COACHES ON CALL: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF "ON-CALL" COACHING

TARA WILSON

ABSTRACT

The purpose for this qualitative study was to describe elementary school teachers' perspectives on working with a literacy instructional coach. The particular literacy instructional coach in this study was also a university professor, not employed by the school district. The university professor provided professional learning to meet teachers' instructional needs by modeling research-based instructional strategies, conducted after school professional development sessions, helped teachers use formative assessments to plan for instruction, and gathered needed resources. Individual interviews, observations, and reflective journaling were used to answer two research questions: What are teachers' perceptions on how a literacy coach provides professional learning for teachers? What are teachers' perceptions on having a university professor serving as a literacy coach? Three themes emerged from the data analysis and coding: growth, relationship, and advocacy. A selective review of recent literature on professional learning, public school and university partnerships, and types of coaching is included.

Keywords: literacy coaching, elementary, professional development

Instructional coaching (IC) serves as a popular medium for delivering on-site professional development. Instructional coaches are individuals capable of bringing out the best in teachers by uncovering their strengths, building effective teams, and cultivating compassion (Aguilar, 2013). According to Marsh et al., (2011) "the use of instructional coaches as part of school improvement programs has become increasingly popular and has been expanding across the country" (p. 25). Jim Knight (2007), a renowned expert on IC, adds "the concept of coaching, though it has been around for decades, perhaps centuries, has been described in much great detail over the past 20 years" (p. 9). However, due to budget restraints, some districts cannot afford to employ ICs. Fortunately, university professors can serve as an alternative.

University education professors often seek out opportunities to collaborate with local schools. Partnering schools with the local university helps streamline instructional best practices. One way to establish this partnership is for a professor who can also serve as an IC begin a relationship with the school's administrator. The professor conveys that they will devote a certain amount of time in classrooms and expresses the reasons they want to work with the teachers.

Administrator buy-in is crucial. School administrators can show hesitance when an "outsider," especially one from higher education, wants to come onto their campus. This hesitation can decrease if a two-way relationship of trust is established. The university aims to produce highly qualified teachers, and schools want to employ them. Professors can take it upon themselves to serve as ICs to offer continued support at no financial cost to either institution.

This article chronicles a reading professor's experience serving as a literacy instructional coach at a local elementary school. It includes perspectives from the teachers involved and the coach herself (the author).

Selective Review of Literature

Professional Learning

Professional development and professional learning are often used interchangeably; however, the two practices differ. Professional development is defined as activities designed to engage professionals in learning about enhancing their practice (Knapp, 2003). Frerichs et al. (2018) postulate that "adult learners require ongoing professional development experiences to stay abreast of new knowledge and practices, improve their skills and abilities, and support organizational growth" (p. 120). Teras and Kartoglu (2017) add that participating in professional development either may or may not lead to professional learning.

Professional learning (PL) occurs intrinsically and continuously throughout the entire professional career of the individual. For PL to be effective, it must be organic, individualized, reflective, and empowering (International Literacy Association, 2017). As a result, Webster-Wright (2010) summarizes, "PL cannot be mandated, coerced or controlled, but can be supported, facilitated and shaped" (p. 12). Engagement, another important piece of PL; requires the individual to care about the situation (Yin, 2011).

These professionals seek lifelong learning and strive to be literacy leaders in their schools and their districts and community. This is accomplished by working collaboratively to support professional learning in literacy and by understanding the development of self and others (International Literacy Association, 2017). Webster-Wright (2010) posits "professional learning is open-ended and requires openness of attitude. Professional learning does not have a beginning or an end, as it can occur when the professional cares enough to commit to the learning interactions" (p. 208).

Public School and University Partnerships

Colleges of Education educator preparation programs and public schools share a goal of fostering successful, student-centered teachers. A myriad of research illustrates the benefits, challenges, and ways public school and university partnerships work (Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009; Beach et al. 2015; Smith et al., 2016).

Encouraging public schools and universities to work together can offer a bi-directional flow of beneficial opportunities for not only sustainment of quality education, but for growth as well (Smith et al., 2016). Bartholomew and Sandholtz (2009) discovered some beneficial opportunities: an avenue for exchanging resources, enhanced instruction, and continued professional learning.

