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Instructional Coaching with Adult Basic Education's English Language Learner Instructors

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Literature Review Presented

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Education in Teacher Leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the changing role of professional development and to consider the possibility of using instructional coaching in the field of adult basic literacy instruction. One concept the literature discussed is what professional development models are beneficial for teachers of adult English Language Learners. The literature provided a deeper understanding about instructional coaching as a professional development option and how schools could utilize this model to support the instructional needs of teachers. Another idea that the literature addressed is how instructional coaching can strengthen the quality of instruction in adult education.   If one goal of professional development is to strengthen the quality of instruction, then that might logically lead to an increase in students' learning, skills, and achievement. Also, the literature led to further consideration about what instructional coaching methods would work well to support learning in adult English Language Learners. This literature review focused on instructional coaching in the context of adult English language instruction and learning because many adult basic education programs aim to provide high-quality professional development for their teachers and educational opportunities for their students.

Keywords: Instructional coach (IC), English language learner (ELL), professional development (PD)

Instructional Coaching with Adult Basic Education's English Language Learner Instructors

All teachers participate in professional development throughout their careers, but the quality of those experiences can vary greatly from school to school. According to the Iowa Department of Education (2015), all adult basic literacy programs are required to provide high-quality professional development (PD) trainings for their instructors, and school administrators have the freedom to select the specific PD activities (p.4). The Iowa Department of Education went on to say that regardless of the format of those trainings, all PD experiences are expected to provide instructors with the skills, knowledge, and experience to effectively support the needs of their adult learners (p. 5). Each school administrator must consider which professional development model is the most beneficial for their adult literacy instructors.

Instructional coaching is one common professional development model in K-12 school systems that could also be utilized in the context of adult basic literacy education. Knight (2007), an expert in the field of instructional coaching, described instructional coaching as a collaboration between a coach and a teacher for the purpose of developing teaching skills and research-based instructional strategies; that relationship serves as a catalyst for professional growth through reflection and feedback (p. 13). McDowell, Bedford, and DiTommaso Downs (2014) identified some common benefits of instructional coaching: coaches differentiate the PD experiences to better address the individual goals and needs of each teacher (p. 4). The researchers went on to point out that teachers also often have more choices about their PD activities when they engage in instructional coaching, so teachers can choose topics that lead to the greatest immediate impact on their students; this is likely to increase motivation and morale among teachers (McDowell et al., 2014, p. 5). There are many different approaches to instructional coaching, but Knight's (2007) Partnership Approach could be an effective model

because it focuses on equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity in the coaching experience (p. 37).

Teachers of any subject can benefit from instructional coaching, but instructors of English Language Learners (ELL) especially benefit from a more individualized approach to PD. Russell (2015) pointed out that teachers are often unequipped to handle the increasing number of ELLs in their classrooms, and ELL instructors need professional learning opportunities that focus on the unique needs of their students (p. 27). Teemant (2014) also reported that schools often fail to provide PD focusing on the needs of students who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds (pp. 574-575). If teachers do not understand the needs of their students or do not have knowledge about the appropriate teaching strategies to meet those needs, then students are less likely to reach their full learning potentials.

This literature review focuses on exploring a professional development approach that benefits adult ELL instructors and supports their unique teaching context. Although instructional coaching has rarely been utilized in adult education, this paper examines how instructional coaching can strengthen the quality of adult ELL teaching and improve learning among adult ELLs.

Review of the Literature

Historical Perspective on Professional Development

In the dynamic field of education, professional development is one necessary approach in supporting teachers' ongoing needs. Pre-service training is not enough to equip teachers, so schools, districts, and the Department of Education require teachers' participation in professional development throughout each school year. Professional development methods and approaches have changed and evolved over time.

Historically, professional development was often a passive experience for teachers. Easton (2008) described traditional PD as trainings or a school's attempt at creating a standardized approach toward teaching (p. 755). Easton (2008) went on to point out that those factory-like trainings informed teachers about basic teaching skills, but few teachers viewed those experiences as producing meaningful growth (p. 755). Kraft and Blazar (2018) explained that the traditional approach of day-long seminars provided teaching tips for entire districts, schools, or departments; therefore, the information was often general and did not allow teachers to address their individual needs (p. 6). The researchers also asserted that early approaches toward PD often had little impact on the quality of teaching over time (Kraft & Blazar, 2018, p. 6). Matherson and Windle (2017) went a step farther to conclude that traditional approaches toward PD had little impact on teacher practices or on student learning (p. 28). The writers indicated that usually, an expert imparted information while requiring little input or participation; as a result, PD was often viewed as something to endure because it was required but with little influence on classroom practices (Matherson & Windle, 2017, p. 28).

