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The Sustainability of a Coaching Model for Beginning Principals

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THE SUSTAINABILITY OF A COACHING MODEL FOR BEGINNING
PRINCIPALS

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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The journey is complete. There are many reasons I was able to make it to the end. The most important of these is my God who gave me the strength I needed to endure and persevere. God also blessed me with people in my life who encouraged me when I needed it, kept the faith when I couldn't, believed in me when I didn't, and always seemed to know what I needed to hear.

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Dedication

In honor of my parents, Charlotte and David Loving, who love me, believe in me, and inspire me. Their confidence leads me to attempt what I imagine impossible. Believe it and achieve it! Thank you Mom and Dad, I love you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Abstract

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By Virginia F. Loving

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011

Director: R. Martin Reardon, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Education

This phenomenological study sought to determine what coaching-induced practices are acquired during novice principals first year as principal, and the sustainability of coaching-induced practices once the coach has been removed. This study identified skills learned while novice principals participated in a coaching program, and the extent to which these practices continued into the second, third, and fourth year of their principalship (as appropriate) once the coaching had concluded.

Face-to-face interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed to provide insight into common themes from the participants. Direct quotations about the experience were then placed in a narrative to describe the phenomenon of the coaching experience as seen through the eyes of the participants.

After a careful review of the information, the findings reveal, that indeed, components of the coaching experience are sustainable once the coach has been removed. The common elements were data collection and analysis, confidence, feedback, finding a focus, and self-reflection.

Chapter 1

Introduction

For years the business world has employed a coaching model for the induction

and support of the newly hired in order to maintain the high standards found in the best of

corporate America. Lee (2008) contended that coaching combines the life-long lessons

of the coach with a belief in the client's potential for intentional growth. The

combination of these elements constitutes a helping practice to assure the possibility of

success in professional endeavors. This business coaching model has found its way into

the world of education only recently. The educational community has begun to embrace

this idea of a coaching model for the induction and support of beginning principals.

Bloom, Castagna, and Warren (2003), forerunners in expanding the educational coaching

model, believe a coach or mentor may be a key element in more fully preparing

candidates for the principalship. Their findings indicated traditional pre-service

programs have not fully prepared individuals for this responsibility.

The terms coaching and mentoring have been used interchangeably in literature

and practice. There are differences that deserve to be noted in the context of their use and

in this study. Mentoring of beginning principals is not a new concept. Many novice

principals are assigned a mentor when entering the profession. This mentor is generally

someone who has gained respect through exemplary work or, more often, endurance.

According to Shulman (2008) mentoring is an instructional process usually provided by a

colleague in the same district. Shulman suggested that the in-district nature of the usual

mentoring process may prohibit the sharing of confidences. Bloom, Castagna, and Warren (2003) recognized this as only one of the severe limitations of the practice.

Coaching, in contrast, is a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individuals and more accomplished peers (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003). According to Bloom et al. (2003) coaching is not training. Training suggests a fixed curriculum with closely defined topics that must be covered during the time of the "training." Coaching addresses the needs of the individual. Topics are discussed as they arise within the context of the school day and the principal's interactions with students, staff, parents, and all other stakeholders. Bloom et al. also asserted that coaching should not be confused with therapy. Therapists seek to discover or unlock hidden events from the past which may influence an individual. Therapy addresses psychological function, whereas coaches seek for ways to allow the individual to engage in self-discovery and focus upon goal attainment.

Overview of the Literature

Principal preparation, or the lack thereof, has been discussed at length by many experts in the field. Levine's (2005) scathing critique prompted universities to revisit principal preparation programs and consider making changes for improvement. Extended hours in the internship and the assignment of mentors or coaches were suggestions and implementations that resulted from Levine's report. Many universities have increased internship hours, generally in accordance with revised state regulations, and some state departments of education require the assignment of a mentor to all first year principals (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Bloom et al. (2003) suggested that novice principals should

have both a mentor as a source of advice and information regarding district matters, and a coach as a source of confidential and expert support around the demanding and frequently personal issues faced from day one of the job.

In contrast to the abundant literature available on mentoring, Bloom et al. (2003) have pointed to the very limited amount of literature on the coaching of school leaders. A primary source of information regarding coaching is the New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California Santa Cruz (McNulty, 2007; New Teacher Center, 2009). In collaboration with the Association of California School Administrators, NTC Santa Cruz has developed Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS). CLASS educates individuals to serve as coaches using a blended coaching strategy whereby both cognitive and transformational coaching are utilized. CLASS is a two year design, utilizing the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for guidance. Preliminary findings suggest that the coaching of school leadership is a worthwhile investment (Bloom, Castagna, Moir and Warren, 2005; Bloom, Danilovich, and Fogel, 2005; Bloom et al. 2003; Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2001; Shulman, 2008; Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, and Tripps, 2009; Villani, 2006).

Poglinco et al. (2003) have suggested that identifiable characteristics of coaches influence the outcomes and effectiveness of leadership coaching collaborations. These include strong human relations and communication skills in situations where authority is collegial, rather than managerial. Poglinco et al. further suggested that clear definitions and expectations need to be in place to assure the success of the coaching initiative.

Since coaches have been in place for beginning *teachers* for some time, there is research-based evidence that points to the success of this generic model. For example, Schwille (2008) and Coronado (2009) pointed to coaching as one means of attracting and keeping beginning teachers in the classroom. However, additional research is needed with regard to *principals* and the effectiveness of a coaching model. Even more important, is the question of what practices are learned or changes are made during the coaching year. Equally important is the question of whether these practices and changes are sustainable once the coaching has been removed.

As Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) asserted, "evidence suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning. Principals' abilities are central to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students" (p. 4). In the era of the federal law, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002), it is critical that principals are fully prepared and provided the necessary support in order to enhance the likelihood of student achievement in the schools they lead.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated what coaching-induced practices were acquired during novice principals first year as principals and the sustainability of coaching-induced practices once the coach had been removed. This study identified skills learned while novice principals participated in a coaching program, and the extent to which these practices continued into the second, third, and fourth years of their principalships (as appropriate) once the coaching had concluded.

