

PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Leadership Coaches, all retired principals in K-12 public schools, provided year-long leadership coaching to principals participating in a new principals' leadership academy. Each coach had over 30 years experience in education and leadership and had participated in intensive training and development in leadership coaching and principal development through a partnership with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI). Moreover, each coach was familiar with the instructional and program initiatives within the participating school district. All but one of the coaches had served as a principal in the participating urban school district and had former experience with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) as a Leadership Coach. Coaches were assigned to new principals based on feedback from the Area Assistant Superintendents and the Division of Instruction. Coaches provided continued support to principals based on the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) Eight Roles of Leadership (see Appendix C.)

FINDINGS

The following data represent the face-to-face semi-structured interview and focus group interview findings of the principals and Leadership Coaches, respectively, regarding their perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance as evidenced in their respective experiences as principals and Leadership Coaches in an urban school system in the southeastern portion of the United States. The researcher was cognizant of creating a safe environment such that the participants felt comfortable engaging in an honest open dialogue regarding their

coaching experiences. The researcher engaged the participants throughout the interview process

and asked probing questions to obtain rich data for the study.

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW RESPONSES

For research question 1, (*What kinds of support and professional learning appear

to have had the greatest impact on your principal performance?), each respondent

expressed the importance of having time with the leadership coach. All seven principals

stated that their coach called and visited them three times a week. During these visits

coaches conducted walk-throughs with the principals, met with school leadership teams,

looked at student achievement data, looked over and discussed written

documents, planned and problem-solved together, discussed strategies for achieving

school goals, and discussed professional articles and books. P 1, a new high

school principal, whose building is undergoing an extensive fiscal renovation, spoke about

his coach's access and her ability to help him slow down. He stated the following:

She calls me once a week, and whenever I need anything, she will come over

immediately, so it's not a bombardment where she calls me every day or she wants me to

report in everyday. She will call on Wednesday and ask if I need anything and I say yes,

I need something. She will say what day can I come over and meet with your leadership

team and look at some things to make it work?

When asked to describe strength he had developed as a result of the coaching process, P 1 responded with the following:

Well number one, the most important thing for me was to slow down because I am the type of person who will jump in feet first because I want to participate in it. So the ability to slow down, to look at the situation, and the ability to delegate that to someone. She has given me that opportunity to think before I act because I act a lot of times, and sometimes it gets me in trouble, and sometimes it works out, but I just needed to slow down and use that skill.

When asked to give the researcher an example of what "slowing down" looked like, he responded as follows:

For example, you receive a phone call and there is a parent on the other end who needs something done immediately. So the first thing, you know, you say to that parent is well, let me take that information and investigate that situation and then I'll get back with you. That was a big one for me because there again, I am the type of person if you call me and need something, I am going to try to take care of it immediately. But to be able to just say let me look into it and I will give you a call back tomorrow and give you some options, that in itself is pretty good.

P 3 discussed the benefits she had received from having participated in the district's Leadership Academy as an assistant principal. She felt that participation in this professional development with other assistant principals afforded her a comfort level so that she was not

afraid to ask questions. She described receiving training in collaboration with faculty and how to work with budgets. She stated, "Theory is much different from practice. The Leadership Academy gave us a strong foundation."

Five of the seven principal respondents discussed the benefits of the monthly classes that were conducted for new principals framed around the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement Eight Roles of School Leadership. P 3 stated the benefits of these classes as follows:

> Not only are we learning hands-on, but through these classes we talk about various scenarios, ask about what has happened in our buildings and discuss concerns with our coaches. Learning from your peers is very important and helps you realize your issue may not be an isolated case.

For research question 2 (*What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders?*), principal respondents consistently spoke about the value of having a trusted, experienced person with whom to dialogue and problem-solve issues of practice. Each respondent alluded to the increasing demands of the job of the principalship and the need for more, not less, support. P 2 stated the following:

> This job has become a 24-hour-a-day-job so with that being noted, you always have to be thinking, always be engaging in discussion and thoughtful, deliberative conversations so that coaching exposes you to other outlets because you just do not know it all. With the complexity of the education arena across the country, Common Core Standards, teacher

quality, highly qualified credentialing process, how to ensure that low-performing

schools are being served, cutting-edge technology; we have to have some folks who are

cheerleading for us. There is so much that goes on in the position that we have to have

someone who has had that experience who can give us the tools and the guidance that

ordinarily you may not have. I think that some of the blunders that we make as principals

do not have to be repeated if we have a coach that is committed to who we are and they

are making an investment in what we want to become.

Each of the principals talked about the role of the principal being difficult, complex, and

fast paced. P 5 described the high school principalship as "the hardest job in education; it is fast

paced, full of speed every day and the part I struggle with the most is I spend so much time on

non-instructional issues. You cannot help but spend time with it." This participant talked about

his best laid plans on any given day being thwarted by unexpected crises. He stated the

following:

> There needs to be daily or every other day conversations with your coach about what is
>
> going on with your agenda and plans and what you are going to do daily. What I have
>
> learned as a principal is that you can have a nice agenda and they are blown every day. It
>
> is like you are walking into the unknown. You have plans to go into the classroom to do
>
> observations and an irate parent comes in or you have an issue on the bus or an issue at
>
> the central office that you have to address. You have to stop and take care of those
>
> things. The time that needs to be set aside everyday or every other day for you to work
>
> with your coach would help you a lot. As a principal, you want to learn and get better at

your craft. You want to get any kind of help that you can get, especially from a veteran administrator.

Another theme that emerged from principal interviews was the practice of reflection. P 2 spoke also about how the coaching process had helped her to become more of a reflective practitioner. When asked about strengths she had developed as a result of the coaching process, she had the following to say:

> Strengths that I have developed have to be in the area of planning and reflection. I know a lot of people discount the reflection piece; however, engaging in a conversation with my coach in a nonjudgmental way and the reflection of that conversation is kind of pure and not blemished by subjectivity, so through that I think my growth as a leader has developed as a result. She is truly interested in my success.

Reflection was especially meaningful to P 7 as he described how the coaching process had allowed him to accelerate his professional growth curve. His response is below:

> Confucius said that by three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection which is the noblest; second, by imitation, which of course is the easiest; and third, by experience, which is the bitterest. Of the three, imitation, reflection and experience, reflection was the highest form of wisdom I have developed because it is only after you have reflected on your experience that you can truly learn what worked and what didn't work and how you can actually apply that experience in real life-situations.