Over time, the increasing demands for teachers and administrators led to changes in professional development approaches. Kraft and Blazar (2018) mentioned that teachers now face more accountability with assessments and with added instructional rigor, as a result of the implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards (p. 6). Knight (2006) noted that with added pressure to improve student achievement, some school districts tried to find quick fixes by introducing new teaching strategies, curricula, or programs; districts implemented those changes quickly but did not provide adequate support or consistent professional development, so those new programs did not lead to sustainable changes (pp. 36-37). Knight (2005) reported that schools recognized that increasing student achievement is directly related to improving the quality of instruction, and effective PD is at the root of positive instructional changes (p. 16). The researcher went on to point out that some of these PD changes included a shift toward more individualized professional development options that occur over longer periods of time (Knight, 2005, p. 17).

As educational practices and teachers' needs changed, teachers expressed their needs and desires for reforming professional development experiences. According to Kraft and Blazar (2018), teachers face unique roles that often include demanding skills, such as developing curricula, analyzing data, understanding and effectively teaching content, and meeting the diverse needs of learners (p. 6). The researchers went on to state that teachers are increasingly asking for individualized PD experiences that address the specific instructional and learning needs that exist in their classrooms (Kraft and Blazar, 2018, p. 6). Easton (2008) noted that teachers are asking for professional learning experiences that address their students' greatest needs and allow the teachers to observe increasing achievements in individual students (p. 757). Also, Easton (2008) indicated that teachers are seeking opportunities to collaborate with peers

and actively engage in learning that recognizes and values their teaching experiences (p. 757).

Matherson and Windle (2017) pointed out that every teacher has unique experiences and skills,

so teachers want professional development opportunities that recognize and address those

individual learning needs (p. 30). Matherson and Windle (2017) went on to suggest that many

teachers want teacher-led PD opportunities and want to learn content-specific instructional

strategies that are relevant to their teaching contexts (p. 31). The researchers also suggested that

teachers want to actively participate in PD and collaborate in a consistent and on-going manner

to support long-lasting changes in their classrooms (Matherson & Windle, 2017, pp. 30-31).

Many schools in the United States have embraced instructional coaching as one possible

answer to the demand for more individualized and relevant professional development

experiences. Knight (2006) emphasized that instructional coaching provides a unique learning

experience because the coach and teacher both have opportunities to learn and grow

professionally as they collaborate (p. 37). Knight (2006) explained that the trusting relationship

coaches and teachers build over time serves as a catalyst for non-evaluative identification of

needs, goal setting, instructional improvement, and reflection (p. 37).

Framework of Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is an individualized approach toward professional development;

while the methods may vary, the general goals remain the same. Mangin and Stoelinga (2010)

identified one major goal of instructional coaching as increasing teachers' depth of knowledge

and skills, and this is accomplished through collaboration between coaches and teachers (p. 52).

The authors also asserted that the one-on-one approach of instructional coaching allows coaches

to provide contextualized, content-specific professional development that continues over a longer

period of time (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010, p. 51). Knight (2005) highlighted another common

goal of instructional coaching--addressing common teaching obstacles; instructional coaches (ICs) can provide helpful strategies and problem-solving support related to classroom management issues, content, and assessments (p. 19). Miller, Wargo, and Hoke (2019) mentioned that the individualized approach of instructional coaching also allows coaches to address the diverse needs of all teachers, regardless of their experience or prior knowledge (p. 17).

There are different approaches toward instructional coaching, but many coaches and collaborating teachers engage in common professional development activities. Knight (2006) described how ICs often meet one-on-one with teachers for collaborative discussions or conferences to discuss and evaluate teachers' needs (p. 37). The author elaborated and explained that in response, coaches might model lessons, observe and collect data in the classroom setting, and provide feedback to teachers as they implement new teaching strategies (Knight, 2006, p. 37). Stover, Kissel, Haag, and Shoniker (2011) also highlighted three possible coaching activities to support teachers through differentiation: encouraging teachers to utilize journals for writing lesson reflections, identifying teachers' needs through surveys, and facilitating teacher self-evaluations and reflections through videotaped lessons (p. 498). For more measurable instructional improvements, Kane and Rosenquist (2018) recommended that ICs engage in modeling instructional strategies and facilitate teachers' reflections by videotaping and analyzing lessons during face-to-face conferences (p. 22).

Strong relationships are the foundation for most instructional coaching models, and Knight's Partnership Approach is one popular instructional coaching model that especially embraces equality between coaches and teachers. Knight (2006) observed that teachers need to trust their coaches before the teachers will display vulnerability or open-up about classroom

struggles (p. 39). Knight (2006) suggested that once a trusting relationship is established, teachers are more open to collaboration and advice (p. 37). In 2002, Knight established a model of coaching called the Partnership Approach, and this instructional coaching approach focuses on seven core components: equity between teachers and ICs, teachers' choices about PD, collaborative dialogues between teachers and ICs, praxis, teachers and ICs both voicing their opinions, ongoing reflection throughout the coaching cycle, and reciprocity during the coaching process (Knight, 2005, pp. 20-21).