Being one of the few studies investigating principal coaching and the sustainability of the coaching model, this study provides meaningful insight into this type of principal preparation and support. The identification of sustained coaching practices has implications that reach beyond the scope of the field of education.

Research Questions

Questions to be explored included: (1) To what extent do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the use of a coaching model contributed to the development of the principal's practice? (2) In what ways do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the coaching program impacted the principal's first year? and (3) In what ways have the principal's practices remained the same or changed during the year when coaching was removed and/or in subsequent years following the coaching?

Design and Methodology

In a study such as this, it is imperative to have input from "expert witnesses," the principals who have experienced a coach in their induction. These principals bring the most meaningful insight to the question of the value of coaching practices. In order to facilitate this discovery, a phenomenological qualitative design method was employed. Principals who were provided the support of a coach by their school district during their induction year in a principalship were identified by their districts and invited to participate in this study by the researcher. Interviews were held with these volunteers who were one, two, or three years removed from the coaching experience. The purpose of these interviews determined changes that occurred during the coaching program, and whether these changes remained in effect once the coaching support concluded.

Anticipated problems with this study included a potentially low number of respondents. The number of individuals who have been provided a coach is limited, and individuals may be reluctant to discuss their experience out of concern that their practice may be more closely scrutinized by their districts. Coaching is a new approach in the field of educational leadership. Coaching programs have been created and implemented. Currently two recognized programs exist in the sample population provided by local universities, as well as one program provided by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) to assure the mastery of the Virginia Standards of Learning. Five districts were invited to approve participation in this study. Each district was involved in a grant-funded program coaching model supported through two large universities in central Virginia or provided support by the state DOE. Hence, the sample size is at the will of the districts. Contact was made with the central office staff in each district, and the state DOE, seeking their approval to contact eligible participants for this study. Requests for participation were referred through each district to invite voluntary participation in this study by eligible principals via an informational flyer.

Definition of Terms

In this study, the terms coach and mentor, which have been used interchangeably in the past, are clearly delineated. As can be seen in Table 1, there are differences in the definition and application of each, and these differences are notable. The term *coaching* refers to a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individuals and more accomplished peers (Poglinco et al., 2003). The coach is the individual who is identified as the more accomplished peer in the pairing. In contrast,

mentoring is more of an instructional model (Shulman, 2008) where the mentor is an individual found in the same school district, often the same school, as the beginning principal. Mentoring is generally, "a lead by example" experience. The mentor serves as a source of advice and information regarding district matters (Bloom et al., 2003) with no promise of confidentiality. The term *leadership expertise* is the knowledge that guides an individual's practice as a building leader (Goldring, Huff, Spillane, & Barnes, 2009), and will be provided by the coach to the beginning principal. *Induction* is a process that provides orientation to new principals in a school or school district, while seeking to enhance their knowledge, skills and dispositions as they become educational leaders (Villani, 2006).

In the literature, the terms *novice* and *first-year principals* are used interchangeably identifying principals in the first year of their practice who may be receiving the support of a coach. *Early career principals* include principals who have completed their initial year in the position, are in the second, third, or fourth year of a principalship, and are no longer receiving the support of a coach.

Several localities were included in this study, including urban, suburban and rural. According to the United States Census Bureau Concepts and Definitions (U. S. Department of Education, 2010), *urban* school districts are areas with 70% or greater central city populations; *suburban* school districts are areas with 50% to 70% urban populations and 30% to 50% rural populations; and *rural* school districts are areas with 30% or less urban populations and are identified as "in a place" (town) or "not in a place" (country).

Table 1
Comparison of Terms

Mentoring	Coaching
Instructional model characterized by "lead by example" thinking	Inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration
Respect through exemplary work and/or endurance	Helping practice
From within same district	Generally from outside district
Source of advice and information regarding district matters	Confidant and expert support
Authority is managerial	Authority is collegial
Provides advice	Leads to finding own solutions
Short-term solutions	Long-term goal attainment
Not new in education	New method of induction
Usually over one year or as needed	Usually a one year experience
Manager	Instructional Leader

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This review of literature provides the necessary context in which to place the conduct and findings of this study. Each section of this review of literature provides an introduction, a chronology of the review of literature, findings of the review of literature, and a summary. In order to provide thorough background information and a context in which to place this study, four areas of interest were reviewed. They include: (a) Changes in Principal Preparation, (b) Mentoring, (c) Coaching: The Business Model, and (d) Coaching: The Educational Model. Initially, the literature addressing the areas where principal preparation programs have undergone change since Levine's (2005) findings was reviewed. Additionally, a review was conducted into the differences noted in the literature between mentoring and coaching in both the business and the educational setting. Lastly, in order to realize the value of coaching beginning principals, an understanding of the concept of a coach and the potential benefits of employing this practice early in a principal's career was reviewed.

There are few studies that attempt to assess the value of mentoring or coaching in an objective or a subjective way. Although, little research has been done on the topic of the coaching of school principals (Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, & Tripps, 2009), some valuable writing that frames thinking on the issue has been completed and documented.

Strong opinions by eminent experts on the subject support the value of coaching. The writings of these individuals provided insight into coaching and the importance of providing coaches for newly hired employees, be it Chief Executive Officers or first-year principals.

The research does not present a clear definition or model for the term coach or coaching as it has as many definitions as practitioners (Axmith, 2004; Peterson & Little, 2005). In an effort to limit confusion, the term coach or coaching in this study was identified as a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individuals and more accomplished peers (Poglinco et al., 2003). The coach is the individual who is identified as the more accomplished peer in the pairing.

Literature Review Methodology

This literature review utilized Virginia Commonwealth University electronic databases. ERIC EBSCO, Business Source Complete, Education Research Complete, and Dissertation and Theses Full Text provided access to information regarding the topic. Other search engines employed to assist in the research included YAHOO, bing, Google Scholar and ASK.com.

