How School Principals Enable Instructional Coaches: Evidence from New Jersey

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In recent years, schools across the United States (U.S.) have allocated large amounts of state and federal level money towards instructional coaching with the hope that instructional coaching will lead to teacher improvement and ultimately increased student learning. This qualitative case study examined how the principal at one New Jersey public high school supported and enabled the work of the school's instructional coaches. An analysis of interview, observation, and document data reveal the principal enabled instructional coaches in three ways. First, the principal at this school enabled the instructional coaches by clearly defining the roles, purposes, and responsibilities of everyone involved in the instructional coaching program. Second, the principal enabled the school's instructional coaches by providing teachers and coaches adequate time to meet, typically, although not exclusively, during school hours. Finally, the principal enabled the instructional coaches by working with the coaches to develop trust between the administration, coaches, and the teachers with whom the coaches worked. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.

Keywords: school leaders, principals, instructional coaching, teacher development

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In recent years, schools across the United States (U.S.) have allocated large amounts of state and federal level money towards instructional coaching. Policymakers and practitioners alike believe instructional coaching has the potential to lead to improvements in teacher instruction, policy and reform implementation efforts, and increased student learning (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; New Jersey Department of Education, 2017; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Research examining the impacts of instructional coaching supports these beliefs showing instructional coaching supports teacher development and has the potential to lead to increased student learning (Camburn, 2010; Kraft, Blazer & Hogan, 2018). However, despite these optimistic beliefs and promising research findings, little research exists that examines the tasks in which instructional coaches engage and how instructional coaches are enabled to go about their daily work. The research that does exist suggests instructional coaches' roles are seldom defined and vary greatly (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017; Woulfin, 2018). For example, district and school leaders often use instructional coaches as data analysts, behavior specialists or as support for school leadership (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Each of these activities may be beneficial for schools, but are tangential to the primary goals of instructional coaching – supporting teacher instruction (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017; Woulfin, 2018).

What instructional coaches do and who enables to them to do it is important to understand for several reasons. First, if given opportunities to engage with teachers, instructional coaches can support teachers in learning new curriculum and instructional strategies, ultimately leading to teacher instructional improvement and increased student learning (Bean, 2004; Spillane, Reiser, Reimer, 2002; Kraft et al., 2018). Second, instructional coaches can help teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice and policy implementation (Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). Instructional coaches are uniquely positioned to support teacher development and student learning, but must be enabled to engage in this work. Therefore, I argue how instructional coaches are enabled to undertake their work is imperative to better understanding the true impact instructional coaches have in schools.

One factor that directly influences the daily work of instructional coaches is the school principal. School principals act as a primary enabler of coaching actions, tasks, and performance (Huguet, Marsh, & Farrell, 2014; Matsumura et al., 2009; Nicolaidou, Karagiorgi, & Petridou, 2018). For example, how principals assign tasks to coaches, motivate teachers to work with coaches, and structure opportunities for coaches to enact instructional reforms, all influence the impact of an instructional coach (Matsumura et al., 2009; Huguet, Marsh, & Farrell, 2014). Due in part to the important role principals play in the work of instructional coaches, more research is needed examining how school principals enable instructional coaching. To address this phenomenon I ask the following: In what ways do school principals enable instructional coaches to engage with teachers?

Contextual Framework

Like many states across the U.S., the state of New Jersey has invested heavily in instructional coaching as a way to support teacher improvement and student learning. In 2015 New Jersey implemented a state-funded grant program called the Achievement Coaches Program (ACP). This program aimed to use highly effective teachers' expertise and skills to support novice and struggling teachers. In the first year of the program 19 school districts throughout the state selected 158 Achievement Coaches to participate in the program. To date, the ACP has impacted more than 12,000 educators in more than 100 different Local Education Agencies (LEAs) throughout New

Jersey (New Jersey Department of Education, 2017). The ACP has been well-received and in New Jersey's 2016 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) application, the state doubled-down on this program, requesting to expand the ACP to include principals, principal supervisors, and teacher leaders (NJDOE, 2017). The New Jersey Department of Education believes expanding the ACP will help ensure more educators throughout the state receive strong pedagogical and instructional strategies which will lead to increased instructional effectiveness and ultimately impact student learning (NJDOE, 2017).