Themes in the Literature

       Qualities of effective instructional coaching programs. One theme in the literature includes identifying the qualities that exist in effective instructional coaching programs. Many ICs agree that it is important to build positive relationships with teachers before working with them in a coaching capacity. Miller et al. (2019) suggested that trust and respect are necessary elements for making collaboration possible and effective when engaging in instructional coaching (p. 25). Gómez Palacio, Gómez Vargas, & Pulgarín Taborda (2019) also reported that teachers felt more comfortable and secure when they worked with coaches with whom they had a trusting relationship (pp. 130-131). The researchers went on to point out that teachers responded well when the ICs showed genuine interest in the teachers, not only their professional careers, and the coaches provided nonjudgmental support and feedback (Gómez Palacio et al., 2019, pp. 130-131). Knight (2009) commented that some instructional coaches use these strategies to build respectful relationships with collaborating teachers: valuing teachers' experience and skills, presenting new teaching strategies in a respectful manner, providing environments where teachers can experiment with new strategies without fear of negative consequences, and allowing teachers to determine which strategies are the most effective for their students (p. 511). Another

possible way to build trust and respect in a coaching relationship is when the instructional

coaches provide high-quality PD opportunities over time and show consistency throughout

numerous coaching cycles (Kraft & Blazer, 2018, p. 8).

Other educators and researchers suggest that instructional coaching programs work more

effectively when the coach and the participating teacher collaborate and work together as

partners. Knight (2005) asserted that instructional coaching is most effective when

administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers collaborate in focused and meaningful ways;

then, this Partnership Approach can be a catalyst for significant and sustainable improvements

(p. 21). A partnership perspective toward instructional coaching also means that teachers and

coaches both have the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions during coaching sessions.

Stover et al. (2011) put forward the idea that instructional coaching is more effective when

teachers are encouraged to voice their preferences about their PD processes; then, it is beneficial

for the coach to utilize those teacher interests and preferences to make the instructional coaching

experience more relevant to the teachers' individual needs (p. 499). Huston and Weaver (2007)

recommended that teachers establish the goals and focus during the instructional coaching

process because this empowers the teachers and conveys equality in the coaching relationships

(p. 14). Another possible benefit of collaborating and having a collaborative approach toward

instructional coaching is the positive impact on instructional feedback. Huston and Weaver

(2007) pointed out that it is more effective for coaches to provide feedback in a manner that

teachers can understand, value, and use (p. 14). Kraft and Blazer (2018) indicated that teachers

are also more likely to be open to and utilize feedback from coaches when the entire school

culture embraces trust, respect, and a growth mindset (p. 9).

Many educators also recommend that instructional coaches possess a deep knowledge about instructional strategies and available resources to provide higher quality professional development experiences. Knight (2006) suggested that ICs understand and can explain a wide variety of research-based instructional strategies, especially, those that focus on behavior, content knowledge, instruction, and assessments (p. 37). Stover et al. (2011) emphasized that instructional coaches should effectively model reflective instructional practices because that can empower teachers and equip them for sustainable instructional changes (p. 507). Poglinco and Bach (2004) recommended that ICs have proficiency in a variety of skills, including mentoring, modeling instructional strategies, collaborative lesson planning, providing constructive feedback based on classroom observations, and facilitating reflective conversations about instructional practices (p. 399). McDowell et al. (2014) observed success among instructional coaches when the coaches had a collection of available digital and non-technology related resources that the coaches could provide teachers to support specific topical, content-area, or instructional needs (p. 8).

The role of administrators in instructional coaching programs. A second theme in the literature is that school administrators can play an important role in supporting instructional coaches and coaching programs. Poglinco and Bach (2004) pointed out that even highly qualified ICs need support from administrators, and that support often sets the foundation for positive buy-in from teachers and other staff members (p. 400). McDowell et al. (2014) identified support from administrators as one of the primary factors that contributes to the success of coaching programs because teachers are less likely to volunteer or eagerly participate in professional development activities that their supervisors view as a waste of time (p. 7). Likewise, Kane and Rosenquist (2018) acknowledged that instructional coaches had greater

access to teachers and more time to work with them when administrators supported coaching as an effective PD model (p. 24).

Administrators and instructional coaches can often work together more effectively when they both understand the purpose and vision for the instructional coaching program at their school. Instructional coaching programs can use different approaches and utilize a variety of activities, so it can be helpful for administrators and coaches to discuss the details of their program before introducing it to the staff at their school. Knight (2006) asserted that administrators are much more likely to recommend instructional coaching sessions when they know and understand the specific services that coaches can offer teachers (p. 39). Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) also pointed out the benefit of having discussions between administrators and instructional coaches to clearly define expectations for teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators (p. 53). Discussing expectations before starting a new instructional coaching program can often help all parties involved avoid misunderstandings or incorrect assumptions.