Several keywords, alone and/or in ordered sets, were researched. These included but were not limited to: beginning principal induction and support, coaches, mentors, professional coach, new principal, principal preparation, life coach, and first year principal. Once articles were retrieved, reference lists from the research articles were reviewed and additional articles chosen based on relevance to the topic. In excess of 600 articles were reviewed. Criteria for inclusion of these articles in the reference list were

based on the American Educational Research Association (2006) standards. The vetting of the articles used included: a research problem closely associated with the topic of study, peer-reviewed articles or journals, empirical quantitative research, qualitative research, and the timeliness of the research.

Notably, the field is saturated with coaching programs "for sale." Caution was exercised to differentiate between those providing scholarly information and others promoting sales.

Changes in Principal Preparation

Principal preparation has been a concern for years. The outcry to improve the programs has been debated in varying venues (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Hale & Moorman, 2003; McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, & Terry, 2010). Universities, states, and local districts have created and implemented changes in their program designs in the hopes of producing the very best of the best to lead schools.

Chronology of the review of literature

A review of literature regarding principal preparation programs highlighted the need for changes in criteria for leading schools (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Edmonds, Waddle, Murphy, Ozturgut, & Caruthers, 2007; Fleck, 2008; Goldring, Huff, Spillane & Barnes, 2009; Hoyle, 2007). In the span of a decade, the importance of practical experience has surfaced, and the importance of a coach has been identified (Edmonds, Waddle, Murphy, Ozturgut, & Caruthers, 2007; Fleck, 2008; Goldring, Huff, Spillane & Barnes, 2009).

In the review of literature, shortcomings of preparation programs were reviewed. The varying and changing demands placed on the 21st century principal are cited. Needed changes, based on standards, are listed. Comparisons between several institutions are drawn. Practicing and aspiring principals delineated what they believed to be the better points of their preparation programs as well as things they would change. The need for changes in university preparation programs are discussed, and a missing link between expertise and practice hypothesized. Literature regarding changes in principal preparation was reviewed and several themes were identified from the writings.

Too much theory. Experts pointed to the large amounts of classroom time being spent in theory with little relevancy to practice. Reacting to Levine (2005), Edmonds, Waddle, Murphy, Ozturgut, and Caruthers (2007) of The Missouri Leadership Academy (MLA), researched what principals had to say about their preparation programs. Using a three question survey, data were collected from 200 aspiring or practicing principals attending a MLA conference. Participants were asked to work in focus groups and post their responses on chart paper to these questions: (a) What are the things you liked about the classes in your preparation program? (b) What are the things you disliked about the classes in your preparation program? and (c) If you could change one thing about your preparation program, what would it be?   A discussion was held in each focus group with reporting out to the entire group. Overall, the responses were similar for both aspiring and practicing principals. Knowledgeable and experienced instructors were the common finding for likes; too much theory and too little application for dislikes; and more hands on experience, mentoring, and collaboration were the things most needing change.

Fleck (2008), a middle school principal, used his article to reflect on his own journey through principal preparation and the principalship. Although theoretically prepared, Fleck did not feel ready in the practical sense when he became an assistant principal, but through relationships with a seasoned principal and superintendent he gained what he believed necessary for success as a building administrator. Some practical suggestions included: (a) It is all about relationships, (b) Reflection is critical for growth and success, (c) Network – develop relationships in and outside the district, (d) You will not be expected to know all the answers – ask for help, (e) Mistakes happen – learn from them, (f) Collaborate and communicate with everyone in the decision-making process, and (g) Leadership is about serving others.

Hoyle (2007) pointed to information which indicated leadership programs are improving but questioned why some are failing and others succeeding. Hoyle suggested some critics believed the programs are too theoretical, while others believed preparation has never been better, based on improved grade point averages, higher entrance exam scores, greater ethnic and gender diversity, and more emphasis on social justice. These differences in opinion may suggest that theory and reality continue to elude one another.

In order to address these differences, Hoyle (2007) completed a longitudinal mixed-methods study using interviews, observation, and data analysis of two district superintendents. This study covered a five year period following the two administrators from doctoral work into the superintendency. Hoyle completed his findings using the dismissal of one and the extended contract of the other as a means of identifying gaps in the leadership preparation programs of each. In his final analysis, Hoyle identified the

need for greater emphasis on the political domain and the interpersonal side of leadership, yet did not identify how to find and maintain the proper balance there.

Using a descriptive pilot study of 61 urban school principals, McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, and Terry (2010) examined principals' perceptions of their preparation programs and the impact on special education at the elementary school level. McHatton et al. highlighted overall improvements needed in principal preparation programs, notably the need to move from theory to practice in school leadership. The findings indicated only one third of the 61 participants felt they were well-prepared for the principalship by their university, and felt their school district had provided meaningful in-service development to assist them in fulfilling their job requirements. It should also be noted here that even though principals did not feel fully prepared, they overwhelmingly were not interested in additional training. McHatton et al. attributed this to (a) an already overwhelming workload, (b) the perception they could attain information from another source, (c) the perception of on the job training, and (d) a sense of high self-efficacy. McHatton et al. identified a limitation of their study in the limited sample, thereby limiting generalizability. They believed their findings would be enhanced through further interviews with the participants to investigate the noted discrepancies between preparation and self-efficacy.

Need for changes at the university level. A need was cited for change in the preparation programs at the university level as well as in the utilization of collaboration between university and school district. Additionally, extensive clinical activities are

needed to prepare new principals. Extended internship hours may provide opportunity for this to happen.

Cowie and Crawford (2007) based their research in the belief that pre-appointment preparation is an 'act of faith.' Their International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP) compared and contrasted several institutional programs of school leadership. Citing Levine (2005), they pointed to the fact that he challenged the educational world to question the preparation school leaders were receiving. To address this and the criticism that comes from Westernized influence, Cowie and Crawford created an international study involving seven countries. Using a mapping protocol, which included client group, content, pedagogy, structure, deliverers and delivery mode, each of the preparation institutions outlined their program. Data were collected by the teams and a comparative analysis completed. As was expected, a wide range of patterns emerged in most of the six categories. With the United State's Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), Scotland's Standard for Headship (SfH), and England's National Qualification for Headship (NQFH) now in place, they found more pressure was being placed on universities and school districts to provide better school leadership programs.