The six participants in this study worked in one of the 19 schools that were originally selected for the ACP program. This school participated in the ACP for the first two years of the program and although they no longer participate directly with the ACP, the school continues to use instructional coaches, based on their training and experiences with the ACP. In this study, the participants include: the principal, the assistant principal, two current instructional coaches, and two former instructional coaches (both currently teaching at the school - see Table 1 for complete participant information). The goal of this study was to examine how one public high school principal worked with and enabled instructional coaches during (and after) the Achievement Coaches Program.

Literature Review

Instructional Coaches

Much like the roles and responsibilities of instructional coaches, the definition of an instructional coach varies across context. For the purpose of this work, I use the definition from Gallucci et al. (2010) and define an instructional coach as an individual working with teachers who does not have authority over the teacher, but instead works with the teacher in a non-supervisory, support role (Gallucci et al., 2010). This support role takes on many forms, including, but not limited to, supporting teacher instructional practices, managing student discipline, supporting district, state, and federal policy and reform implementation, and conferencing with teachers. Importantly, coaches have the potential to support teachers by providing feedback and professional development in a low-stakes environment (Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). In addition to these specific supports, instructional coaches generally possess strong communication and relationship skills (Knight, 2006) and balance supporting teachers and critiquing their instruction and performance (Knight, 2006; 2004).

Instructional coaches engage not only with teachers, but with school and district-level administrators and may play political roles in their organization (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Woulfin, 2018). For example, although often times the stated role of a coach is to provide in-class support to teachers (Day, 2015) coaches are also tasked with convincing teachers to adopt and try new curriculum, policies, or reforms. Additionally, instructional coaches are tasked with working with teachers in cultivating a shared school vision and acting as a mediator between the district leadership, school leadership, and teaching staff (Bean, 2004; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012). The coaches in this study meet these aforementioned definitions.

Impacts of Instructional Coaching

Policymakers and school districts increasingly use instructional coaches in attempts to positively influence student outcomes (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). For example,

districts and schools have turned to instructional coaches to assist teachers in learning new curriculum and expanding teacher instructional strategies and expertise (Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010; Matsumura, Garnier, & Spybrook, 2013). Additionally, instructional coaches can help teachers set goals, enact professional development, and model effective instructional strategies, while providing teachers real-time and sustained feedback and support (Aguilar, 2013; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). For example, research by Bean (2004) and Coburn and Woulfin (2012) found coaches' can positively influence teacher instruction by assisting teachers in the designing of instructional lessons. As data analysts, coaches can support teachers by better understanding how to make "data-driven decisions" and adjust their teaching accordingly (Marsh et al., 2009; Woulfin, 2018). All of these impacts have the potential to lead to more desirable student outcomes, such as increased achievement, attendance and graduation rates (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Woulfin, 2018). In short, the existing research on the impacts of instructional coaches is generally positive, particularly when compared to more traditional forms of teacher professional development.

Gap in the Literature

Although literature exists documenting the impact of instructional coaching on teacher improvement and student learning, less research examines specifically how principals enable instructional coaches to go about this important work. The research that does exist shows that in practice often times coaches are not afforded adequate opportunities to work towards their stated goals, such as working with teachers to support instructional development (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Instead, coaches often take on tangential responsibilities, such as filling in for teachers or monitoring the school cafeteria or playground. Given the potential positive impacts of instructional coaching highlighted above, additional research is needed investigating how coaches are enable to do this work. For example, do principals support and encourage coaches to engage in these aforementioned "best" practices, or do principals use coaches in other capacities, less related to these practices? In an effort to address this lack of research on how principals enable instructional coaching, I collected interview, observation, and document data on an instructional coaching program in one public high school in New Jersey.

Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, school principals enable instructional coaches to engage with teachers. To answer my research question I used a case study design to examine how one school principal enabled instructional coaching and instructional coaches. Due to the empirical nature of this study, I used a grounded theory approach to my data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). As grounded theory is an inductive research approach, this type of research design allowed me to collect empirical evidence and begin to develop hypotheses and theory about what is occurring in practice (specifically how principals enable instructional coaches to engage with teachers) (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The goal of case study research is to collect comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest (Patton, 2014) and grounded theory is particularly well-suited when collecting observation, interview, and documentary data (Turner, 1983).

A case study approach allowed me to view my phenomenon of study through a variety of lenses and perspectives, allowing multiple facets of the phenomenon to be reveled and understood (Yin, 2013). Specifically, I was able to collect data from the school administration (the principal and assistant principal) and current and former instructional coaches, thus gathering multiple perspectives involving the same phenomenon (how school principals enable instructional coaching). According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), a case study is a phenomenon bounded in a specific context. This case is bounded by time and place, time and sensitivity, and by definition and context. Specifically, the participants in this study and their context bound this case study, as does the time of data collection (during the 2017-18 school year). Principals' actions enabling instructional coaching is the primary unit of analysis of this work.

Table 1
Participant Information

Participant	Current Role	Years as Coach at Current School	Years as Teacher at Current School	Years as Admin at Current School
Ms. Hansen	Principal	N/A	N/A	4
Mr. Burton	Assistant Principal	N/A	N/A	4
Mr. Brent	Current Coach	1	4	N/A
Ms. Warner	Current Coach	3	10	N/A
Ms. Jacobs	Former Coach	2	10	N/A
Ms. Gaines	Former Coach	2	5	N/A

**Note: All names are pseudonyms*

Data Collection and Analysis

I used grounded theory when collecting and analyzing my data. Grounded theory was best suited to assist in the collection and analysis of my data as in grounded theory data collection and analysis is interrelated (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Additional, I collected solely empirical data in an effort to begin theory building based on what was actually happening in the context of this study. Specifically, I relied on three sources of data. First, I conducted six semi-structured interviews. I interviewed the school principal once, the assistant principal once, and each instructional coach once. The interviews each lasted approximately 30 minutes and I conducted the interviews in a one-on-one format. I audio-recorded and transcribed all of the interviews. During the interviews I asked the participants about their experiences with instructional coaching/coaches, their interaction with various stakeholders involved in instructional coaching, and how their school's specific instructional coaching program was adopted, communicated, and ultimately enacted.

Second, I observed two coach-led professional development opportunities offered to teachers. Each observation lasted approximately one hour and as I observed, I took field notes. The purpose of these observations was to better understand how instructional coaches were enabled to go about their daily work and to document how coaches interacted with teachers. These observations occurred during traditional school hours and consisted of instructional coaches leading a group of teachers through a workshop on how to use student data to drive instruction. The observations (and field-notes which I analyzed) provided me a window into the daily work of

the instructional coaches and more specifically, how these coaches were enabled to engage with teachers.

Finally, I collected district- and school-based coaching documents as provided by the participants. These documents included district-wide and/or school specific training policies and teacher-coach interaction protocols. The purpose of collecting these documents was to examine, in writing, the official roles, responsibilities, and expectations of principals and coaches at this school. I used these three data sources as a form of data triangulation, so I could compare what principals and coaches told me (interviews), to what I observed in practice (observations), to what I found in the official documents/policies related to coaching (documents).

Using Dedoose qualitative software I open coded all interviews, observations, and documents once I had collected all of the data. I began coding by generating specific codes based on the language of the participants (Miles et al., 2014). I developed the codes inductively and as themes emerge from the coding process I grouped together by theme (Miles et al., 2014; Strauss, 1990). I coded all of the data three times and after I completed the coding process, I compared quotations, field-notes, and excerpts from the documents to their original text, making sure these data were taken in context and accurately represented what the participants attempted to articulate (Miles et al., 2014). The initial codes that emerged were: responsibilities, transparency, organization, specificity, communication, support, time, resources, adaptability, listening, relationships, trust, expertise, benefits, and meaningful. From these themes I developed a larger codebook (see Table 2 for my complete coding process).