Another way that administrators can support instructional coaching programs is through communication with instructional coaches and teachers. Knight (2005) asserted that instructional coaching programs are most effective when principals and ICs collaborate and communicate as partners who are working toward the same goal—promoting growth in teachers and students (p. 19). Knight (2006) described the importance of principals and instructional coaches meeting one-on-one regularly to discuss short-term and long-term goals, progress reports, new instructional strategies, and possible solutions to problems in the school (p. 40). Miller et al. (2019) reported that supportive administrators promoted instructional coaching programs by communicating with teachers about how instructional coaching works with other district-wide PD initiatives for a more comprehensive approach toward professional

development; in contrast, less supportive leadership teams viewed ICs as a competing form of

PD, so they did not communicate available instructional coaching services (pp. 21-22, 24).

Administrators can become allies and partners with instructional coaches, or administrators can

create obstacles for instructional coaches to overcome.

      Professional development for instructional coaches. Another theme in the literature

suggested that instructional coaches often benefit from professional development because it

allows them to more effectively serve teachers. Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) recommended that

all teacher leaders engage in both preservice training and ongoing professional development

because teacher leadership roles demand a wide variety of knowledge and skills (p. 58).

Instructional coaches can gain some practical instructional knowledge before starting coaching,

but often, some of their leadership skills are developed through experiences of working directly

with individuals and groups of teachers. Other times, professional development can seem more

meaningful when ICs can connect new skills to prior knowledge or experiences in coaching.

Knight (2006) emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development by pointing out

that coaches who fail to engage in PD can be less effective, waste teachers' time, and provide

inaccurate information; all of this can result in wasting a school district's money (p. 38). In

contrast, logic would suggest that investing in professional development for instructional coaches

could be perceived as an investment in the coaches', teachers', and school districts'

effectiveness.

      Professional development for instructional coaches is a relatively new concept, but some

experts have ideas about what this could include. Knight (2006) recommended PD that focuses

directly on coaching skills and practices, such as effectively enrolling teachers in the coaching

program, identifying the best teaching strategies or interventions to help teachers learn, modeling

the process of gathering and analyzing data, and guiding teachers in reflective and intentional data-driven decision making (p. 38). The author went on to point out that all coaches rely on communication skills, relationship-building skills, and leadership skills, so those are also important areas of focus for professional development (Knight, 2006, p. 38). Knight (2006) added to that list the need to focus on developing a deep understanding of research-based instructional strategies (p. 38). Depending on the teaching and coaching context, the coach also might benefit from further content-specific knowledge and skills, especially in areas like technology, that continue to change over time.

Some school districts have explored the idea of supporting instructional coaches by providing professional development and mentoring opportunities. Stock and Duncan (2010) conducted research about this topic after the state of Wyoming passed a legislation in 2006 that awarded Wyoming schools grants to use for hiring instructional coaches; coaches were then supported high-quality instruction, aligned to curriculum standards, and more consistency in professional development for teachers (p. 58). Stock and Duncan (2010) studied the instructional coaching programs across Wyoming in 2009 and noted that 56% of the participating coaches said they did not have mentors, even though 90% of the participants considered mentors as a valuable part of the instructional coaching training and professional development process (p. 61). The researchers went on to report that participants especially thought mentoring would be valuable when developing these skills: instructional leadership, data collection and analysis, and strategies for working with difficult staff members (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 62). The researchers concluded that participants wanted more state and district-level training before they began coaching roles and wanted mentors to provide ongoing

support and further professional development throughout their instructional coaching careers (Stock & Duncan, 2010, p. 66).

Opposing Viewpoints and Alternative Options

There are several potential challenges and obstacles to address when utilizing instructional coaching programs, and some problems arose when schools hired unqualified coaches for loosely defined roles. Poglinco and Bach (2004) observed that as schools began implementing instructional coaching models, some administrators and school leaders did not have a clear understanding of the job requirements for instructional coaching, so they did not clearly identify criteria for hiring new coaches (p. 400). Some leadership teams incorrectly assumed that if a candidate was an effective teacher, then that person would also automatically possess the necessary skills for coaching (Poglinco & Bach, 2004, p. 399). Stock and Duncan (2010) saw this in their research also; they mentioned that one teacher reported that new coaches were hired in their district without any training because those individuals were considered good teachers (p. 65). Knight (2006) pointed out that while exceptional teaching skills are important, there are other necessary skills to look for when hiring a coach, such as strong communication skills, relationship-building skills, flexibility, humility, determination, etc. (p. 40). Likewise, ambiguity in some instructional coaches' roles and responsibilities led to power struggles with co-workers and a lack of boundaries about what duties administrators expected coaches to do; this contributed to ineffective coaching relationships (Poglinco & Bach, 2004, p. 400).

Scheduling problems are also possible obstacles that can make instructional coaching a less effective professional development option. Kane and Rosenquist (2018) reported that administrators often require instructional coaches to engage in duties like making photocopies, covering for a lack of substitute teachers, or tutoring students, instead of spending time with

teachers to improve instruction (p. 22). The researchers also observed that misuses of instructional coaches occurred more frequently when coaches were hired directly by a principal instead of by a school district (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018, p. 25). Some schools appeared to need basic support staff members more than specialized and higher paid instructional coaches, and schools' use of coaches highlighted those priorities. Knight (2006) agreed and reported that one of the biggest complaints from ICs was having insufficient time to work with teachers, and that resulted from so many non-instructional responsibilities (p. 37). Another scheduling problem arose when coaches were working at multiple schools and spent extra time traveling and less time building deep relationships with teachers and principals in one location (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018, p. 25). Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) also mentioned the benefits of having coaching time planned into teachers' regular schedules, but that idea isn't currently used in all schools (p. 54).