Cunningham and Sherman (2008) pointed to the pressure being felt at the university level to improve educational leadership programs with a particular emphasis on real world experiences and internships. Two major themes of criticism are that these programs lack contextual relevancy and focus on instructional achievement, and thereby, student achievement. One shortcoming they mentioned was the lack of continuity in the

practice. Cunningham and Sherman believe the disconnect between theory and practice can be filled through a successful internship provided by the university - school district partnership.

Fleck (2008) also asserted universities could provide better connections with theory and practice through longer internships, experience in several buildings with different age groups and practitioners, and provide a coach from within or outside the district. Universities working collaboratively with school districts would be able to more readily identify methods of preparation for beginning administrators based on the needs at the local level.

Goldring, Huff, Spillane, and Barnes (2009) detailed the importance of the school principal and the need for high-quality preparation in order to assure success. Their study focused on measuring the impact of preparation and development programs as outcome results are virtually nonexistent.   These authors asserted that despite the adoption of Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and research regarding school leadership roles, there continues to be very little information available regarding the skills needed by a successful school leader that contributes to school improvement.

A new kind of principal – the instructional leader. A new kind of leader is needed at the school level. Gone is the day of the manager replaced by the need for an instructional leader with student achievement a Number 1 priority. Cunningham and Sherman (2008) pointed out that traditional programs, in the past, have provided guidance in school management and maintaining a safe environment. Internships were

focused on scheduling, faculty meetings, discipline, extra-curricular activities, etc. These

areas certainly are part of a school leader's day but only indirectly impact instruction.

Their findings also indicated the emphasis of an internship must move from tasks of

management to tasks of instructional leadership, school improvement, and student

achievement. In order to achieve this, universities and school districts must collaborate

to design meaningful internship experiences which will enhance the preparation process

and thereby the effectiveness of the instructional leader. This can only be achieved with

intentional planning on the part of the university and the school districts.

Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) believe principals

wear many hats: visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts,

disciplinarians, community builders, public-relations experts, budget analysts, facility

managers, special program administrators, overseers of legal entanglements, conflict

resolvers and are sensitive to all student needs.

The Davis et al. (2005) study, funded by the Wallace Foundation, sought to

identify and replicate effective programs producing the most highly qualified school

leaders. Using case study analysis, eight pre- and in-service programs in five states

followed graduates into the schools they lead. The literature reviewed for the study

summarized the following points:

- Essential elements of good leadership which included support and
  development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective
  organizational processes.

- Effective program design based in research, with curricular coherence in authentic contexts, using cohorts and mentors to enable collaborative activities between the university and area schools.

- Multiple pathways to high quality leadership development. Programs vary between an emphasis on leadership and managements skills over academic proficiency versus the cultivation of teachers who demonstrate leadership and possess a thorough understanding of instruction.

- Policy reform and financial sustainability. Knowledge of program components and support systems are aligned in effective policy reform.

Based on Davis et al.'s (2005) research, the next steps included defining leadership skills and program elements. There is minimal empirical information available at this time to definitively address these two next steps. Although little is known about the outcomes of many preparation programs, this study did provide information regarding the use of mentoring, coaching, and authentic problem-based learning experiences as a basis for improvement

Reporting through The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), Hale and Moorman (2003) cited the need for change in principal preparation programs. These changes are needed for many reasons, but most importantly, because the old way no longer works in the schools of the 21st century. Furthermore, they voiced the need for a new kind of principal - a principal who is the instructional leader, the community leader and the visionary leader. Universities which graduate well-prepared candidates for school leadership are the exception not the rule. Hale and Moorman continued to identify

the needs of the well-prepared leader. These leaders come with extensive clinical activities, field-based mentored internships, as well as academic coursework which have provided them with the realities of running a school on a daily basis. Hale and Moorman placed the burden of preparing school leadership on the universities through innovation and collaboration with school districts and other educational institutions. Most importantly, according to Hale and Moorman, all preparation programs must develop practices which produce leaders who can provide instructional leadership.

   Providing a mentor or a coach. A mentor and/or coach are frequently pointed to as the greatest need of a new principal. Cunningham and Sherman (2008) identified the importance of supplying the new principal with a mentor who can provide socialization and acculturation into the district. In their view, the mentor should also provide general guidance to the mentee through feedback and support with opportunities for open dialogue and communication. It is their belief that effective mentoring could be the difference in the success or failure of a first-year principal. One shortcoming they mentioned was the lack of continuity in the practice. Traditionally, a mentor is in place for one year. When the year of mentoring ends, many mentees are left to work alone and often express the desire for the relationship to continue and build through the ensuing years.

   Fleck's (2008) suggestions to veteran leaders included: serve as a mentor to new leaders, invite them to informal gatherings, schedule luncheons with them, provide networking opportunities, offer to help, ask for their help, build their confidence, create a new principal induction program, create a quality mentoring program, set goals and meet

regularly to discuss them, provide opportunities for new principals to meet together regularly, require visits between new principals, create professional development opportunities, encourage attendance at regional meetings and create a suggested reading or viewing list of books and videos.

Summary

As can be seen in the literature, principal preparation programs have undergone change since the critical findings cataloged in the Levine (2005) report. Universities have identified the need for more practical application of the theories taught (Cunningham and Sherman, 2008). More hands-on experience, over a span of time, in varying locations, addressing a diverse population can be critical in the success of the beginning principal. But ultimately, the greatest need of a novice school leader is the wisdom that can only be found in someone who has been there and done it, successfully (Goldring, Huff, Spillane, and Barnes, 2009).

Mentoring

Mentoring has been a successful method of induction for teachers (Coronado, 2009; Schwille, 2008) for some time. Mentors for principals have also been in place for some time (Daresh, 2007; Villani, 2006), nationally and internationally.