For research question 3 (*What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?*), several themes emerged including being a lifelong learner, improved decision making, how to work with teams, a desire to continue coaching others, and collaboration with peers. First, all participants spoke about their desire to be the best professional they could be. P 1, when asked how he would benefit from additional coaching said, "I need to go out and find a mentor who can coach me as well because there are always things that I have to learn and that I need to learn." Similarly, P 2, in response to the question, how would you rate the time allotted to coaching, responded with the following:

> She comes out and looks at our professional learning opportunities that we kind of put together and examines it and she shares literature that I so eagerly read. This is where I think I get the depth because it is not always given to you; it is a sharing type of thing – check this out and then that exploration journey is a good thing in the case of my development. I want to be a principal who can make a difference in the lives of the children and the parents who entrust their lives to us.

P 2 discussed a book, *Critical Conversations,* that her school leadership team is reading and discussing as a book study. She also talked about tutoring seven academically struggling students three days a week before school. P 4 responded to the question, *tell me about a strength that you have developed as a result of the coaching process,* that her ability to build relationships had been strengthened. She stated the following:

> In thinking of one specific strength as it relates to our 8 leadership roles, I by nature am an introvert. I believe in *True Colors* (Personality Inventory*).*   I am a gold person, so I

am very task oriented. Sometimes people who are gold tend to be very focused on the completion of a task at hand, and one of the strengths that I have developed that is very important has been the building of relationships. Despite different issues that have come up in the district, because I have formed relationships with staff members here, I feel that the morale has been very good. We have remained focused on student achievement, and that was a strength that was developed through the coaching process because as we focused on each of the 8 roles, we outlined a plan for the development of beginning of the process and had some very honest conversations about strengthening areas of improvement.

Similarly, building relationships with staff was a leadership skill that P 3 also spoke about during her interview. She was named principal of an established school with little teacher turnover. An added challenge she faced was that the school was organized as a traditional theme school model, which implicated certain expectations by teachers, staff, and parents. At her first faculty meeting, she asked for anyone new to the school to stand. She was shocked when she was the only one standing. She credited her coach with guiding and supporting her ability to work collaboratively with her team to forge positive relationships and to involve the staff on a more consistent basis in areas of concern in the school. She stated, "Coaching has helped me be a better listener for my staff and be more secure in the decisions that I make."

When probed about how her coach assisted with making better decisions, she stated the following:

> By asking me what decisions have been made, how I approached them, asking about solutions and assuring me that I am following appropriate procedures and protocol, giving me insight and helping me to look at things from all perspectives.

A final theme that emerged from principal interview responses was participants' interest in becoming a coach or mentor for others. Multiple participants referenced former mentors who had a vested interest in their careers and performance. P 2 spoke about her former high school principal who hired her to be an assistant principal. She stated "He said to me that I will participate in your success and not your failure, so that demonstrated to me that he was totally committed to my development and my success. I feel the same way about my coach."

Likewise, P 3 referenced her former principal who hired her as an elementary assistant principal. She stated, "When I was brought on as an assistant principal, Dr. _____ said to me, 'I'm training you as a principal.' It really has made a difference." P 4 also talked about her formal and informal coaches. She stated the following:

> I worked under a great principal, _____. He did a lot of coaching. It is that extra layer of support that you need in order to ensure you that you are doing the right thing all the time. By the time you get to this job, you are certain of yourself or you should be, but you do not need to be so sure that you do not need to speak to anyone because I think that is when people get themselves into trouble.

P 6 referred to role models who assisted in supporting her career, such as former principals, area assistant superintendents, and her former principal as well. She said the following about her desire to serve in a coaching role:

I would love to serve in that role. I hope that in some point in my career that I develop many common strengths from great leaders and that I am able to have that opportunity to come back and serve in that capacity with others.

P 7 noted that a turning point in his educational career was the day his coach stepped into his office. He stated the following about his experience:

I had always respected her from a distance because I heard of her reputation before I ever met her. What she did at _____ High School was just short of amazing. So when I found out she was going to be my coach, I was floored. I felt like Michael Jordan getting Phil Jackson. You had a talent that could take you to a totally different level. She asked me where I wanted to go, and she was the bridge between where I was and where I was going, which was huge because I knew where I was, but I didn't quite know how I wanted to get there. One of the highlights of our relationship was when we met over the Christmas break at Barnes and Noble because that meeting prepared me to go into second semester full throttle.

When asked about his expectations of the coaching process, P 7 responded with the following:

When I first had the opportunity to have a coach, I expected to go to a totally different level. I really did. Some of the greatest athletes in the world seek the best coaches out

there for training, so I did not have the opportunity to recruit my coach. But if I had, I would have recruited somebody very, very similar, somebody with an impressive background, somebody who was passionate, energetic, and who was not easily intimidated because sometimes as a coach you cannot coach somebody if you are afraid that they got to be better than you or they are going to try to outdo you in that regards. She had so much confidence that that was not the case.

To answer the overarching question of this study, (*What impact does coaching have on principal performance?*), the participants had strong opinions that can best be summarized this way: All but one respondent described a "critical incident" of practice in which the leadership coach provided guidance and support. A critical incident presents an account of something that happened in one's work that was puzzling, rewarding or devastating and sheds new insights about one's work or practice. These critical incidents included personnel issues, time management, and delegation to school safety. In each case, respondents described how their leadership coach provided coaching, guidance and support through dialogue and problem solving. P1 described a personnel issue involving a custodian who was out under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) with back issues. The employee's 60 days were ending, and the principal did not want the individual to return to school if she was not going to be productive. His leadership coach walked him through the process of working with Human Resources to complete the necessary paperwork and follow the procedures regarding medical leave. The principal admitted that this was a gray area for him, even though he had experience as an assistant principal and appreciated the guidance he received from his leadership coach.