Table 2
Coding Process (adapted from Saldana, 2013)

Initial Codes	Categories	Themes/ Concepts	Theory
Responsibilities Transparency Organization Specificity Communication	Clarity Communication	Clearly defined roles	Principals enable instructional coaches by clearly defining roles within the coaching program
Support Time Resources Adaptability Listening	Support Listening/taking action	Support (financial/ physical)	Principals enable instructional coaches by providing coaches support to engage in the coaching process
Relationships Trust Expertise Benefits Meaningful	Trust/Letting coaches take the lead	Trusting relationships	Principals enable instructional coaches by cultivating trusting relationships with the coaches

From these initial codes I developed three main theories that serve as the outline of my findings: (1) Principals enable instructional coaches by clearly defining roles within the coaching

program; (2) Principals enable instructional coaches by providing coaches support to engage in the coaching process; and (3) Principals enable instructional coaches by cultivating trusting relationships with the coaches.

In an effort to establish credibility for all interview and observation data I left room to ask participants about any comments they made, making sure I clarified their statements before drawing any conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Additionally, I contacted participants to clarify any questions that arose during the transcribing and coding of the data. I also solicited critical feedback from colleagues throughout the data collection and writing process.

Findings

In this study I asked: In what ways do school principals enable instructional coaches to engage with teachers? My analysis of these data reveal three prominent themes. First, Ms. Hansen, the principal at Farmington High School (pseudonym), enabled her instructional coaches by clearly defining the roles, purposes, and responsibilities of everyone involved in the coaching program. Second, Ms. Hansen enabled the instructional coaches by providing teachers and coaches with adequate time to meet, typically, although not exclusively, during school hours. Finally, Ms. Hansen enabled the instructional coaches at Farmington High School by developing trust between herself, the coaches, and teachers with whom the coaches worked.

Clearly Defined Roles

One way the principal at Farmington High School (Ms. Hansen) enabled her instructional coaches to engage with teachers was by clearly defining the roles of those involved in Farmington High School's coaching program. Ms. Hansen explained that she, the instructional coaches, and the teachers with whom the coaches worked spent a lot of time upfront clearly outlining the roles of everyone involved in the coaching program. Ms. Hansen believed having a clear separation between coaching and the school leadership was key in developing a coaching system that allowed authentic coach-teacher engagement. Specifically, Ms. Hansen said her role (and to a lesser extent the role of the assistant principal, Mr. Burton), was to support her school's coaching program and stated she was not directly involved with the ins and outs of the program. Ms. Hansen believed if she operated in a support role, trust would develop and the coaching program would be more impactful than if there was confusion about the roles of the leadership at the school, coaches and teachers. The roles of the instructional coaches were clearly defined as well. The instructional coaches at Farmington High School were in charge of coach-teacher interactions and the types of coaching that occurred (such as classroom observations of teacher instruction or professional development session on select topics, such as analyzing student data). Importantly, the leadership team, coaches, and teachers involved in the instructional coaching program at Farmington High School all knew the clear division of the roles and responsibilities of everyone affiliated with the coaching program. Mr. Burton (the assistant principal) highlighted this idea and said, "We make sure everyone – from coaches to teachers to the administration – is on the same page. We communicate this (everyone's specific roles) during our interactions." Mr. Burton explained that Ms. Hansen made clearly defining these roles a priority from the onset of the coaching program in an effort to make the coaching program "transparent for all those involved".

Although Ms. Hansen was involved in the coaching program and would meet with the coaches to learn about their work, discuss school and district goals, and learn about student and

teacher progress, she was intentionally one step removed from the actual coaching that went on between coaches and teachers. Ms. Hansen and the instructional coaches I interviewed communicated this during the interviews and a review coaching program documents indicated a clear separation between Ms. Hansen and the instructional coaches. Although Ms. Hansen oversaw the coaching program, the logistics and specifics of coaching interactions between coaches and teachers remained between the coaches and teachers. Ms. Hansen said,

> You cannot have a good school or any kind of learning institution without building leadership capacity. When you think about it, you cannot be so narrow minded to think that just your administrative team is going to do everything they need to do. As a principal, I always thought I needed to know everything. I can't possibly know everything and that is why I rely on the expertise of others and that includes our instructional coaches.