Another possible obstacle is teachers' resistance to professional development, instructional coaching, or change. Knight (2009) reported that, at times, teachers felt overwhelmed by too many new teaching practices within a short period of time, and some PD techniques merely seemed like fads that were adopted and dropped quickly (p. 508). The researcher noted that whether the school districts, administrators, or ICs were expecting teachers to change, teachers wanted to see strong evidence that the changes were positive and how the changes directly impacted their students' achievement (Knight, 2009, p. 509). Knight (2009) acknowledged that instructional coaching does not always show fast results, and some teachers resisted new practices that were not perceived as easy to implement (p. 509).

Some educators recommend alternative approaches toward professional development, such as mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are similar to instructional coaching because

both offer individualized, one-on-one PD experiences. Salgür (2014) described the common features of educational mentoring: usually, an experienced teacher advises, supports, tutors, and models professional techniques for novice teachers (p. 47). The researcher went on to say that the veteran teacher often explains school procedures, expectations, curriculum, and experiences that are part of their shared teaching environment (Salgür, 2014, p. 50). Salgür (2014) also observed that mentoring often leads to higher retention and job satisfaction for new teachers (p. 48). Brannon and Bleistein (2012) reported that novice teachers especially desired knowledge about instructional strategies, resources, and logistical information from mentors; those inexperienced teachers wanted advice and problem-solving help from teachers who understood their specific teaching contexts and needs (p. 534).

Other educators suggested using Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for a professional development model. Like instructional coaching, PLCs provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and focus on the needs in a specific learning environment. Stewart (2014) promoted PLCs in the adult educational setting because this form of professional development includes data analysis of students' work over a semester or longer to identify learning gaps and inform instructional decisions about meeting those needs (pp. 29-30). Stewart (2014) went on to note that PLCs also require active participation from teachers, so that increases teachers' motivation (p. 31). Additionally, the collaborative problem-solving with teachers in similar classroom settings leads to specific feedback and reflection that improves teachers practices and impacts student learning (Stewart, 2014, p. 31).

Although some schools have already observed benefits to mentoring programs and PLCs, the one-on-one approach of instructional coaching, in a mutually beneficial professional development model, appeals to many school districts. Some administrators and teachers have

also recognized that instructional coaching is versatile for teachers in a variety of teaching contexts.

Impact of Instructional Coaching on Students, Teachers, and Schools

The impact of instructional coaching on students, teachers, and schools highlights the benefits of this professional development approach and often convinces administrators to implement instructional coaching. Mangin & Stoelinga (2010) pointed out that coaches understand the school setting and individual teachers' classroom contexts, so the coaches can provide specialized knowledge and specific insights that address students' unique needs (p. 49). Teemant (2014) noted that coaching positively improved teachers' skills, attitudes, confidence, and student achievement (p. 581). Matherson and Windle (2017) agreed that this tailored approach toward professional development allowed teachers to immediately implement interventions and instructional strategies; it also provided a student-focused PD model with rippling effects throughout the school (p. 30). Additionally, the researchers found that ongoing coaching cycles, and coaching sessions throughout the year, led to gradual and sustainable professional development (Matherson & Windle, 2017, p. 31).

Instructional coaching with instructors of adult education. Specifically, instructional coaching showed positive results in the context of adult education. McDowell et al. (2014) reported that it is a relatively new practice to use instructional coaching as a form of professional development in the higher education field, even though this process has been widely used in some K-12 settings since the early 2000s (pp. 3-4). Like teachers in other educational levels, these instructors of adult education represented a variety of teaching experiences and skills, so they desired PD to address their specific teaching contexts and needs (McDowell et al., 2014, pp. 4-5). Huston and Weaver (2007) noticed that colleges often overlook the professional

development that focuses on instructional strategies for mid-career and experienced faculty members (p. 5). The researchers noted that some instructors, who taught more than ten years, especially struggled with technology-based changes and instructional strategies, changes in students' learning needs and preferences, and increasing class sizes of students who are academically less prepared; instructors had different instructional needs, so they needed individualized PD options to address their needs (Huston & Weaver, 2007, pp. 6-7). Gómez Palacio et al. (2019) pointed out that scheduling is another unique challenge with providing professional development for adjunct or part-time adult educators (p. 122). The researchers went on to note that extended training sessions or workshops might not be possible for those instructors, but private coaching sessions with instructional coaches allow flexible scheduling options and the opportunities for teachers to address their personal PD needs (Gómez Palacio et al., 2019, p. 122). When adult educational instructors, at all stages in their careers, engaged in PD, they often felt better-equipped for meeting the needs of the students they served; Huston and Weaver (2007) concluded that peer coaching was one effective strategy for meeting a variety of professional development needs in adult educators (pp. 17-18).