P 2 described an incident that dealt with the safety of her building. She spoke of a weekend call that she received from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) alleging that someone was going to do harm to the school. In her description she referenced how her coach helped her to reflect on her thinking. She described the following scenario:

> While you think you have these answers as an assistant principal aspiring to be a principal, once you are there, you learn rather quickly to second guess yourself, which I think not such a bad idea. In my case, I was able to contact my leadership coach in addition to following the protocol that goes along with making certain that you contact the ranking file and the appropriate persons in the building. Talking it out with my leadership coach gave me a real opportunity to kind of bounce some things around and to hear some alternate thoughts about my thoughts. While my coach was pleased with what I had put in place, this gave me an opportunity to have some depth in the course of my thinking. It gave me a little bit more assurance that what I had put in place appeared, at least on paper, to be one that was deliberative and that I had given some thought to and had sketched up something that we could actually execute because many times you do not have calls to come in and say that there is a threat to the building and you do not know when it is going to come, but you get that advance notice, so that was a great dry run for something that could happen. I was just thinking about my coach, who is experienced and has had a bevy of experiences over her lifetime and she said to me, "Wait. I think what you got going is good. Go ahead and carry it out and talk it over with your superiors as you have done with me and I think everything will be fine." As it would happen, it turned out good.

P 3 discussed her need for guidance and assurance from her leadership coach that she was following appropriate protocol and procedure in dealing with a teacher with excessive absences. She was concerned with the teacher's high absenteeism impacting student achievement in reading and mathematics. A review of the principal's monthly coaching report evidences that the leadership coach and principal discussed an action plan for improvement for the teacher. P 3 stated, "The appropriate documentation needed to be in place and needed to be accurate to give the individual an opportunity to correct the behavior. It was a big decision because it affected someone in their employment."

Several principals discussed needing help from their coach with time management. This sentiment was expressed from both elementary and high school principals. P 4 described herself as follows: "In addition to being a principal, I am also a wife and mother. I have a nine-month old." She recalled that one of the first conversations she had with her Leadership Coach was about time management. She went on to describe that meeting as follows:

> We sat down and looked at the school calendar, and she had a guide that she had created – sort of a practitioner's guide. We worked together to plan the school year. It was very helpful to me to look at the year at a glance so to speak. We looked at things like testing, teacher evaluation, informal classroom observations, and meetings with stakeholders. There were so many things that we looked at and all of those tasks I was able to accomplish and I felt that I did a good job because we had that very important conversation about the management of time.

P 5 and P 7, both high school principals of large urban high schools with student enrollments of 1,500 students and 1,800 students respectively, described how their coach assisted them with delegation that enabled them to find more unencumbered time in their day. Both described themselves as high achievers and hands on leaders. P 5 described himself as follows:

> I struggle with delegation from time to time. I feel like I have to have my hands in it. I am the type of person who believes that in order to be successful, you have to work hard but you have to work smart. With this job and a young family, I could not give so much; I would lose a lot. This is where my coach really helped me. My coach said, 'You are doing a great job but I came in to help you learn how to delegate work so that you do not kill yourself.'

When asked how his coach assisted him with delegating work, P 5 responded as follows:

> She said to stop doing everything. This is what you have assistant principals for. For example, coverage. She said, do you cover games? Yes. Well she said, not anymore. The assistant principals cover and you go to what you want to go to. Hall duty and cafeteria duty, not anymore.

> Similarly, P 7 proclaimed that his leadership coach probably took 10 years off of his principalship. He described himself as the little engine that could, moving 80 miles an hour. He described the advice his coach gave him as follows:

> She told me that sometimes the little engine that could needs to pull up to the station and recharge. She actually settled me down.   She helped me organize my front office

because people were just walking all through – parents, teachers, students – so we put

buffers in place where people could not get to the principal so easily. She even showed

me a methodology for organizing a high school structure. She said you have to sit down

if it's not but 30 or 45 minutes to think and reflect because you cannot make effective

decisions if you are always on the run. She also helped with things that I was actually

trying to create that she already had, such as formal letters to business partners and a

variety of stakeholders – teachers, students, parents, and community officials. From my

coach I have learned that there are three things principals have to do, 1) delegate to those

individuals around them that make up their administrative team, 2) supervise them, and

3) analyze problems. You have to make time to think and my coach really helped me

understand this.

LEADERSHIP COACH'S FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

The researcher conducted an hour-long focus group interview with five Leadership

Coaches. To answer the overarching question of this study, (*What impact does coaching have on*

principal performance), an analysis of responses resulted in five major themes reflective of

coaches' perspectives of the coaching process. These five themes were: 1) lack of open

communication between the district office, principals and coaches, 2) a guiding framework for

coaching leadership competencies, 3) a need for honesty and trust, 4) empathy for the demands

of the job of the principalship, and 5) an essential need for a more comprehensive coaching

orientation.

The first theme that emerged from coaches' responses was a feeling of frustration due to a lack of communication between district personnel and principals who were assigned a Leadership Coach. When asked question # 1 (*Think back to a challenge that you faced during the coaching process and tell me about that)*, C1 stated:

> I think for me the greatest challenge was working with district administration and working with the principals because at times I didn't feel we were on the same page and we've got to be on the same page. It's like if district personnel were telling me about some concern but had not voiced concerns to the principal, to me that's a challenge. Similarly, C 2 stated the following sentiment:
> I would piggyback on what _____ said. My biggest challenge has been the lack of communication between district level supervisors and the principals. The triad would be the principal, the leadership coach, and the district level supervisor. In order to have a working relationship as we have been communicated to that it would be, you have to be advised of the deficiencies or concerns with the principal so that as the leadership coach, in a non-threatening way, we can actually assist that principal in remediating or correcting those deficiencies.

All five coaches expressed frustration that the need for better communication between the district office, principals' supervisors, principals and coaches had been a problem for two years and has seen little improvement. The above responses evidenced that much more effective communication would improve the coaching process for both principals and Leadership Coaches.

A second theme that emerged from coaches' responses was a focus on the specific leader competencies outlined in the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement Eight Roles of Leadership. When asked question # 2 (*Tell me about the training you received to be a coach*), Leadership Coaches spoke highly of the Georgia Institute of School Improvement Eight Roles of School Leadership. They all stated that this training provided them with the foundation from which they established expectations with principals and guided their coaching. C 3 stated the following:

> We went through the Georgia Leadership for School Improvement (GLISI) training last year. It was helpful because it allowed me to specifically be the coach, not the mentor. Being a mentor is quite different from being a coach but the training allowed me to focus specifically on tasks in specific areas. It was like when I went to the school they knew exactly why I was coming and what I was going to be looking for. Say for instance, with one of the principals this year the person wanted to become more of an instructional leader in terms of professional learning and so we mapped out the things that she would do and when I would go to see her she knew specifically what I was coming for and what I was going to be observing. So the coaching piece was good for me in that respect because it allowed me to just zero in on some specific things that I was looking for, not just going to help them put out fires.