Ms. Hansen went on to articulate that when an issue occurred that needed her input, she would get involved, but she mostly played a hands-off role as she believed her role was to monitor and support the coaching program, not get involved in actual coaching. Ms. Hansen believed this allowed for an open relationship between her coaches and teachers, which would ultimately lead to a more successful coach-teacher partnership.

All of the instructional coaches at Farmington High School noted the clarity and transparency of the roles of those involved in the coaching program. For example, Mr. Brent said, "It (the presence of the coaches) doesn't come off the same as the presence of the administration. We know and teachers know that coaching happens here absent of the administration." Mr. Brent explained that because the teachers knew the role of the administration (e.g. the administration would not be involved in the actual coaching process), they were more willing to engage in the coaching process, as they did not fear the coaches reporting back to the administration. Mr. Burton said, "Some teachers were worried (at the beginning of the coaching program) that the coaches were a spy for the administration. We quickly made sure everyone knew the specific purpose of the coaches and the role the administration played in supporting the coaches." During the two coach-teacher observations I conducted I did not see Ms. Hansen. In subsequent interviews with the instructional coaches, all told me that although Ms. Hansen had a schedule of times when coaches and teachers would meet during the school day, she never attended these sessions. All those involved in the instructional coaching program, including the leadership team, instructional coaches, and teachers knew their specific roles and responsibilities within the coaching program and this was made possible in large part due to Ms. Hansen's initial effort. In this way, Ms. Hansen enabled the instructional coaches at her school to engage with teachers by removing the threat of interference from the administration at Farmington High School.

Time to Engage in the Coaching Process

The second finding that emerged after an analysis of the data is the principal at Farmington High School enabled her instructional coaches by providing time and space for coaches to meet with teachers, often, although not exclusively, during the school day. One of the instructional coaches, Ms. Warner, explained that originally Ms. Hansen (based on suggestions from the coaches) provided the coaches and teachers a space to meet after school. However, because of a modest turnout at these meetings, the coaches and teachers asked if it was possible for Ms. Hansen to find a way for these meetings to occur during school hours. Ms. Warner said,

> One of the challenges was when we were going to meet. You know we are contracted until 3 o'clock. So, initially we had our meetings after that or sometimes before school started.

> She (Ms. Hansen) gave us time and coverage to meet with teachers during school, which increased teacher attendance.

Together with her coaches, Ms. Hansen created a system that allowed coaches to hold bi-weekly meetings with teachers during school hours. The principal and assistant principal arranged coverage for teachers' classrooms and scheduled times and spaces for the teachers and coaches to meet based on what worked best for the teacher. Many of the teacher-coach interactions still occurred after school hours and these were attended by some teachers. However, for teachers who could not (or did not want to) stay after contract hours to engage with the instructional coaches, the during school hour meeting option led to increased teacher-coach engagement. Ms. Hansen explained that this decision was easy (although at times the scheduling was not) because the most important thing she could do is provide teachers and coaches adequate time and space to meet.

The two observations I conducted of instructional coach-teacher meetings took place during the school day. Various teachers attended each meeting and appeared genuinely engaged in the topic of discussion. Of course given the challenging logistics of creating a high school schedule not every teacher was able to attend each instructional coach meeting, even if he or she wanted to attend. However, to address this barrier to coach-teacher interactions, the coaches (again with the support and approval of Ms. Hansen) varied their meeting times during the school day, in the hopes they would be able to create a system where all teachers would be able to attend at least some of their offered meetings. In this way, Ms. Hansen enabled the instructional coaches at Farmington High School to engage with a variety of teachers.