Public schools can afford to relinquish the traditional professional development model and facilitate PL by addressing the needs of their teachers, regardless of their career stage. Beach et al. (2015) elaborate by stating, "while the experienced teachers at the public school serve as mentors for the university's pre-service teachers, the faculty members at the university use their expertise to address the professional development needs of the public school's experienced teachers" (p. 5). Likewise, university faculty and public school teachers working together toward a common goal enhance professional learning with the aim of improving education for all students.

School and university partnerships face challenges. Parker et al. (2012) elaborate on this by stating that "professors have been criticized for academic elitism and being disconnected from the real world" (p. 33). Public schools and universities often have issues with establishing mutual respect. University faculty may perceive public school teachers as having little or no expertise at all. Public school teachers can view university faculty as being out of the loop in regard to the daily life of a schoolteacher (Beach et al., 2015). These opposing viewpoints exist because the two entities often do not have chances to consistently interact, particularly outside of student teaching mentorships (Smith et al., 2016).

Bartholomew and Sandholtz (2009) acknowledge more challenges that stem from public school and university partnerships: logistical issues (i.e. funding, time, adequate resources) and differences in structures, missions, and cultures. When these challenges are recognized and addressed, then the partnership can proceed.

Research indicates that public school and university partnerships can work. The first step is to establish trust. Trust develops by having an honest and open understanding between both entities regarding outcomes, duties, relationships, and purposes (Beach et al., 2015). The second step is to create a shared vision, so that the public school and the university can strive to meet a common goal. According to a study by Parker et al. (2012), "when the two entities came to the 'table,' university faculty brought theoretical knowledge of curriculum and instruction and public-school teachers had the daily reality of being in K-12 schools" (p. 33). Parker et al. (2012) suggest that both entities sit at a table (figuratively) to honestly listen to each other so that criticisms about knowledge and practice can dissipate.

Types of Coaching

Literacy coaches play an essential role in assisting teachers with their instruction (Frerichs et al., 2018). They accomplish this task in many ways, depending on what type of coach they are. Customarily, coaching tasks frequently involve a gentle balance concerning campus-wide improvement plans and mentoring responsibilities. This balance often relies on the district's vision

of a coach's role within their reform efforts and the placement of coaches, such as campus-based or district level (Gallucci et al., 2010).

Literacy coaches generally serve in one of three structures: teacher leaders/school-based personnel, district-level coaches, and third-party coaches. Leadership may be distributed among people at the campus level to support an identified instructional focus. Within this structure, coaches serves as a means of shared leadership. Coaches in this instance are basically teacher leaders. Sometimes coaches are part-time teachers who take on coaching responsibilities. Classroom teachers who serve as coaches are vital in creating positive change, especially through professional development (Gallucci et al., 2010). Many times a campus chooses to hire someone solely to serve as a literacy coach. This coach does not need to balance their time between the two positions and can allocate their entire day to working with teachers.

Sometimes school districts decide to hire coaches at the district level. For example, a district with 20 elementary schools may opt to employ 10 literacy coaches, each coach working with two campuses. Gallucci et al. (2010) posit that "coaches can act as mediators between district-directed reform efforts and classroom practice" (p. 920).

Cases also exist in which literacy coaches may work on campuses as a result of contractual arrangements with outside organizations. These organizations offer an array of coaching services to support either district or campus needs.

To date, a systematic review of university professors serving as literacy coaches is scarce. The gap in literature addressed in this study focuses on teachers' perceptions about university professors serving the role of a literacy instructional coach.

THE PRESENT STUDY

In this qualitative study, I explored teacher perceptions of working with a university professor who served as an instructional literacy coach. By examining teachers' perceptions of working with literacy coaches, administrators and other stakeholders we can gain improved insight about using a literacy coach for planning and providing professional development opportunities, integrating the latest literacy instructional strategies, and building a more influential educational environment.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are teachers' perceptions about how a literacy coach provides professional development for teachers?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of having a university professor serving as a literacy coach?

METHODOLOGY

Creswell (2013) describes qualitative research as:

> …inquiring about a problem, collecting data from people and places in natural settings, and then looking for themes to emerge from the data. The results or findings should simply be a reflection of the participants. At the end of the research, there should be a description of the problem and an appeal to mend the problem. (p.74)

I conducted this study using a phenomenological approach. In this phenomenological study, I collected data from teachers who experienced the phenomenon of working with a literacy instructional coach. The collection of experiences was vital in gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This process allowed me to pinpoint ideas and experiences that participants had in common to understand their perceptions about their experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

Falcon Academy (pseudonym) educates students in kindergarten to ninth grade. After first grade, students at each grade level are organized into three teams. Math, science, and language arts teachers share the same students on one team. Team meetings occur weekly to discuss the academic and behavioral progress of the students. Falcon Academy, a charter school, includes about 35% Latino/a, 60% Caucasian, 2% African-American, and 3% other racial minorities, for a total of 564 students. Seventeen percent are classified as low socioeconomic status.