Chronology of the review of literature

This review of literature identified benefits as well as obstacles to successful mentoring One of the major findings of the review of literature of mentoring pointed to the need for something additional in order to more assure the success of novice principals

(Hall, 2008). Literature regarding mentoring was reviewed and several themes were identified from the writings.

More effective use of mentoring. Mentoring has long been used as a successful method of induction for new teachers but not nearly as effectively with new principals. Literature reviewed indicated there needs to be a more effective use of mentors with beginning principals. Villani (2006) concludes her discussion of induction and mentoring by reminding readers that the goal of such programs is to support those who care about leading and want to lead by choosing a model that is best for the new principals in the district. Collaboration on the part of the organization providing the mentoring and the local school district will guide the process to assist in assuring expectations are clear and requirements detailed.

More experienced colleague with a long-term commitment. Research points to the need for a more experienced colleague, with a long-term commitment, to assist a beginning principal thereby assuring future success. Daresh (2007) has conducted research in the area of educational leadership and specifically addresses the practice of mentorship. Daresh described mentoring as assigning a seasoned professional the duty of advising and giving "tips" to the newly appointed principal in the hope of avoiding an unsuccessful career. Daresh identified many pros to the practice of mentoring including socializing the new principal into the district as well as teaching the mentee the "ins and outs" of managing a school building utilizing district and/or state requirements. Daresh pointed to challenges faced by new principals of today that were unheard of in the past.

These include juggling community concerns, societal issues, and most importantly, student achievement.

Daresh's (2007) research focused on combining the manager and instructional leader roles thereby creating today's effective principal. To accomplish this, Daresh recommended a long-term commitment in the mentoring relationship to assure success at three levels: initial career entry, stabilization and risk taking or risk avoidance. At the initial career entry the new principal is trying to survive and trying not to fail. Stabilization leads to more personal satisfaction and confidence to do the job. Risk taking involves experimentation or diversification of activity as the instructional leader whereas risk avoidance more involves the traditional image of a school principal as building manager. Daresh identified the third stage of risk, risk taking, as the most critical decision point of a principal's career. Using a qualitative method, Daresh interviewed 20 experienced, current or recently retired, principals from two large urban school districts who work with first year principals within the district. Findings from this study indicated the mentors, who had primarily been managers, had a difficult time integrating both the instructional leader and building manager roles with their mentees. At mid-year, the groups had divided almost evenly into the two groups Daresh has labeled risk-takers (leaders) and risk-avoiders (managers). In the final analysis, Daresh points to the importance of mentors being able to lead new principals into being risk-takers and guide them to think differently about their role as principal. These individuals are the ones who can effectively lead 21st century schools into areas of high student achievement.

Villani (2006) identified the five stages of induction each new principal must go through as: (a) survival – getting through, (b) control – setting priorities, positional power rather than personal power, (c) stability – things become more routine, established as a veteran, (d) educational leadership – move to focus on instruction and curriculum, and (e) professional actualization – personal confirmation, focus is on personal vision attainment. One method of achieving success through these five levels is with the effective use of a mentor. Villani's definition of mentoring is support received from a more experienced colleague who assists in assuring the success of a new principal. The relationship between mentor and mentee must be established and maintained for the period of a year and longer if possible.

Appropriate matching of mentor and mentee. A key to the success of a mentoring program is a plan must be in place for the appropriate matching of the mentor and the mentee. Villani (2006) points out several program components must be considered in the implementation of an induction mentoring program. To provide for a successful mentor/mentee relationship these components must be in place: an orientation and entry plan must be established, and incentives and selection of mentors is crucial. Most importantly, making appropriate matches between the mentor and mentee, training of the mentors, and identifying responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee as well as the school district contribute to the success of the program.

University and school district collaboration. There is a critical need for collaboration between mentoring organizations and the school district to assure there are clear expectations outlined and understood by all parties involved. Mentoring programs

can be found throughout the United States, according to Villani (2006). For example, Albuquerque, New Mexico established Extra Support for Principals (ESP) to help principals move into a positive leadership program. New administrators in Bridgeport, Connecticut receive support through the New Administrator Induction Program (NAIP). NAIP provides networking opportunities, professional development, mentoring, support for the evaluation plan, and trains and retains urban leaders. In Chicago, the Leadership Initiative for Transformation (LIFT) program supports new administrators as the instructional and administrative leader of the school. The Principal Induction Program (PIP) in Raleigh, North Carolina seeks to retain those hired as principals, provide professional development where needed, develop a support system, and familiarize the principal with the culture of the school.

In addition to these cities that have developed their induction program, Villani (2006) identified states that have seen the benefits as well. Arkansas, Indiana, Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee have mandated statewide programs for the induction and mentoring of new school leaders as a means of improving school leadership across the state. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) have set the goals of national mentoring certification and providing skills and attributes to assure student success, respectively.

More defined roles. Hall (2008) reviewed the history of mentors in the field of teacher education but was quick to point out the implementation of mentorship in school leadership has been erratic and inconsistent, leaving many beginning principals to fly

solo. According to Hall, the systems in place are often left to the discretion of the district, thereby creating disparities from one area to another.

In 2002, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) created the Principals Advisory Leadership Services Corps (PALS), designed to address the needs of a beginning principal. The National Principals Mentoring Certification Program was developed from this group as a means of identifying standards for leaders of schools. This certification requires a nine-month mentoring internship, which includes monthly chats, frequent professional reading and continuous self-reflection. There are definitions provided for mentoring and the expectations required to achieve "master artisan" in the field.

Over the last decade, mentoring has become a topic for discussion in many areas. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) developed a process of mentoring. The Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association created the First-Time Campus Administrators Academy. The California School Leadership Academy provides support for novice principals, and the Albuquerque Public Schools' Extra Support for Principals has had excellent results. These programs and results are encouraging, but the fact is these programs are not universal.