McDowell et al. (2014) reported that some higher education institutes have recognized the success of instructional coaching models in K-12 settings and adapted those practices to fit the context of adult education (p. 3). McDowell et al. (2014) conducted research at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, because they wanted to understand how to support the diverse needs of faculty members at different points in their careers, and the purpose of their coaching model was to provide relationship-based learning opportunities to address individual professional development needs and make the experiences more meaningful for instructors, at all levels of their careers (p. 7). This coaching model offered new faculty orientation, webinars,

face-to-face workshops, group discussions, and one-on-one coaching sessions (McDowell et al.,

2014, p. 7). McDowell et al. (2014) reported that between 2011 and 2014, this coaching

program served and supported 277 different faculty members in nearly 450 one-on-one coaching

sessions (p. 8). The researchers went on to state that some factors in the success of their program

were attributed to support from administrators, faculty members choosing this PD option rather

than having it as a requirement, and the non-evaluative nature of the coaching sessions

(McDowell et al., 2014, p. 8).

Huston and Weaver (2007) acknowledged that in the field of adult education, many

institutes support novice faculty members but overlook the professional development needs of

more experienced faculty members; instructional coaching provides one solution for a variety of

instructional needs (p. 5). Huston and Weaver (2007) described the peer coaching models that

they implemented at Seattle University, and their pilot program included ten experienced,

interdisciplinary faculty members who became coaches and engaged in a year of training, a year

of reciprocal coaching, and a year of one-way coaching (pp. 8-9). The researchers noted that

experienced faculty members especially reported benefits of reciprocal coaching with other

experienced faculty members because they could relate to common context-specific experiences,

benefit from instructional observations and advice from other experienced faculty and maintain

accountability in their PD practices (Huston & Weaver, 2007, p. 12). Huston and Weaver (2007)

highlighted that reciprocal coaching allowed coaches to develop trusting relationships and coach

one another over a prolonged time for more in-depth instructional reflection (p.12).

Gómez Palacio et al. (2019), noted that instructional coaching is a model that many

schools around the world are using for PD, and this is slowly becoming a part of higher

educational practices globally, so the authors recently conducted research on instructional

coaching with adjunct professors at a Columbian University (pp. 123, 125). The coaches were

certified through the International Coaching Leadership in Columbia and formed an

interdisciplinary research team that included two psychologists and other experienced English

instructors; the interdisciplinary aspect of their coaching session allowed the coaches to

contribute unique skills and experiences such as focusing on the psychological and emotional

components of teaching, while the coaches with experience in the participating teachers'

departments could focus more on the content-specific aspects of teaching (Gómez Palacio et al.,

2019, p. 125). Gómez Palacio et al. (2019) noted that all the coaches provided general

instructional support, but the psychiatrist-coaches addressed some of the underlying personal

struggles that impact teachers' abilities to excel (p. 126). One participating teacher even

acknowledged how gaining confidence allowed the teacher to think more creatively and develop

closer relationships with students and co-workers, which directly impacted the professional

context (Gómez Palacio et al., 2019, p. 128). The researchers also observed a correlation

between teachers' positive self-perceptions or positive social-emotional health and teachers'

instructional effectiveness (Gómez Palacio et al., 2019, p. 132). In higher education, the students

are often adults who may respond more to instructors that appear confident about their teaching

skills, but this is an area where further research is needed.

Instructional coaching with instructors of English language learners. Some schools

also see a need for improving the professional development available for teachers of English

Language Learners. According to Teemant (2014), there is a recent increase in diversity among

students in the United States: culturally, linguistically, financially, and socially; consequently,

these demographic changes represent changing needs among students, and teachers are asking

schools for training and professional development that equips them to meet the needs of students

in their classrooms (p. 575). According to Brannan and Bleistein (2012), ELL teachers regularly

engage in intercultural communication and daily navigate communication across language

barriers; these communication challenges can lead to misunderstandings and an increase in stress

and frustration for students and teachers (p. 520). The researchers went on to point out that ELL

teachers expressed a desire for professional development and instructional strategies that focus

directly on the needs of their ELL students (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012, p. 520). Russell (2015)

also highlighted the unique needs that instructors have when teaching ELLs and indicated that

after instructors determine the academic and linguistic needs of each student, there could also be

social and emotional factors that impact the student's learning or instructor's teaching (p. 29).

Russell (2015) indicated that the cultural diversity in an ELL classroom also impacts

interpersonal relationships, communication, and learning; this, in turn, needs to direct aspects of

professional development for ELL instructors (pp. 29-30). Russell (2015) also asserted that ELL

instructors need specific instructional strategies to address those issues and knowledge about

how to support language acquisition through appropriate levels of scaffolding (p. 31).