Six English Language Arts teachers who teach grades kindergarten through 5th grade at Falcon Academy participated in this study. The participants come from various backgrounds and have a combined total of 81 years in education.

DATA COLLECTION

I collected data across a seven-month period at Falcon Academy. I began with a pre-interview of six teachers. During the seven months this study took place, I spent about three hours a week in classrooms, for almost 26 weeks. I concluded with a post-interview with each teacher. I interviewed each teacher individually after school for the pre- and post-interviews.

INTERVIEWS.

After obtaining consent, I interviewed the teachers. Patton (2002) reported "the purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 341). Interviews occurred before and after working with a university professor serving as a literacy coach. All interviews took place after school hours in the teachers' classrooms. I audio taped, transcribed, and coded all interviews for analysis purposes and I incorporated both theme codes and memos. Bernard and Ryan (2010) defined these types of codes: "[T]heme codes show where the themes identified actually occur in a text [while] [m]emos are field notes about codes and contain our running commentary as we read through texts" (p. 76).

Interview questions were crafted to elicit the teachers' perceptions of working with a university coach; before and after their experience. See Table 1 for a list of the questions used for the pre- and post-interviews.

Table 1

Interview Questions

Questions	Pre / Post Working with University Professor
In what ways have you grown as an educator over the years?	Pre
What do you credit this growth to?	Pre
How do you think you can continue to grow as an educator?	Pre
What are some professional goals for yourself?	Pre
How do you think it will be working with an instructional coach?	Pre
Do you think it matters that the coach you will be working with is a university professor?	Pre
What are your expectations for this coaching partnership?	Pre
Describe how your time working with a literacy instructional coach went.	Post
What ways do you think participating in this relationship has helped you as a teacher; your students?	Post
Have your feelings about literacy instruction changed?	Post
Were your expectations meet? Why or why not/	Post
Is there anything else you would like to share relating to working with a literacy instructional coach?	Post

JOURNALING.

I recorded memos and field notes throughout the duration of the study. The notes aided in validation and helped to provide triangulation. I wrote notes concerning observations and after individual interviews. These notes permitted me to monitor how personal beliefs influenced the interpretation of data. A reflexive journal, according to Wertz (2005) allows a researcher to record insights and reflections, along with pointing out possible themes and analyzing expressions. Memoing, as defined by Bernard and Ryan (2010), entails "keeping running notes about each of the concepts identified, including hypotheses about how the concepts may be related" (p. 273).

OBSERVATIONS.

In between the pre- and post-interviews, I modeled lessons, planned with teachers, analyzed student data, and observed the teachers. The purpose of the observations was to capture what the

teacher and I had planned or discussed or to see whether the teacher used what was modeled. The observations were not randomly scheduled; the teacher knew when they would occur, and I went over my notes with each teacher afterwards.

Coding Data

I transcribed all interviews manually and verbatim. Using content analysis, I read the transcriptions, looking for key words, phrases, and concepts that corresponded to the interview questions. Content analysis, according to Patton (2002), refers to "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). Coding the transcriptions allowed me to classify elements in the data into useful categories (Schensul, 2012). Those categories were *professional development*, *relationships,* and *instruction*.

The categories were further narrowed down into themes. To discover themes, I engaged in two rounds of coding. The first round employed open coding. Line by line, I coded data for themes. After completion of the first round of coding, I carried out a second cycle, axial coding. Axial coding allowed for synthesis and organization of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This cycle provided a way to refine the first round of coding into more precisely defined themes (Miles et al., 2014). These themes served as another method of interpreting the data and revealed the core of the participants' perceptions (Patton, 2002). Yin (2011) considers interpreting "the craft of giving your own meaning to your reassembled data and data arrays. This phase brings the entire analysis together and stands at its pinnacle" (p. 207). A trusted colleague checked the appropriateness of all codes to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data.