Hall (2008) also points to some obstacles for a successful mentoring program: (a) Lack of common language – there is no clear definition of what a mentor is or should be, (b) Unclear roles and responsibilities – expectations are unclear in many instances and a poor mentor may be very harmful, (c) Time constraints – there is not enough time in the day for the mentor and the mentee to have meaningful dialogue and grow as

professionals, (d) Mentor/Mentee mismatching – lack of compatibility stymies the

process and attention must be given to properly matching mentor and mentee, and

(e) Absence of clear goals – many programs allow for accidental learning but do not set

benchmarks throughout resulting in a lack of true accomplishment.

Hall (2008) points to self-reflection as the key to a successful mentorship. Based

on his research, school leaders do not take time to self-reflect on a regular basis. An

effective mentor will provide opportunities for the novice principal to reflect, building his

or her practice for future use.

Summary

An effective mentoring partnership has the potential to engender greatness.

According to Schwille (2008) and Coronado (2009), mentoring has been very effective in

teacher preparation with documented success. Unfortunately, as Daresh (2007) and Hall

(2008) demonstrated, this cannot be said of the mentoring of new principals. Models, as

well as examples of successful mentoring programs exist, and they serve as a valuable

resource but, as Hall asserted, even in programs that exist, there is inconsistency in the

implementation. Hall found that districts do not provide the time or the resources that

allow veteran principals to effectively mentor new principals. Effective components of

the mentoring model could provide additional substance when combined with strategies

outlined in the coaching model. These should include: a more effective use of the

mentor (Villani, 2006), a long term commitment on the part of the mentor and the mentee

(Daresh, 2007), appropriate matching of mentor and mentee (Villani), and clearly defined

roles (Hall, 2008). As this review of literature has demonstrated, new principals would

certainly benefit from a mentor, but more is needed to assure a successful transition from classroom to instructional leadership at the principal level.

Coaching: The Business Model

Corporate America has long realized the importance of investing time and money in potential leadership. Nixon-Witt (2008) identified that as early as 1998 career coaches were being placed with CEOs of corporations seeking to advance their status through improved leadership. The International Coach Federation (ICF) reported that in 2006 there were an estimated 30,000 coaches worldwide and this number was growing exponentially as their popularity increased.

Chronology of the review of literature

Literature regarding the business coaching model was reviewed and several themes were identified from the writings. It should be noted that much of the literature reviewed in the area of corporate coaching served as a marketing strategy and was viewed in that light when considered for submission in this research.

Defining coaching: the business model. Underwood (2005) provided a clear description of business coaching by asking and answering these questions:

- *Who are these people?* Coaches commonly hold a sociology or psychology degree, but Underwood finds the most important credential needed is the ability to gain trust.

- *Who needs a coach?* Individuals who seek the support of a coach are generally making some significant change in their life or have discovered something is holding them back in their career and seek to change it.

- *What does coaching cost?* An effective coach will cost upwards of $10,000 per person over a given time. Although, some coaches may charge as little as $50 for an hour, it is wise to remember, "You get what you pay for."

- *What should you expect?* Individuals being coached should expect to be the one doing the hard work. The coach is there to guide. It is not a substitute for therapy or counseling. It is not a business strategy. An effective coach knows the right questions to ask with the expectation of the coachee finding the right answer.

- *Does coaching work?* If you ask the coaches, the answer is a resounding "YES!" If asking the individuals being coached the answers vary with each person. For many it is a very successful endeavor. For others it is a frustration resulting in less than favorable outcomes.

Interested in success of corporation and the executive. According to Underwood (2005), there are two kinds of coaches, executive coaches and life/career coaches. Executive coaches are interested in the success of the executive but are also grounded in what is best for the company. These coaches gain entrance through an agency brought in to a company to provide support and guidance. Life coaches are more focused on the happiness of the individual and are usually found by the individual requesting the support.

Outside support with buy-in and collaboration. Ahearn (2003) completed a case study using 30 practitioners or aspiring practitioners in a large human resource management company. The purpose of Ahearn's study was to introduce the importance

of competencies in the field of coaching. The term coach was differentiated from mentor as being support provided by an expert outside the confines of the hiring corporation as opposed to support provided by an individual from within the corporation. The findings of the study indicated there must be buy-in from all parties involved in the process.

Seeking change in career or transition to leadership. Axmith (2004), a coach consultant, investigated the importance of a coach for personal growth and change in senior business leaders. Although, Axmith was interested in providing coaching for a fee, her investigation did provide (a) key attributes in the practice of coaching, (b) practical uses of coaching, and (c) conditions for successful coaching. Axmith believes key attributes include the purpose of enhancing the executive's contribution to the organization and the importance of the executive, not the coach, owning the decisions and actions that arise from the coaching experience. She went on to say, practical uses of executive coaching most commonly found in corporations includes making successful transitions into leadership, developing new skills, assistance in fast-tracking employees into leadership positions, and providing a confidant to executives who serves as a sounding board or devil's advocate. Axmith considered successful coaching as effective only if the executive was receptive to a new way of looking at problems and solutions. In this sense, the coach would provide an "ego check" as needed, and assure the executive's role and conduct was consistent with personal values and beliefs. Axmith asserted that it was, most important, that the coach's credentials were realized and valued by the executive to be coached.

Validation and standardization needed. Although much is said as to the importance of coaching, there is very little validation or standardization of the practice. Peterson and Little (2005) reviewed a study from McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert, and Larkin (2005), which addressed the development and validation of a coaching measurement instrument. Although, the findings of McLean et al.'s study did not provide the validation it purported to, it did provide some insight into the practice of coaching both professionally and managerially. One of the major differences Peterson and Little point out is the difference in the structuring of the professional and managerial coaching models. The professional model allows for limited interaction with the individual with a focus on coaching whereas the manager model is more likely to have opportunity for frequent interaction and observation of the individual on the job. The professional model provided an external support from outside the corporation, whereas the managerial model provided internal support from within the corporation.