Trusting Relationships

The final finding that emerged after the analysis of the data is the principal at Farmington High School enabled her coaches to engage with teachers by developing trusting relationships between the coaches, teachers, and the administration. Ms. Hansen explained, "Relationships are everything, so one of the best ways to develop those relationship is to show trust in the people you give responsibility." Ms. Hansen said that her leadership philosophy begins with establishing trusting relationships with her colleagues and this influenced the way in which she led the coaching program. She said,

> You have to set them (coaches) free. Validate them. They don't get validated enough. Be grateful and express that not just to them but to everyone. I think celebrating them too. Honesty and being candid. We have come as far as quickly as we have because we have those conversations. You have to have a genuine relationship with them. Make it clear your trust what they are doing.

Trust also emerged as a theme from the coaches' perspective. The instructional coaches constantly referred back to the trust they had in Ms. Hansen and that Ms. Hansen truly was looking out for the best interest of the coaches and teachers with whom they worked. This trust also helped the instructional coaches establish trust with teachers. Because the instructional coaches had trust in Ms. Hansen, they were able to sell this trust to the teachers with whom they worked. Ms. Warner said,

> We tell them we are just like you. We are not a company, we have been in the classroom. This idea was developed by current or former teachers and the PD was given by current and former teachers. There is a science to it (coaching), but there is also an art to it. You have to know how to work with people and you have to have an opportunity to do it. You have to be able to reach people by showing them you are just like they are.

The theme of trust connects back the first two findings: clarity of roles/responsibilities and time and space to engage in the coaching process. For example, Ms. Hansen established trust with her coaches (and teachers) by playing a hands-off role during teacher-coach interactions. Ms. Hansen did not know what specific teachers attended these meetings, nor the specifics of these teacher-coach meetings/interactions. Of course Ms. Hansen had some idea of these interactions as she debriefed with the coaches regarding the status of the coaching program. However, because Ms. Hansen did not micromanage the coaching process, she developed trust and teachers felt free to engage with the coaches. The instructional coaches at Farmington High School felt free to engage in their work due to the trust they had in Ms. Hansen. Ms. Warner said, "The trust with the teachers is important. For them (teachers) to ask me for help and know that I will not go to their supervisor, the principal, that is trust. I think that trust in the role is very important and that is what we all really take pride in."

Discussion

This study adds to the existing literature on how school leaders successfully enable and support organizational systems. Specifically, through the lens of how one school principal enabled her instructional coaches, the case of Ms. Hansen adds to the literature showing how organizational (and specifically educational) leaders build successful systems and programs. The underlying foundation of the instructional coaching program at Farmington High School was trust. The findings of this case study fall in line with previous work indicating a promising way to support organizational growth and successful initiatives, reforms, and programs is through honest communication and transparency (Fullan, 2008; Klein, 2012; Koyama & Kania, 2016; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Ms. Hansen constantly stressed the importance of transparency and communication with the coaches at her school and as a result, she created a seemingly thriving instructional coaching system.

Another connection to the organizational literature showing trust is a crucial element of program success, is successful systems are not reliant on one leader, but instead many leaders (Bellibas & Lui, 2018; Fullan, 2008; Huggins et al., 2017). Ms. Hansen embodied this belief, empowering her coaches to act as leaders as they worked with teachers in the coaching program. Ms. Hansen gave the instructional coaches at Farmington High School freedom to engage in teacher coaching and validated their knowledge and expertise. The trust Ms. Hansen exhibited in her instructional coaches strengthened the relationships between the school leaders, coaches, and teachers at Farmington High School and allowed the instructional coaching program to operate in concert with improving teaching and student learning (Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Day, 2015; Fullan, 2006).

Finally, the findings from this case study fall in line with Fullan's (2008) idea of connecting peers with a purpose. Ms. Hansen encouraged collaboration between coaches and teachers, but did not make these interactions mandatory, instead the principal "provided direction" and "created conditions" for purposeful interactions to take place (Fullan, 2008). Specifically, Ms. Hansen provided physical space for the coaches and teachers to meet as well as allowed these meetings to take place during the school day by providing coverage for teachers to meet with coaches during contract hours. Due in part to this connection, the coaches and teachers felt supported and enabled to engage in meaningful coach-teacher interactions. Beyond Fullan, these findings add to previous work that shows principals who strategically create conditions for peers to collaborate and interact

yield positive benefits, including greater buy-in to change and general employee improvement (Odden, 2011; Spillane, Hopkins & Sweet, 2017).