Instructional coaching is one professional development approach that supports the

ongoing needs of teachers and students in ELL classrooms. Teemant (2014) pointed out that the

collaborative relationship between instructional coaches and ELL teachers often provides

emotional support and an increased sense of confidence for teachers who might experience

heightened levels of stress (p. 581). The researcher suggested that instructional coaching

provides a positive opportunity for ELL teachers to discuss the challenges their students are

experiencing, and together, ICs and teachers can problem-solve ways to overcome those

obstacles (Teemant, 2014, p. 581). Brannan and Bleistein (2012) highlighted the emotional toll

that ELL instructors might face, such as experiencing feelings of isolation and pressure in cross-

cultural contexts; furthermore, novice teachers are especially vulnerable to those feelings while

adjusting to many changes and demands at once (p. 521). Then, Brannan and Bleistein (2012)

commented that ICs can provide essential support through face-to-face interactions and through

actual or perceived support; the researchers also observed that even the perception of ongoing

support led teachers to feel more confident in their skills, satisfied with their jobs, and committed

to serving their students well (p. 521). Russell (2015) suggested that ELL teachers have

benefited most from working with ICs who have skills as experienced teachers, backgrounds in

working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, and knowledge of coaching strategies

that target ELL needs (p. 31). The author went on to point out that although it is uncommon to

find instructional coaches that focus on ELL settings, those coaches could lead to positive school

impact in general education and ELL-centered classrooms, thereby impacting an entire school

culture (Russell, 2015, p. 28).

Brannan and Bleistein (2012) focused on the role of social support for novice ELL

instructors in their research, and they studied mostly higher education instructors to understand

who supported those teachers the most, the degree of support provided, and how the support

impacted the teachers (p. 524). Brannan and Bleistein (2012) reported that the largest amount of

social support came from mentors/instructional coaches, co-workers, and family members (p.

530). According to the researchers, mentors, instructional coaches, and co-workers often

provided teaching ideas, content knowledge, resources, and social support, and those ELL

teachers who did not have this consistent teaching support network reported feeling isolated and

like their work was more challenging (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012, p. 530). Conversely, the

researchers noted that those teachers who experienced frequent reassurance, encouragement, and

support from colleagues who understood their work felt like their work was more sustainable

(Brannan & Bleistein, 2012, p. 530). Brannan and Bleistein's (2012) research suggested that

ELL instructors would benefit from learning social networking skills before starting their

teaching careers because collegial relationships increased teacher efficacy and retention (p. 536).

Teemant (2014) suggested that instructional coaching provides a differentiated approach

toward professional development and can provide instructors with ideas about how to use

differentiation to address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, and Teemant's

research focused on supporting teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse, urban schools (p.

591). The researcher observed that the variety of linguistic skills and life experiences add

additional challenges for teachers, but participating teachers reported that PD which focused on

differentiated teaching strategies and problem solving with specific demographics and student

data in mind made the PD more relevant and easier to apply to their classroom contexts

(Teemant, 2014, p. 591). Teemant's (2014) research also showed that multiple teachers

recognized how instructional coaching aided them in altering their perspectives and the

expectations that they held for their ELL students (pp. 593-594). Prior to coaching, several

teachers reported that they made assumptions about students' literacy skills and life experiences,

but the coaching emphasis on reflection caused teachers to utilized more inquiry and reflection

with students, which helped the instructors better identify and understand the needs of their

students (Teemant, 2014, pp. 593-594).

Russell (2015) showed that some novice ELL instructors want professional development

that has more direct application to their teaching contexts (p. 37). Russell (2015) conducted

research that utilized instructional coaches with ELL teaching backgrounds to provide more

specialized training for novice ELL instructors (p. 33). The ELL instructors expressed a need for

PD to focus on both basic instructional needs and adjustments, as well as instructional strategies

that focused on the supporting the ELL population (Russell, 2015, p. 37). Russell (2015)

reflected on some of the specific issues that ELL instructors often address during coaching

sessions, and one instructor struggled to understand when, how, and to what depth she should

differentiate instruction (p. 40). Russell (2015) described how ELL instructors often see a wide

variety of skill levels in their classrooms, so frequent reflection and discussions, with coaches,

about the data that informs decisions aided new teachers in that differentiation process (p. 40).

Connected to that issue, Russell (2015) noted that some ELL instructors struggled with the

pacing of lessons, for example, they struggled in determining when to provide additional

scaffolding and when to move on to the next part of the lesson (p. 40). Instructional coaches,

who had experience with those ELL-focused issues, had experience, knowledge, and resources to

support the new teachers (Russell, 2015, p. 40). Additionally, Russell (2015) observed that

instructional coaching exposed novice teachers to co-workers who provided valuable resources

and context-specific support (p. 44).

Conclusion

This literature review focused on professional development in the fields of adult basic

education and ELL instruction, and it addressed the idea of utilizing instructional coaching in

that educational context. Instructors of adult ELLs often want professional development

opportunities that focus on research-based instructional strategies, knowledge about meeting the

needs of adult learners, and skills that specifically focus on ELL instruction. A variety of

professional development options are available to address those issues, and instructional

coaching is one possibility. The literature supports using instructional coaching as a

differentiated professional development model when working with students of varying ages

(McDowell et al., 2014, pp. 3-4), with teachers of varying content-areas (Russell, 2015, p. 27),

and with teachers of varying skill levels (Huston & Weaver, 2007, pp. 17-18).