C 3 talked about a Field Visit Notes observation rubric that she had developed derived from the GLISI Eight leader roles. She had shared it with the other coaches and they all used it

as a tool in their coaching. The coaches spoke about its usefulness as they conducted school walk thrus and met with principals.

The third theme that emerged from coach responses was their concern that there was a lack of trust among principals, coaches and district administration. All of the coaches expressed their belief that trust was an integral part of a successful and meaningful coaching relationship. However, they did not feel that they had been successful in forging a trusting relationship with the district administration.   C 4 expressed her fear that feedback she may give her protégé might be used by district administration as retaliation against the principal. She stated the following:

> When we're not communicating with the area people and then they are not telling
>
> us truthfully what the problem is then we don't know what to go back and deal
>
> with. And the principal has to be truthful about what's happening and we have to
>
> be truthful about what we are observing.....and not fearing that this information is
>
> going to be used against them. That's the other part I have a problem with.

C 4 recalled that when she was interviewed for the Leadership Coach position two years ago, one of the interview questions she was asked was, *How would you establish trust with a principal?* She stated the following: "It's our number one task. We have to get their trust and once they trust us, they will tell you everything."

All of the coaches were confident that they had each successfully established a trusting relationship with their respective protégés. They described how trust between a coach and protégé facilitates potential growth opportunities and assists a coach in tactfully but truthfully

identifying leader deficiencies. C 5 agreed that trust is essential in the coach/protégé relationship and stated the following:

> I think we all have built that trust with our principals. It is obvious when we
>
> interact with our principals that the trust is there but you want that trust to extend.
>
> That's why we are so glad we are in a non-evaluative role and are non-threatening
>
> to them. But we also want to be in the true sense in a supportive role. They have
>
> to be completely honest with us because sometimes it is hard to tell somebody
>
> about their deficiencies or their weaknesses and so they have to be honest with us
>
> and then too those that supervise them have to communicate with us and with
>
> them. It is devastating when contracts go out and for a principal not to receive a
>
> contract.

A fourth theme that emerged from focus group interview questions was acknowledgement of and empathy for the great demands of today's principals. When the interviewer asked the question, (*What have you learned from the coaching experience*), C 1 stated, "I am glad I am not sitting in their shoes right now." The interviewer followed up with the probe, *why?* C 5 responded as follows:

> I think they are overwhelmed. I think principals now are given so much to do that
>
> they cannot do what they are being paid to do. They have too much paperwork
>
> and too many meetings outside the building. It's just too much. They don't have
>
> time to go into classrooms the way we used to do and actually monitor and
>
> evaluate teachers and deal with student discipline and parents.

C 6 stated "On the district level I would like to see them do a better job of planning around everyone's calendar. If something is going on, don't take your assistant and principal out of the building at the same time."

A final theme that emerged from the focus group interview questions was a need for a more comprehensive coaching orientation. Coaches spoke about several of their protégés being assigned to them after the school year had started and the protégé had missed a formal meeting that other principals had attended to orient them to the coaching program. Coaches felt that often a new principal does not understand the value of the coaching process. C 4 stated, "I'm not sure the principals are coachable ready at the beginning. I don't think they even know what the coaching experience is going to do for them."

C 1 agreed. She described her thoughts about an improved orientation process as follows:

> We really need for the area assistant superintendent to sit down with the principal and the coach and say, "I know you have a lot on your plate. These are the things you can expect from now until the end of school. But I have Ms. _____ here, and she is going to be helping you, and these are some of the kinds of things that she can do." That piece is missing.

MONTHLY COACH NARRATIVE REPORT FINDINGS

In addition to analyzing interview responses of principals and Leadership Coaches, the researcher also read and analyzed a secondary data source, monthly Leadership Coaching Reports, to glean potential insights into the coaching experience. The monthly Leadership

Coaching Reports corroborated what the Leadership Coaches and principals discussed in their interviews. A close reading of the monthly reports revealed that each coach and principal spends time monthly planning and reviewing strategies for improved academic student achievement. Specifically, reports reflected strategies to disaggregate data relative to schools making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Additionally, high school reports referenced strategies to address students doing well on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSG-T). Reports also reflected the work the coach had done to plan with the principal and with the school's leadership teams to improve school communications by updating school websites, crafting staff and student incentive programs, and developing school bulletins. Each report chronicled an initial meeting with the principal, area assistant superintendent and leadership coach. These reports reflected that the area assistant superintendents to whom the principal directly reports outlined the areas for improvement that coaches needed to address with their protégés. Present in reports were the following: challenges/concerns, recommendations, and next steps. Leadership Coach Monthly Status Reports weree shared with the principal and area assistant superintendents.

SUMMARY

The researcher conducted a qualitative study to examine the perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance. The data were gathered from focus group interviews and face-to-face semi-structured interviews as well as a review of individual Leadership Coach Monthly Reports. In summary, this study revealed several major findings relating to new principal and Leadership Coach perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance.

The first major finding this study revealed was that new principals need and value continuous time, support and guidance from an experienced principal with whom they can engage in dialogue and reflection in order to improve their craft.   The principals in this study all expressed their gratefulness for having as a resource a leadership coach whom they trust and rely on to "show them the way" in a non-threatening and trusting professional relationship. Each principal in the study discussed a multitude of spinning plates they strive to balance each day and a feeling of being often overwhelmed and unprepared for the role of principal.

Another major finding revealed by this study was that the district office needs to shore up communication with principals and Leadership Coaches regarding the expectations of the coaching process and its importance in improving principal performance. The study also revealed that principals may not feel adequately prepared to be a principal. For this reason, earlier identification of aspiring principals and earlier training prior to being assigned the role of principal would be important in developing high-performing principals.

Furthermore, the study revealed that principal training is most effective when it is hands-on, job-embedded, and is learned with peers. The following final chapter offers an overview of the research study, a discussion of its findings, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the study including research questions, findings, discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations, and concluding thoughts. This chapter is organized by the researcher to include a discussion of how the research findings related to the review of the literature. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for additional study and final thoughts.