In their study, Griffiths and Campbell (2008) supported the need for standardization and the development of a framework for the accreditation of professional business coaches. Identifying the International Coach Federation (ICF) as a forerunner in the establishment of standards for executive coaches, Griffiths and Campbell utilized the ICF's coaching competencies as a basis for their research. As can be seen in Table 2, The ICF has outlined eleven core coaching behaviors clustered into four specific coaching competencies along with findings from Griffiths and Campbell.

Table 2
ICF Coaching Competencies, Behaviors, and Findings

Competency	Coaching Behavior	Findings
Setting the Foundation	Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards Establishing the coaching agreement	Minimally represented
Co-Creating the Relationship	Establishing trust and intimacy with the client Coaching presence	Largely validated Major category with trust, safety and equality identified as important
Communicating Effectively	Active listening Powerful questioning Direct communication	Significantly validated Active listening major need by coach and client
Facilitating Learning and Results	Creating awareness Designing actions Planning and goal setting Managing progress and accountability	Highly validated Culmination of other competencies

Griffiths and Campbell (2008) employed a qualitative, grounded theory approach which investigated the learning processes in personal coaching. Due to what they viewed as the lack of empirical evidence in this field of study, Griffiths and Campbell sought to create theory to support coaching standards or competencies. Five coaches and nine coaching clients provided more than thirty hours of interview material. Their findings provided information under each of the four specific coaching behaviors as outlined by

the ICF. As can be seen in Table 2, Competency 1 - Setting the Foundation, was found to

be minimally represented in the findings. Competency 2 - Co-Creating the Relationship,

was largely validated in the findings. Relationship emerged as a major category in the

study with trust, safety and equality being identified as important elements to the success

of coaching. Competency 3 - Communicating Effectively, was significantly validated

with active listening emerging as a major coaching need by coach and client, and

Competency 4 - Facilitating Learning and Results, emerged as a culmination of the other

competencies and were highly validated in the study. Significant findings provided

support for the ICF's standardization of a framework for coaching. Limitations of the

study included the use of only ICF coaches and only interview data was used without the

support of observations of the coaching sessions. The conclusion drawn was for the need

of collaboration between coach and client.

      Qualities of executive coaches identified. Lee (2008), a Distinguished

Psychologist in Management award-winner for 2008, focused his work on executive

coaching with HR directors, psychologists, social workers, OD facilitators, management

consultants, clergy and business executives. He delineated his beliefs on coaching under

five headings. Lee conceptualized coaching as consisting of:

- *Seeing* as an ability not to see only what is obvious but seeing beyond to what

  is possible, and helping the coachee see it as well.

- *Listening* involves being quiet, and most people are uncomfortable with

  silence, but it is needed if one is to really hear.

- *Being Yourself,* this allows authenticity in the coaching. It provides opportunity for growth by the coach and the coachee.

- *Taking Action* is providing an opportunity for positive outcomes to emerge based on work performance. An effective coach will employ flexibility in support and confrontation, goal shaping, and using resistance.

- *Believing in Coaching* and in you as a coach as the key to success. A large part of this is knowing when to keep pushing ahead or realizing it is time to fall back and allow the mentee to succeed or fail as a growth experience.

Nixon-Witt (2008) provided a detailed look into coaching for both life and business. For Nixon-Witt, qualities needed by a professional coach included being a good listener, observer, and supporter. An effective coach will produce results in the improvement of his/her client's thinking and decision-making, interpersonal effectiveness and confidence. Nixon-Witt pointed to the differences between coaching and consulting. Coaches are seeking long-term goal attainment while consultants provide short-term solutions. Coaches encourage clients to find their own solutions while consultants provide advice. Additionally, she outlined the differences between coaching and therapy. Coaching focuses on today and tomorrow while therapy focuses on yesterday to explore current behavior. Lastly, Nixon-Witt delineated between a good friend and a coach. Both are vital to a person's success and happiness, but a coach is there to be objective with an emotional distance from the client.

Summary

In summary, each of the business coaching models reviewed above provided guidelines for implementing the practice of executive coaching in corporate America. The knowledge that an early-career executive needs support is affirmed and this may be achieved through the use of an executive coach. If coaching is to be effective, there must be willingness on the part of the individual being coached (Ahearn, 2003; Axmith, 2003). A key ingredient in this success is the ability of the coach to establish rapport with the client that is based in trust. An identified shortcoming in the coaching profession is the lack of standards or competencies for coaches (Griffiths & Campbell, 2008; Peterson & Little, 2005). The ICF addressed the importance of this, and has begun the process to assure standards are in place for professional executive coaches. The practice of providing a coach for individuals new to a position is a good one and worthy of investigation for other professions, including education.

In the light of the above, the most relevant factors emerging from the business literature appear to be the definition of what coaching should be (Underwood, 2005), determining where the coach's loyalty lies, be it the corporation or the beginning executive (Underwood), the need for validation and standardization (Griffiths & Campbell, 2008; Peterson & Little, 2005) and the need for identification of a coach's qualities (Lee, 2008).

The majority of information available regarding coaching addressed the environment of corporate America. Unfortunately, much of the writing on the subject is in the context of coaching service marketing which causes one to question the objectivity

of the information. In choosing research for this study, this potential bias was taken into consideration and much of that information has been omitted.

Coaching: The Educational Model

Due to the growing success of coaching in corporate America (Ahearn, 2003; Axmith, 2004; Nixon-Witt, 2008), the world of academia has begun to investigate the potential benefits to be reaped by borrowing this concept and applying it to principal induction. Empirical evidence on this topic from the field of education is minimal.

Chronology of the review of literature

Much of the literature has arisen from universities that have created and implemented a coaching model as a part of their leadership induction programs. Another source of the research comes from conference papers or articles with no peer review providing little or no evidence to support conclusions. The literature reviewed here comes from cited experts in the field who provide insight into the value of the coaching model and in most instances methods for implementing the program they outline. Literature regarding the educational coaching model was reviewed and several themes were identified from the writings.