Findings and Analysis

Three major themes emerged across both pre-coaching and post coaching interviews: a) growth, b) relationship and c) advocate. Specific teacher comments added depth to the meaning of their experience. The theme of *growth* was associated with the first research question, the theme of *relationship* was connected to both research questions, and the theme of *advocate* was related to the second research question.

Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions about how a literacy coach provides professional learning for teachers?

Growth. During the interviews, all teachers indicated that each year they feel like they grow as educators. They credit that growth to lived experiences. The teachers, who have taught various grade levels, felt that they could apply what they experienced in one grade level to another. The more scenarios they encounter, the more they grow, especially in regard to classroom management.

In terms of working with a literacy coach, the coach enabled them to grow through exposure to the experience of another professional educator. Four of the teachers mentioned they were visual learners, so by watching literacy lessons modeled by an "expert" (two teachers referred to the university professor as being an expert in the field of literacy) helped them see a lesson in action, instead of only reading about it in a professional book or discussed at a professional development.

In her pre-interview, Ms. Thames (all names are pseudonyms) expressed that she hoped the literacy coach would help "grow my strategy toolbox and home in on what works by modeling best practices. My end goal of this partnership is to enhance, on our part, the literacy instruction for my second-grade students. I plan on taking lots of notes from an expert." Then in her post-interview, Ms. Thames stated, "I think it has helped see some different ways to deliver lessons. Seeing someone else give a lesson has always been one of my favorite ways to improve as a teacher."

Ms. Baker, in her post-interview explained, "The time was helpful because I was able to gain knowledge from someone who is experienced in my grade. I was able to observe lessons that I could use with my students. I feel I have gained experience in teaching writing in upper elementary."

Ms. Witten expressed the need to learn more strategies during her pre-interview, "I just want to learn more strategies. I want to learn new and upcoming things. I feel like I am stagnate and I want to learn new things, especially from an expert. I want to learn new ways to teach." Then in her post-interview, she simply added that, "It helped me develop some new lessons."

During Ms. Prescott's pre-interview, she talked about how her years of experience helped her to grow in terms of being able to pick up on the "little struggles" students have with reading and to analyze data in a more meaningful way. When asked what she hoped to gain by working with a literacy coach, she responded, "I want to learn new ideas, witness a fresh approach to teaching, and to grow as a Language Arts teacher." In Ms. Prescott's post-interview, she stated that by working with a literacy coach she grew as a writing teacher, "I have gotten some really good ideas from [the professor literacy coach]. She has helped me strengthen as a writing teacher. Watching her has helped me become a stronger writing teacher."

RELATIONSHIP. Throughout the interviews, all teachers reflected on the importance of relationships. None of the participants mentioned relationships with fellow teachers, but all referred to working with a literacy coach. Regarding working with a literacy coach, half of the six teachers, in their pre-interview, seemed unsure of how the relationship would be. However, all but one of the six teachers expressed in their post-interviews that they became confident in their relationship with the coach.

In Prescott's pre-interview, she voiced, "I think I will like it. I hope we will have a good relationship. That is important. It should be a positive experience." After her experience working with the coach, she was more confident in the relationship, as evidenced by a comment made in her post-interview.

She stated, “I enjoyed working with an instructional coach and developing a professional relationship.” One teacher, Ms. Lee put some stipulations on the potential relationship. In her pre-interview she expressed, “If the coaching relationship is going to work it will depend on the coach’s personality, positive interactions and a non-threating vibe.” In Ms. Lee’s post-interview, she admitted that the relationship “was a little stressful at first until I got to know the literacy instructional coach.” The kindergarten teacher Mr. Perez admitted his uncertainty by stating in his pre-interview, “I think coaching is still new. So I don’t know, I guess to be open and share experiences.”

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ON HAVING A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SERVING AS A LITERACY COACH?

ADVOCATE. When the teachers talked about having a university professor being their literacy coach, four of the six mentioned support or advocacy. Two teachers had negative perceptions. One stated in her pre-interview, “A professor has a totally different environment from especially elementary teachers, so, but I don’t think that all of them are quite in tune with what goes on in the classroom, unless they have been a teacher before and can remember and can put that experience back in the classroom.” The other expressed uncertainty of the university professor’s teaching experience, stating,“I worry that the professor doesn’t have the experience that some of us teachers do have.”