SUMMARY

A phenomenon of great interest in the country today is what to do about chronically low-performing schools. Such schools can only hope to become high performing if there is a successful strategy to recruit, train, retain and sustain exemplary school leaders who can meet such a challenge. Stellar and cutting-edge principal support is paramount for retaining the nation's school leaders. Leadership indeed makes a difference. To be sure, it is a tall order to ensure that leaders provide equity and quality in the nation's schools, particularly in high needs schools. But it certainly can be done and done well.

Leadership matters. We cannot expect to have good schools without equipping them with good principals. The myriad of complex challenges facing today's school leaders is daunting at best. The bar continues to be raised not only for student academic achievement, but similarly for those leaders who attempt to lead the nation's schools. It is more critical than ever that more attention be paid to the preparation, support, guidance, and feedback given to today's

principals. No longer will an outdated model of principal preparation, pre-service, and in-service suffice. That model is heavily steeped in theory with no application, seat time with no clinical experience, learning in isolation with little problem solving with peers, and transmittal of information from lecture with little or no scenario-based dialogue in the context of the real work of schooling. We must do better if we expect to produce highly-skilled men and women who possess and exhibit leadership skills that correlate to student achievement and who can deeply affect student learning.

The purpose of this study was to determine participants' perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance of new principals in an urban school system located in the southeastern portion of the United States. To that end, the researcher conducted focus group interviews and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with five principal coaches and seven principal protégés respectively. Additionally, the researcher reviewed Leadership Coach monthly status reports. The researcher analyzed the interview responses and individual monthly status reports to respond to the research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was designed to answer the following over-arching question: What impact does coaching have on principal performance? Secondary questions that were explored in the study were as follows:

1. What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal performance?

2. What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders?

3. What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study revealed several major findings relating to the perceptions of the impact of coaching on principal performance. The first major finding this study revealed was that, in the view of the participants of this study, they did not feel adequately prepared for leading schools. Participants felt that the preparation for the job of leading a school needed to be revisited and revised to incorporate the following: more clinical experiences to "practice" leadership and more opportunities for collaborative problem-solving in a community of peers. Findings indicated that principals' experience during their principal preparation programs were heavy on seat time with little or no application of practice. Forty-three percent of principals interviewed expressed that their principal preparation programs did not adequately prepare them for the job. They all described the job of leading schools as overwhelming and challenging at best.

Another major finding revealed by this study was that principals value, as an integral part of their skill development, the presence of a trusted, experienced leadership coach who guides, supports and monitors their performance. One hundred percent of principals interviewed provided examples or "critical incidences" and how their Leadership Coaches had assisted them in handling these real school issues. All respondents indicated that they had made better decisions based on critical conversations, school walk thrus, observations, problem-solving,

and/or data analysis with their Leadership Coaches. This work was conducted at school sites and was often done in collaboration with the principal, coach, and school leadership team.

The study further revealed that there was a lack of communication and trust between the principal's supervisor, Leadership Coach and the principal. This gap was frustrating to coaches and often thwarted their ability to assist the principals with identifying deficiencies and developing goals for improved performance. One hundred percent of the Leadership Coaches interviewed expressed frustration that they often received skewed feedback about their protégé's performance and deficiencies or strengths. Frequently, what the coach had been told about the principal and what the supervisor had communicated to the principal regarding job performance did not match. All coaches suggested that this gap impeded their ability to nurture a trusting relationship with the protégé, which is essential for an effective coaching relationship. All coaches also expressed a concern that principals had a fear of sharing with them issues or concerns due to a district culture of retaliation that might result in loss of a principal contract.

The final major theme revealed by this study pointed to the pedigree of the Leadership Coach. All principals, when asked about their expectations of the coaching process, voiced effusive praise for their Leadership Coach. Leadership Coaches, albeit retired principals, all empathized with the role of today's principals. They each had a deep desire to support, to "coach up," and to help improve the leader competencies of the principals under their tutelage. Principals consistently spoke about their positive experiences with both formal and informal coaches. Several made references to former principals with whom they had worked and described how these individuals had" tapped" them into administration and mentored them to take their roles as principals. Additionally, principals spoke of their formal Leadership Coaches and the leadership experiences, skill sets and leadership styles of their respective coaches.

101

The interviewer recorded descriptors of coaches from principal respondents as follows:

- *My coach is a legend;*

- *She is a great listener;*

- *She has finesse;*

- *My coach is very bright;*

- *My coach has a bevy of experiences; she needs to be cloned;*

- *She helps me look at things from all perspectives; she could gage where I was with my learning curve;*

- *She is my cheerleader and I have factored her into a lifelong relationship;* and

- *I wish I had my coach my first year as a principal and not my fourth year.*

All principals expressed a strong desire for the current coaching program to continue in the school district. They each felt fortunate to have had this valuable resource to enhance their leadership.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this study confirm that leadership coaching is a promising practice for guiding, supporting, and improving the leadership performance of beginning principals. Too often new principals find themselves unprepared for the overwhelming challenges facing them in their roles as school leaders. This reality is supported by Davis, Darling-Hammond, la Pointe and Meyerson (2005), SREB (2004), Pfeiffer & Sutton (2000), Elmore (2000), and Levine (2006), who argued that a review of effective principal preparation programs needs to be a

102

priority for the nation's institutions. Participants in the study stated that their leadership preparation programs had fallen short in preparing them for the complex challenges of leading today's schools. Levine (2006) contended that past preparation programs categorized as exemplary were sparse. However, his research revealed that one exemplar that should be examined for lessons learned is England's National College for School Leadership. The 10 core principles that frame this leadership preparation program and its structured continuum of learning began much earlier than principal preparation programs in the United States and holds promise for transforming current preparation programs, including those presently existing in institutions of higher education as well as other agencies engaging in leadership training.