Another idea that the literature addressed is the possible relationship between

instructional coaching and strengthening the quality of instruction in adult education. Huston

and Weaver (2007) examined instructional coaching as an effective approach for meeting the

diverse needs of instructors of adult education, and they concluded that a peer coaching model

allowed coaches and instructors to develop valuable professional skills (pp. 17-18). Instructional

coaching can improve the quality of instruction; that can, in turn, enhance differentiated learning

opportunities for students (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010, p. 49), positively alter teachers' attitudes

about their instructional abilities (Teemant, 2014, p. 581; Gómez Palacio et al., 2019, p. 132),

and support sustainable changes within a school by involving administrators, instructional

coaches, and teachers in creating instructional transformations (Knight, 2005, p. 21).

Also, the literature examined the instructional coaching methods that could possibly

support learning among adult English language students. Many instructional coaching strategies

can support teachers of any subject area, but some techniques might especially support ELL

instruction and learning. Russell (2015) pointed out that ELL instructors often benefit from

coaching sessions that focus on instructional strategies to support language acquisition, literacy

development, and scaffolding (p. 31). Teemant (2014) explained that collaborative problem-

solving discussions between instructional coaches and ELL teachers often provided necessary

knowledge and resources for meeting the unique needs of the ELL population, especially when

the coaches had prior experience or backgrounds with English instruction (p. 581). Brannan and

Bleistein (2012) indicated that it was valuable for instructional coaches to provide PD on

developing social networking skills so the ELL teachers could find the support they needed for

mental and emotional well-being to combat the stresses of intercultural or multilingual

communication (pp. 530, 536).

Further Research

This literature review suggests a need for further research about several related topics.

One area to consider and study more is how to measure the success of instructional coaching

programs. Kraft and Blazer (2018) pointed out that the increase in students' skills and the

increase in participating teachers' skills are often the focus of instructional coaching research (p.

7). It can be challenging for schools to effectively gather data and compare students' learning

from district to district. Since research is not conducted in a laboratory setting, it is also difficult

for schools to determine if the instructional coaching is impacting students' learning or if other

factors are influencing students' learning; the same can be said about possible causes for

improvements in teachers' skills. Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) agreed that future research

should focus on the relationships between instructional coaching, instructional practices, and

student outcomes so educators can utilize that data to support ongoing funding for instructional

coaching programs (p. 59). Boatright and Gallucci (2008) suggested that educators conduct more extensive, longitudinal research about the long-term impact of instructional coaching on student learning because much of the current research focuses on a small number of participants (p. 5). Gómez Palacio et al. (2019) also pointed out that it can be difficult to measure the impact of instructional coaching on teachers' professional, social, and emotional well-being, but further research on coaching that includes collaboration between coaches with education and psychology backgrounds could show a broader spectrum of how instructional coaching impacts teachers (p. 132).

A second possible area for further research is about the impact of instructional coaching on adult education. McDowell et al. (2014) mentioned that while instructional coaching is becoming more common in primary and secondary schools, it is relatively new to adult education contexts (p. 3). That means that little research data is available about coaching programs with adult education instructors, at the university level or at the adult basic education level. Stewart (2014) agreed and suggested that adult basic education schools and programs should research more about professional development opportunities for instructors (p. 28).

A third possible area for further research is about how instructional coaching impacts ELL teachers and students. Russell (2015) specifically suggested that more research is needed about how to support novice teachers of English Language Learners since those teachers and students have unique needs (p. 29). The researcher also pointed out that content area instructional coaches, like those who focus on mathematics or literacy, are relatively common, so more data is available about those coaches; however, little data currently exists related to instructional coaching that focuses primarily on the ELL context (Russell, 2015, p. 28). Along with that, Brannan and Bleistein (2012) suggested that research should focus on how

relationships with instructional coaches and mentors can improve initial teaching experiences for ELL instructors (p. 536).

A fourth possible area for further research is related to training and professional development for instructional coaches. Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) mentioned that researchers should examine the impact of preservice training and ongoing professional development on instructional coaches and their effectiveness in working with teachers (p. 58). Many schools believe that professional development is valuable for educators, but they may be uncertain about how to support teacher leadership positions. Boatright and Gallucci (2008) expressed a need for more research related to identifying the skills, knowledge, and professional development that instructional coaches need to effectively carry out their work (p. 5). Likewise, Stock and Duncan (2010) stated that little research is currently available about mentoring instructional coaches, but schools want more information and data so they can support high-quality instructional coaches and coaching programs (p. 66).

Moving forward, many schools are likely to utilize instructional coaching to support teachers and provide differentiated professional development. Although questions remain about how to effectively implement and utilize instructional coaching programs, it can be helpful to learn from the experiences of other teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and schools.

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