The other four participants felt like the university professor could access more resources and up-to-date research knowledge and would have more contacts and availability than someone from the district or region service center. With these four elements, the teachers felt that the professor served as an advocate for the teachers and their students’ literacy education.

In Ms. Baker’s pre-interview, she mentioned the contact element, saying, “ I feel like one of my expectations would be if I need help with a particular skill they could answer that for me or at least put me in the right direction or in contact with someone that could help me.” Then in her post-interview, she commented on the other three elements, “My students and I had the opportunity to work and learn with someone current on the latest research and who had experience in teaching language arts. Being with a university was a benefit to us because she was easily available. She had resources that helped us and may not have been available had she been with a different entity.”

Ms. Prescott expressed in her post-interview how the university professor advocated for their campus to obtain a human resource, “she helped us to advocate for an instructional coach on our campus all day every day.” In fact, the following school year Falcon Academy hired a literacy instructional coach.

During Ms. Lee's pre-interview she commented on the current knowledge element, saying,"… a university professor will know how to work with data, because they have to conduct a lot of research. I know how important it is." Then in her post-interview, Ms. Lee explained how the university professor was able to personally advocate for her, " [she] helped me come up with a daily schedule to teach ELA in an 85-minute block that my admin would approve coming from a university. It was a great experience."

Ms. Thames explained, in her pre-interview, how she felt about working with a university professor, saying, "I like the idea of working with a university professor. I like the idea of someone being on your side, your team, rather than someone coming in and critiquing you, like someone from the district. I bet she will also be a good resource and can lead us to find the best route to get to where we need to be. I feel like reading is the most important subject, so a reading professor would be perfect." Then during in her post-interview she added, "I truly felt like she was here to help, because it was not her job to be a literacy coach. She chose to be one in addition to being a professor."

RELATIONSHIP. The theme of relationship related to both research questions. Five of the six teachers compared their working relationship with a university professor to that of one with a district or regional education service center. In Ms. Baker's post-interview, she commented on the relationship by telling how reliable the university coach was, "She was able to come to my classroom and work with my students when asked."Mr. Perez expressed his hopes for the relationship in his pre-interview, "I think we will feel comfortable enough that if I need anything, she will just come in. I think it will be a very helpful relationship." However, in his post-interview, he made no comment on this aspect. During Ms. Thames's pre-interview she commented on working with a professor versus a district or region literacy coach, "I think working with a literacy coach who is also a university professor matters. It gives more legitimacy. They must do research, so this can lead us to find what is going to work as we work together." Ms. Thames added in her post-interview, "My expectations were exceeded. I loved how the coach was able to open up her schedule for us." Ms. Witten explained in her post-interview, "I enjoyed working with a literacy instructional coach. I believe it would have gone differently if they were with the service center, but on a negative aspect. It seemed easier to set up and maintain our relationship because she was able to be around more often to exactly see how our class runs." In Ms. Prescott's post-interview, she commented on what she got out of the working relationship, "I was able to get some fresh ideas from a university professor who is interested in literacy research."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study revealed teachers' perceptions on working with a literacy coach, specifically a coach who is also a university professor. The university professor served in a coach's role by supporting the teachers as they identified their strengths, grew their capabilities, reflected on their practice, and assisted with decision making (Toll, 2014). Throughout the study, three overarching themes

occurred: a) growth, b) relationship, and c) advocate.

GROWTH

When schoolteachers and university professors come together and strive towards a common goal, professional learning is enhanced (Beach et al., 2015). Having the IC also be a university professor added a level of credibility due to the professor's knowledge of adult learning. Toll (2014) posits "literacy coaches need knowledge of adult learning" (p. 11). University professors teach adults on a daily basis; they know adults respond best when the instruction directly connects to their needs and when they have a voice in their own learning. This voice enables teachers to grow professionally each year.

They also credit this growth to daily experiences and working with ICs. Over half of the teachers in this study mentioned how observing an IC model a lesson provided them with new hands-on knowledge. Their comments correspond with current literature in that to grow, learning must be inspiring, personalized, and pure (International Literacy Association, 2017). The teachers also commented on how the IC adapted her services to meet the needs of each individual teacher. ICs perform a key role in aiding teachers to strengthen their instruction (Frerichs et al., 2018). However, for growth to occur, a good relationship is essential.