Moreover, study responses indicated that the presence of a trusted, experienced Leadership Coach who guided, supported and monitored principal performance was a promising practice towards the goal of ensuring the kinds of leaders capable of transforming low-performing schools into schools of excellence. This finding is supported by Elmore (2000), Reeves (2009), Lovely (2004), Bloom, Castagna and Warren (2003), and Fink and Resnick (2001) who asserted that existing leadership programs that have coaching as an integral component matriculate strong leaders with the skills and competencies to transform even the most challenging schools. These researchers argued for leadership coaching that was not conducted in isolation but was collaborative and involved problem-solving with peers in the context of schools. The perceptions of the participants in this study strongly indicated that on-going support, job-embedded professional development, and the guidance of a trusted and exemplary experienced Leadership Coach helped to transcend their knowing doing-gap. Leadership coaching offers a meaningful and relevant tool for transforming school leaders from ordinary to extraordinary. This finding is congruent with the research of Reeves (2006), Lambert

(2003), Rich and Jackson (2005) and Rooney (2011) as a way to teach leaders how to be more reflective. They espoused this kind of professional learning as being authentic and resulting in improved decision-making.

Furthermore, the findings in this study concurred with what Crane (2010), Reeves (2009) and Hargrove (2008) suggested are fundamentals for successful coaching relationships. Crane outlined the characteristics for transformational coaching that included humility, heart, trust, dialogue, self-responsibility and a focus on performance. Findings resulting from this study revealed that participants found their coaching relationships engendered all of these characteristics.

Moreover, Reeves suggested that effective coaching is rooted in rich feedback. The principals interviewed for this study all indicated that they received honest, transparent, and rich feedback from their respective Leadership Coaches. Finally, at the core of coaching is transformation. The principals in this study all expressed appreciation for the Leadership Coaches who had invested in them time, resources and energy resulting in moving each principal to a different place from where they were at the beginning of their principalship.

In sum, improving one's craft is hard work at best. To that end, new principals, like all professionals, need support, honest feedback, reflective practice, and collaboration in the context of authentic work settings. Leadership coaching offers the aforementioned opportunities for beginning principals to learn their craft and improve their leadership performance. This model of professional development should be afforded to more of the nations' school leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher analyzed the findings from the study to conclude the following:

1. Leadership coaching is a promising practice for assisting beginning and struggling principals with the necessary skills to improve the leadership necessary to improve the nation's schools.

2. School districts and institutions of higher education would do well to explore existing redesigned principal preparation programs to emulate for their own leadership programs for aspiring school leaders.

3. The Leadership Coaching Program in the participating school district, even though in its infancy, is a good one. Leadership Coaches are experienced principals with the skills, passion and dedication to improve the performance of their protégés. However, there is a gap relative to triangulation of trust and support among the principal, Leadership Coach and the area assistant superintendents. This triad needs to be tightly, not loosely coupled, and all should work together in an honest and communicative relationship to improve the leadership performance of principals.

4. The process of coaching bred among principal protégés in the participating school district a sense of responsibility to pass the torch of leadership coaching to others. To be sure, this is not the end of the process for these school leaders. I have no doubt that they will light the way for others.

IMPLICATIONS

This study is significant to school districts, institutions of higher education, and other agencies interested in identifying, preparing, selecting and retaining leaders to lead the nation's schools. Findings from the study revealed insights into the potential impact of formal coaching as a form of job-embedded professional learning and its effects on principal performance. These findings would be of interest to school districts who are focused on retooling training programs that are grounded in specific leader competencies and skills that provide ongoing training and support for principals that is relevant, meaningful, and focused on improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. To help school districts plan successful coaching programs, further studies are needed to explore the value of coaching for struggling veteran principals.

2. The district should conduct ongoing study to evaluate gaps in the Leadership Coaching Program to try to establish clearer lines of communication, trust, and collaboration among principals, Leadership Coaches, and district administration.

3. Further studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of a Leadership Coaching Program and the correlation between the gender, age, and ethnicity of Leadership Coaches and principals.

4. Further studies on the topic of leadership coaching at other sites is recommended. This study only included one school district.

REFERENCES

Aarons, D.I. (2010). Initiative aims to refashion training path for principals. *Education Week:* 30(6), p. 16.

Ainsworth, L (2010). *Rigorous curriculum design: How to create curricular units of study that align standards, instruction, and assessment.* Englewood, CO: The Leadership and Learning Center.

Anderson, P. K. (2001). But what if......Supporting leaders and learners. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 82(10), 738.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1997). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge.* New York: Harper Collins.

Bloom, G., Castagna, C., & Warren, B. (2003). More than mentors: Principal coaching. *Leadership*, 32(5), 20.

Bloom, G., Claire, C., Moir, E., & Warren, B. (2005). Transformation Coaching. In *Blended coaching: Skills and strategies to support principal development.* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Blumer, I. (2005). What do new principals need to become effective instructional leaders? Fast forward: Considering supports for today's principals. *MASCD Perspectives,* January/February 2005, pp. 4-5.

Bottoms, G, Talley, G, & Miley, E. (2005). Case study: A district-driven principal preparation program design: The Providence school department and the University of Rhode Island partnership. Atlanta: GA: SREB.

Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Muth, R. (2006). Leadership mentoring and situated learning: Catalysts

  for principalship readiness and lifelong mentoring. *Mentoring & Training, 14*(3), 290-

  291.

Clubine, B., Knight, D. L., Schneider, C. L., & Smith, P. A. (2001). *Opening doors: Promising*

  lessons from five Texas high schools. Austin, Texas: The Charles A. Dana Center.

Crane, T. (2010). *The heart of coaching: Using transformational coaching to create a*

  high-performance coaching culture (3rd Ed.). San Diego, CA: FTA Press.

Creswell, J.W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating*

  quantitative and qualitative research. Columbus, OH: Pearson Education, Inc.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M. & Meyerson, D. (2005). School leadership

  study: Developing successful principals. Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

  Standford, CA: The Wallace Foundation.

 deMarrais, K., & Lapan, D., (Eds). (2004). *Foundations for research: Methods of*

  inquiry in education and the social sciences. Mahwah, New Jersey: Laurence

  Erlbaum Associates.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education.* New York: MacMillan.

Dufour, R., Dufour, R., & Eaker, R. (Eds). (2008). *Revisiting professional learning*

  comunities at work: *New insights for improving schools*. Bloomington, Indiana:

  Solution Tree.

Elmore, Richard F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*:

  Washington, DC: The Shanker Institute.

Elmore, Richard F. (2002). Hard questions about practice. *Educational Leadership*,

  59(8), 25.