In short, Ms. Hansen enabled the instructional coaches at Farmington High School to engage with teachers by: (1) ensuring herself, the instructional coaches and the teachers all had clearly defined roles within the instructional coaching system; (2) creating conditions for success by providing time, space, and resources to help coaches and teachers engage in the coach-teacher experience; and (3) by building trust between herself and the coaches. The findings from this study add to the literature showing successful organizations build systems based largely on trust.

Implications

These findings have implications for policy and practice. First, policymakers should consider the findings of this work when allotting school day time to specific content/activities. The participants in this study indicated having a set time to meet during the school was key to the success of their instructional coaching program. Therefore, policymakers and state lawmakers should consider building in time during the school day where teachers and coaches can collaborate. For example, many countries provide their teachers more planning time during the school day compared to the U.S. context (OECD, 2014). Policymakers should consider increasing the amount of time during the school day that teachers can meet to improve their practice. Ms. Hansen made an intentional decision to prioritize the coaching program, by organizing the school schedule to allow for teacher-coach interactions to occur during the school day, allowing the coaching program to have a positive impact at Farmington High School (according to the participants in this study).

For practitioners, district and school leaders, should, as possible build in time during the school day for teachers and coaches to meet and collaborate (as discussed above). Second, principals should explicitly state and define principals' and instructional coaches' roles and responsibilities within an instructional coaching program. By providing clear roles and responsibilities of all involved in a coaching program, teachers might be more willing to engage in the coaching process, as was the case at Farmington High School. Thirdly, school principals should provide coaches time to engage in tasks essential to teacher instructional support. Although certainly must be supportive of the school as a whole, whenever possible school principals must use coaches in ways which are most beneficial for teacher support and improvement.

Conclusions and Future Research

Before concluding, it is important to note the limitations of this study. First, this study is limited by the small number of participants. The participants in this study were not randomly selected and focusing on the experiences and participants in one specific school does not allow me to make generalizable statements how all principals enable instructional coaching. Although generalizability is not the goal of a qualitative/grounded theory study, the results of this work could be atypical. If I collected data from other participants these participants could have provided different insights and thoughts, resulting in a different interpretation or analysis of the data. In this way, the participants in this study shape the findings by their experiences, thoughts, and beliefs. The second limitation is, although the participants were observed in their natural environment engaging in coaching, I did not observe all participants multiple times, with a variety of teachers, or during every interaction. In this way, my presence as a researcher during data collection may not have captured exactly how principals, teachers, and coaches interacted when I was not present. However, despite the aforementioned limitations, the data collected in this study provide insights

as to how the principal in this study works towards enabling instructional coaches to engage with teachers in a specific context. Although not generalizable to the entire principal/coaching /teacher community, the results and analysis of this work have the potential to serve as hypothesis building and testing in future research.

Future researchers should investigate these findings on a larger scale. For example, are these findings unique to this school/context or do these findings play out in various contexts across New Jersey and beyond? Additionally, future research could examine what school leadership characteristics influence how principals enable instructional coaching. For example, do more experienced school principals think about and enable coaching differently than their less experienced peers? Do principals who work in certain contexts (e.g. urban, rural, suburban) think about and enable coaching in different and/or similar ways? Understanding these nuanced differences will help lead to a more complete understanding of the influence school principals have on instructional coaches and instructional coaching.

This study adds to the limited research on how school leaders enable instructional coaches and instructional coaching in schools. These findings depict a successful instructional coaching program at Farmington High School due in part to the clearly defined roles and responsibilities provided by the principal to her coaches and teachers, the time the principal allowed the coaches and teachers to interact, and the trusting relationships the principals worked towards building throughout the coaching program.

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