RELATIONSHIP

Toll (2014) states "coaching is a partnership. Coaching is a collaboration between equals" (p. 10). However, teacher – IC relationships can be tricky. The partners in the relationship need to be like-minded, so each can develop professionally. The International Literacy Association (2017) posits that professional learning is supported when a teacher and an IC work in a collaborative manner with both professionals caring enough to commit to the learning relationship. All but one participant in the current study mentioned that they liked the idea of working with a university professor serving as an IC. During pre-interviews, some participants made similar predictions about the relationship. "Being a partner rather than someone coming in to critique you like people from the district do," and "together we will find the best route to get to where we need to be" are two examples. These statements illustrate how teachers value their relationships made with the university professor IC who established trustworthiness and could collaborate comfortably. These lead to the advocacy theme.

ADVOCATE

Professors often hear criticism for being "disconnected from the real world" (Parker et al., 2012). Two of the participants in this current study communicated similar feelings in their pre-interviews. However, after working with a university professor serving as an IC, 100% of the participants did not feel this way. They expressed the realization that a university professor can be an advocate. Literacy professors are considered experts in the theories, research and practices of literacy instruction. The university professor IC utilized her knowledge, as stated above, to advocate for the teachers in this study. The teachers experienced how being mentored by a university professor

provided benefits. This was made evident in their post-interviews. Comments such as "Go to bat for me, equipped with the latest literacy knowledge" and "able to convince admin to hire a literacy coach" illustrate how the teachers viewed the IC as an advocate.

This research implemented a case study approach to examine teachers' perceptions about working with literacy coaches, in particular one who is also a university professor. The context of the study was at a public, charter school. A key outcome of the study is that teachers do believe that working with a university professor serving as a literacy coach is beneficial for themselves and their students. Understanding the teachers' perceptions provides insight for university professors who work within public schools or want to do so.

Researcher Reflexivity

Instructional coaching is not new but is consistently evolving. IC involves reciprocal learning and this study proved that to be true. Not only did the teachers learn from me, but I also learned from them. Coaching should not be viewed as something that happens to teachers, but rather coaching is a joint relationship. Teachers need to voice their thoughts in a coaching relationship. My personal interest in this topic is due to the years I served as a literacy coach, and now I serve as a university literacy professor. I believe it is important that as professors, we do not lose our grasp on the "real world." The teachers in this study proved the value of coaching and thus, inspire me to keep serving as a literacy coach.

Limitations

Two limitations existed in this study. First, a single school's experience was studied. Since only one school was involved in this research, it is a stretch to generalize the findings. Another notable limitation was the modest sample size (N=6). Though rich data came from 6 participants, more participants could help strengthen the case for professors to also serve as literacy coaches. Yet, this collection of data allowed for discovery of common themes and implications for educators.

Instructional Implications

Despite the limitations, findings from this study can enhance the ways a literacy coach supports teachers. A couple of the participants mentioned data support during their interviews. Literacy coaches should support teachers in how to constructively look at data and then how to implement change deemed necessary by the results of that analysis. Working with a literacy coach does not need to occur just during the school year. According to some of the study's participants, they would like some time before the start of school to work with an IC to create an outline of a general academic plan. This experience would assist the teachers with preparation. The IC and teachers could also plan workstations.

The IC does not need to solely work with classroom teachers; they should also work with small groups of students. Three of the participants mentioned how their students benefited from working in small groups with the IC, with one teacher observing, "The literacy coach helped to build their writing skills." I implemented some of Jeff Anderson's (2007) editing techniques via small groups and that seemed to work well. Teachers can take the strategies the IC teaches the students and apply them to their instruction. However, the teachers were not the only ones learning from this experience.

The teachers provided me with some great ideas to implement with my students. One idea is to conduct mock coaching sessions. I noticed in two of the teachers' classrooms how they held mock interviews to get the students ready for an upcoming news interview. I jotted in my journal that I should do this with my grad students as they begin their journey into the role of an IC.

Another idea I gained is to start off my literacy assessment course with a mentor sentence. I modeled the mentor sentence process in the second-grade class and the teacher pointed out that she would have liked to have learned that strategy (along with some others I modeled) in her undergraduate program. Of course, I introduce my students to effective literacy strategies, but never thought about going through the mentor sentence process with them!