Elmore, R. (2004). *Building a new structure for school leadership*, Cambridge, MA:

    Harvard Education Press.

Feltman, C. (2001). Leadership and the enemies of learning. *Insight coaching* from

    http://www.insightcoaching.com/insights-paper.html

Fink, E., & Resnick, L. Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta*

    Kappan, 82(8), 601.

Fullan, M. (1988). *What's worth fighting for in the principalship? Strategies for taking charge*

    in the elementary school principalship. Ontario: Public School Teachers Federation.

Fullan, M. (1993). The learning organization and its environment. In *Change forces* (pp. 87-88),

    London: The Farmer Press.

Fullan, M. (2002). The Change Leader. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 19-20.

Fullan, M. (2009). Large-scale reform comes of age. *Journal of Educational Change, 10(2-3),*

    109-110.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction (*8th ed.).

    Boston, MA: Pearson.

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. Retrieved from

    http://wwwgaleaders.org/site/lppc/default.htm

Gray, C., Fry, B., Bottoms, G. and O'Neill, K. 2007. *Good principals aren't born –*

    They're mentored: Are we investing enough to get the school leaders we

    need? Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Hall, B. L. (2009). *Turning around an urban district: Curriculum, data, accountability, and*

    teacher and principal talent. Speech presented at the Strategic Management of Human

    Capital National Conference, Washington, DC.

Hall, P. Building bridges: Strengthing the principal induction process through intentional mentoring. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(6), 449.

Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership,* 61(7), 11.

Hargreaves, A., (2004). Broader purpose calls for higher understanding: An interview with Andy Hargreaves. *Journal of Staff Development*, 25(2), 46-50.

Hargreaves, A. & Goodson, I. (2004). *Change over time? A report of educational change over 30 years in eight U.S. and Canadian schools:* Chicago, IL: Spencer Foundation.

Hargrove, R. (2008). *Masterful coaching* (3rd ed., p. 129). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Heinze, J. (2010). Lead your district to greatness. *Scholastic Administrator, 9*(4), 38.

Heppner, P.P. & Heppner, M. J. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation, & research: A guide for students in the helping professions.* Cengage Learning: Belmont, CA.

Hord, S. M., Roussin, J. L., & Sommers, W. A. (2010). *Guiding professional learning communities: Inspiration, challenge, surprise and meaning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (8th ed.) New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Kombarakaran, F., Baker, M., Fernandes, P., & Yang, A. (2008). Executive coaching: It works! *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(2), 78-90.

Kouzes, James. M., & Posner, Barry Z. (1990). *The leadership challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in organizations.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lambert, L. (2003). *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement.* Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Levine, A. (2006). *Educating school teachers.* Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project.

Lindbom, D. (2007). A culture of coaching: The challenge of managing performance for long-term results. *Organization Development Journal,* 25 (1).

Lovely, S. (2004). *Staffing the principalship: Finding, coaching, and mentoring school leaders.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

McDonald, J. P., Mohr, N, Dichter, A. & McDonald, E.C. (2003). *The power of protocols: An educator's guide to better practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Mezzacappa, D., Holland, H., Willen, L., Colvin. R.L., & Feemster, R. (2008). *Journalistic accounts: Improving leadership for learning: Stories from the field.* Seattle, WA. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. (2000). *The knowing-doing gap: How smart companies turn knowledge into action.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

Portin, B. (2004). The roles that principals play. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 15-18.

Portin, B. S., Alejano, C. R., Knapp, M.S., & Marzolf, E. (2006). *Redefining roles, responsibilities, and authority of school leaders.* Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

111

Public Agenda (2008). *A mission of the heart: What does it take to transform a school?* New
 York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and
 choice are undermining education.*   New York, NY: Basic Books.

Reeves, D. B. (2006). *The learning leader: How to focus school improvement for better results.*
 Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Reeves, D. B. (2007). Leading to change: Coaching myths and realities. *Educational Leadership,
 65*(2), 89-90.

Reeves, D. B. (2007). *Ahead of the curve.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Reeves, D.B. (2009) *Leading change in your school: How to conquer myths, build commitment,
 and get results.* Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum
 Development.

Reeves, D.B., & Allison, E. (2009). *Renewable coaching: Sustainable change for individuals
 and organizations.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reeves, D.B. (2010) *Standards, assessment, & accountability: Real questions from educators
 with real answers from Douglas B. Reeves, Ph. D.* Englewood, CO: The Leadership and
 Learning Center.

Rich, R. A., & Jackson, S. H. (2005). Peer coaching: Principals learning from principals.
 Principal, 84(5), 30-32.

Riddle, D., & Ting, S. (2006). Leader coaches: Principles and issues for in-house development.
 Leadership in Action, 26(2), 14.

Rooney, J. (2011). Taming the to-do list. *Educational Leadership*, 68(5), 87.

Roosevelt, T. (1910). "Citizenship in a Republic," Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23,
    1910. Retrieved from http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/quotes

Saphier, S., & West, L. (2010). How coaches can maximize student learning. *Phi Delta Kappan,*
    91(4), 46-50.

Sharratt, L., & Fullan, M. (2009). Interdependent practice. In *Realization: The change*
    imperative for deepening district-wide reform. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Skrla, L., Erlandson, D.A., Reed, E.M, and Wilson, A. P. (2001) *The emerging principalship:*
    Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Sparks, D. (2009). What I believe about leadership development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 90*(7), 516.

Stein, S. J., & Gewirtzman, L. (2003). *Principal training on the ground: Ensuring*
    Highly qualified leadership. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Von Frank, V. (2010) State policy is key to building strong leaders. *Journal of Staff*
    *Developmen*t, 31 (2), 20.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological
    processes. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.

Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years*
    of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. Aurora,
    CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Wolk, R. A. (2011). Wasting *minds: Why our education system is failing and what we*
    can do about it. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum
    Development.

Zepeda, S. (2004). *Instructional leadership for school improvement*. New York: Eye on
Education.

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

1. Think of a time when coaching had an impact on your leadership performance and tell me about that.

2. How would you rate the time allotted to coaching?

3. Tell me about a strength or strengths you have developed as a result of the coaching process?

4. How would you benefit from additional coaching?

5. Having participated in the coaching process, what recommendations would you give your coach for improvement of the process?

6. Think back to the beginning of the coaching process and tell me what you expected or anticipated at that time.

7. Describe your current expectations/impressions of the coaching process.

8. Tell me about the preparation for the coaching process you received before you met your coach.

9. Is there anything you would like to tell me about the coaching process that I have not asked?

APPENDIX B

LEADERSHIP COACH INTERVIEWS

1. Think back to a challenge you have faced during the coaching process and tell me about that.

2. Tell me about the training you received.

3. What was the BEST thing about the training you received?

4. If you were designing the program now, what training would you provide for coaches?

5. Tell me about any surprises you encountered that might have been avoided by having more information about the principal before beginning.

6. Is there additional information about the principals you coached that would have been helpful to you in the coaching process? If yes, what?

7. What did you learn from the coaching experience?

8. Is there anything you would like to tell me about the coaching process that I have not asked?

APPENDIX C

GEORGIA LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (GLISI) EIGHT
ROLES OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Role 1 – Data Analysis Leader: Demonstrates the ability to lead teams to analyze multiple

sources of data to identify improvement needs, symptoms and root causes.

Role 2 – Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader: Demonstrates the ability to implement

a systems approach to instruction in a standards-based environment by leading collaborative

efforts to prioritize curriculum, develop aligned assessments, and plan instruction to improve

student achievement.

Role 3 – Performance Management Leader: Demonstrates the ability to strategically plan,

organize, measure, monitor and manage school systems and processes necessary to improve

student achievement.

Role 4 – Operations Leader: Demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently organize

resources, processes and systems to support teaching and learning.

Role 5 – Process Improvement Leader: Demonstrates the ability to identify and map core

processes and results to create action plans designed to improve student achievement.

Role 6 – Relationship Leader: Demonstrates the ability to identify and develop relationships

among customer and stakeholder groups and communicates school goals and priorities focused

on student learning.

Role 7 – Change Leader: Demonstrates the ability to drive and sustain change in a collegial

environment focused on continued improvement in student achievement.

Role 8 – Learning and Development Leader: Demonstrates the ability to guide the development

of professional learning communities to develop leaders at all levels of the organization.

PRINCIPAL ITEM ANALYSIS

Research Questions	Correlation to Research Question	Research
1. What impact does coaching have on principal performance?	1, 3, 9	Crane, 2010 Hargrove, 2008 Lovely, 2004 Rich & Jackson, 2005 Riddle & Ting, 2006
A. What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal performance?	1, 4, 5, 9	Blumer, 2005 Elmore, 2000 Fink & Resnick, 2001 Fullan, 2002 Hord, Roussin & Sommers, 2010 Reeves, 2007 Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003
B. What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders?	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9	Sparks, 2009 SREB, 2007 Rich & Jackson, 2005 Wolk, 2011 Reeves & Allison, 2009
C. What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?	1, 3, 4, 6, 9	Elmore, 2002 Feltman, 2001 Bloom, Claire, Moir, & Warren, 2005

APPENDIX E

LEADERSHIP COACH ITEM ANALYSIS

Research Questions	Correlation to Research Question	Research
1. What impact does coaching have on principal performance?	2,3 4	Crane, 2010 Hargrove, 2008 Reeves, 2007
A. What kinds of support and professional learning appear to have the greatest impact on principal performance?	2	GLISI, 2010 Hall, 2009
B. What do principals who participate in peer coaching learn from reflection, job-embedded practice, and dialogue with other leaders?	2	Anderson, 2001 Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003 Hargrove, 2008 Reeves, 2007
C. What change occurs in the professional practice of principals who participate in leadership coaching?	1, 2, 3, 4	Bloom, Claire, Moir, & Warren, 2005, Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006

APPENDIX F

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Georgia Southern University	
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-478-0843	Veazey Hall 2021 P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

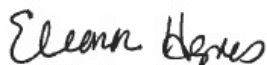|	
To:	Gloria Talley Linda Arthur Department of Educational Leadership
CC:	Charles E. Patterson Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College
From:	Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees (IACUC/IBC/IRB)
Initial Approval Date:	March 2, 2011
Expiration Date:	May 31, 2011
Subject:	Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H11300** and titled **"The Impact of Coaching on Principal Performance,"** it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of **20** subjects.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. Total project approval on this application may not exceed 36 months. If additional time is required, a new application may be submitted for continuing work. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study,** within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

March 1, 2011

Dear Colleague,

I am currently enrolled as a graduate student at Georgia Southern University. As a requirement for my doctoral degree, I will be conducting a research project entitled The Impact of Coaching on School Leadership. The purpose of this research is to examine the techniques, principles, structures, models, and impact of coaching on principal performance. No student records are needed for this research study. I am requesting your permission to include you as a participant in this project.

This project will begin in March, 2011. The project will involve 60-90 minute semi-structured interviews and focus groups. I will tape record interviews and focus group responses and transcribe the recordings. The data collection will be supervised by my advisor, Dr. Linda M. Arthur, College of Education, Department of Leadership, Technology and Human Development, Georgia Southern University. Her telephone number is: 912-681-5307.

Possible benefits for the participants of this project are to provide insight into the potential of effective formal coaching models as a form of job embedded professional learning, to inform leadership understanding of and commitment to better preparing 21st century leaders, and to help substantiate a powerful rationale for creating low cost, no cost modifications in structures, resources, and processes of professional learning practices that lead to new and relevant ways of learning for school leaders that will result in new possibilities for themselves and the schools they lead. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts for participants in this project. All information obtained will be treated confidentially. Your names will not be used in the study and any other identifying information will be removed from the data before it is submitted for publication. You can be most assured that your responses will be kept anonymous and treated with the greatest of confidentiality. I will not share anything you say to me with anyone else and will treat your responses with the greatest confidentiality.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide that you will not participate in this research project.

If you decide to participate in this project, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You have the right to inspect any instrument or materials related to the proposal. Your request will be honored within a reasonable period after the request is received.

Sincerely,

Gloria Talley
Lexington School District 1
803-821-1050 gtalley@lexington1.net

Thank you in advance for your assistance in participating in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by GSDU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H11300.

If you agree to participate in this research by answering interview questions and having those responses tape recorded, please complete the information below:

_____   _____   _____
Participant's Name (please print)   Participant's Signature   Date

Return to: Gloria Talley @ gtalley@lexington1.net