A third idea I obtained was the use of data binders. In a nutshell, data binders are a way for students to take ownership of their learning. The fourth-grade teacher created a binder for each of her students so that they could record books read and various test scores. My undergraduates already utilize TK-20 to fulfill a certification requirement, but why not add something more relevant to their future classrooms? Each of my students could create their own data binder and I could confer with them throughout the semester based on their binder. I like to do assignments that they can easily turn around and utilize in their classroom. A report written by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (2011) illustrates the importance of linking college teaching to the elementary classroom by stating, "educator preparation programs must provide candidates the rich, guided clinical practice required to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to improve academic outcomes for all students" (p. 5). In a study conducted by Schalge (2018), connections created between the college classroom and elementary classrooms improve students' learning outcomes, thus concurring with AACTE's report.

Moreover, while reading back through my reflective journal, two more ideas came to mind. When a professor models effective coaching practices, a reading graduate student could shadow them. This would allow the graduate student to partake in "real-world" coaching observations. When a university professor mentors literacy leaders, those teachers develop as coaches and mentors. Another suggestion is to include other professors from different disciplines. This would provide, for example, an English professor, insight into how language arts is taught in the public school classroom. These ideas are worth sharing as others in my position can use them at their institutions.

REFERENCES

Aguilar, E. (2013). The art of coaching: *Effective strategies for school transformation*. Jossey-Bass.

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2011). *Preparing general teachers to improve outcomes for students with disabilities*.

Anderson, J. (2007). *Everyday editing: Inviting students to develop skill and craft in writer's workshop*. Stenhouse.

Bartholomew, S., & Sandholtz, J. (2009). Competing views of teaching in a school university partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(1), 155-165.

Beach, D., McAdams, L., Becker, M., Gentry, J., Larmer, B., & Miller, J. (2015). Public school-University partnerships: A model for effective professional development. In S. Garrett & K. Fleming (Eds.), *Education: Issues and Answers.* CEDER.

Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Sage.

Frerichs, S.W., Fenton, M.S., & Wingert, K. (2018). A model for out-of-school educator professional learning. *Adult Learning 29*(3). 115-122.

Gallucci, C., Lare, M., Yoon, I., Boatright, B. (2010). Instructional coaching: Building theory about the role and organization support for professional learning. *American Educational Research Journal 47*(4), 919 963.

International Literacy Association (2017). *Standards for the preparation of literacy professionals*. ILA

Knapp, M.S. (2003). Professional development as a policy pathway. In R.E. Floden (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (pgs. 109 158). American Educational Research Association.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership to improving instruction*. Sage.

Marsh, J., McCombs, J., & Martorell, F. (2011). Policy implementation and effects Florida middle schools: How instructional coaches support data-driven decision making. *Educational Policy, 24*, 872-907.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Parker, M., Templin, T., & Setiawan, C. (2012). What has been learned from school university partnerships. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *83*(9), 32-36.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research methods & evaluation research* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Schensul, J. J. (2012). Methodology, methods, and tools in qualitative research. In S. D Lapan, M. T. Quartroli, & E. J. Riemer, (Eds), (2012). *Qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.

Schalge, S. (2018). Service-Learning makes it real. *Annals of Anthropological Practice, 42*(1). 6-18.

Smith, E., Kindall, H.D., Carter, V., & Beachner, M. (2016). Impact of adopt-a-classroom

Partnerships between K-12 and university faculty. *School Community Journal, 26*(1), 163-181.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Teras, H. & Kartoglu, U. (2017). A grounded theory of professional learning in an authentic online professional development. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 18*(7), 192-212.

Toll, C.A. (2014). *The literacy coach's survival guide: Essential questions and practical answers.* International Reading Association.

Webster-Wright, A. (2010). *Authentic professional learning: Making a difference through learning at work.* Springer.

Wertz, F. J. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 157-177.

Yin, R. K. (2011). Aguilar, E. (2013). *The art of coaching: Effective strategies for school transformation.* Jossey-Bass.

About the Author

Tara Wilson, EdD. is an assistant professor of literacy and the literacy program coordinator at The University of Texas-Permian Basin (UTPB). She has been at UTPB since August of 2017. She teaches both pre-service teachers and graduate students. Prior to her time at UTPB, she served as a literacy coach at San Jacinto Elementary in Conroe ISD, early childhood adjunct for Sam Houston State University, and a Kindergarten teacher at Eiland Elementary in Klein ISD. In her "free" time she enjoys spending time with her husband and their 2 fur babies and, of course, reading! Her email address is wilson_t@utpb.edu.