Defining coaching: the educational model. Bloom, Castagna, Moir, and Warren (2005) identified seven key elements in the blended coaching model. They declared that (a) the relationship must be based upon trust and permission, (b) the coach brings a fresh perspective that may lead to new ways of thinking and acting or reacting, (c) the coach must be trained and able to employ a variety of skills appropriate to different situations, (d) the coach is there for the coachee and committed to the coachee's

success, (e) the coach is there to provide emotional support, encouragement, motivation and focus, (f) the coach maintains commitment to the district's goal and is there to push the coachee to attain those goals, and (g) the coach is ethical in all situations.

Bloom et al. (2005) went on to describe what coaching is not. It is neither training nor mentoring. A coach is typically an outsider, in contrast to a mentor, who is typically an organizational insider. Ideally, a new principal would have the benefits of both a coach and a mentor to provide objective insights from outside and inside the district. Coaching is not supervision. Supervisors give direction, hire and fire, report progress to school boards, and give or withhold resources. Coaches do none of those things. Coaching is also not therapy. Therapy focuses on psychological function; coaches focus on the accomplishment of professional goals.

Qualities of educational coaches identified. According to Bloom et al. (2005), effective coaches are equipped with certain skills which include relationship building, listening, observing, questioning, and giving feedback. In order for the coaching relationship to be effective there must be an element of trust between the coach and the coachee. Coaches must exhibit sincerity, reliability, and competence. Coaches must learn to listen and differentiate between assertions and assessments by listening for situations where there is confusion on the part of the coachee between the two. Coaches must also be aware of nonverbal communication. Mehrabian (1972) reports 93% of most exchanges are nonverbal and only 7% of communication comes through the exchange of words. Based on this finding, Bloom et al. believe it would be beneficial for coaches to observe and interpret nonverbal cues as this may be more important than what is said.

Furthermore, Bloom et al. (2005) went on to say, questioning served to inform the coach and influence the coachee. The coach used questions to gather information and data to assist in the assessment of the coaching. They believe questioning provided a method of clarifying thoughts, developing interpretations and creating possibilities for the coachee. Useful feedback is an integral part of blended coaching.

One of the most important habits a new principal can cultivate is reflection, according to Bloom et al. (2005). One of the goals of coaching is to develop a cycle of reflection. Feedback promotes reflection. Coaches provide feedback in a nonthreatening, nonevaluative way. It is confidential and is in no way tied to job performance or job security. This type of feedback is done to improve practice not drive the year-end evaluation.

Shulman (2008) began his "ruminations" with a recounting of the familiar scenario: team is down, hero is on the bench pleading "send me in, Coach" which of course Coach does, hero scores, team wins, hero walks into the sunset with the girl. Shulman asserted that this touching scene could be transferred into the educational realm and provide us with a more clear understanding of coaching. The coach has set high standards and the hero is persistent. Using technique, strategy, motivation, vision, and identity, the coach has supported the hero's learning and development, thereby creating a success. The coach provides the needed technique, the technical skills for success through repetition and persistence. Strategies are provided during conversations or observations of the practice. High levels of motivation are instilled in the coachee. This

all comes together to provide a vision of what can be in successful implementation, thereby creating a new identity.

Shulman (2008) defined unmediated coaching as a performance that belongs entirely to the coachee and is observed by the coach. The alternative is mediated coaching. This performance is not directly observed by the coach but the product can be used as a measure of the success of the coaching. Coaching is instructional, therefore, educational; formative in nature and evaluation.

Trained coach is essential. The coaching of principals is a new way of thinking, a move from the traditional mentorship with which many are familiar. The training of the coach is essential to the success of this transition from mentor to coach. Bloom, Castagna, and Warren (2003) served as developers of the program Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) at the University of California Santa Cruz. The impetus for the creation of CLASS was the attention being focused on the principal and principal preparation programs. CLASS seeks out and trains individuals to serve as coaches for new and experienced principals. Bloom et al. pointed to limitations of mentoring, including inconsistency, unavailability on the part of the mentor, and a lack of the necessary skill set to be effective. Bloom et al. described coaching as the obvious choice for improving principal preparation. They described mentors as "organizational insiders in job-alike positions and coaches as outsiders who have leadership coaching as their primary work" (p. 2). Both mentor and coach are seen as invaluable to a novice. The mentor serves as a source of information and advice regarding the district, and the coach serves as confidant and expert support. CLASS is based upon a blended coaching

strategy whereby both cognitive coaching, the ability to shape or reshape thinking and problem solving skills (Center for Cognitive Coaching, 2010), and transformational coaching, the ability to transform or stretch visions and values (Brock, 2010), are needed. The coach must be able to determine whether an instructional approach or a facilitative approach is necessary for the situation and be able to move easily from one to the other.

As indicated above, Bloom, Danilovich, and Fogel (2005) identified Blended Coaching Strategies as facilitative or instructional coaching, collaborative or consultative, and transformational. Facilitative coaching uses a coachee's existing skills, knowledge, interpretations, and beliefs. Instructional coaching is more of a teaching method through the use of modeling, providing resources, and direct instruction. Collaborative coaching involves the coach and coachee working side by side to complete a task. This method works well when the situation calls for shared work that will provide a learning experience for the coachee. Consultative coaching relies on the expertise brought to the table by the coach. In consultative coaching, the coach provides perspective, knowledge, and advice but the coachee makes the decisions. A caution with consultative coaching is to avoid building dependency on the coach. Transformation coaching is the most difficult method of coaching. This method of coaching moves the coachee from improved performance to new ways of thinking and ultimately changing their ways of being; i.e. personal transformation.

Bloom et al. (2005) and Villani (2006) identified the need for improving the methods used to train and support new school administrators. Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) provides a one to one coach for new administrators

completing their preparation program at the University of California Santa Cruz (Bloom et al., 2003; Bloom et al., 2005). The program is based on a two year relationship built upon trust between the coach and the coachee which addresses the weaknesses and concerns of the new administrator. Using the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Standards (ISLLC), a pre-assessment tool was designed which provides baseline data in order to formulate individualized goals for the coaching experience. Activities and artifacts are collected during the coaching to document mastery of the standards.

Silver, Lochmiller, Copland and Tripps (2009) reviewed a university program for the coaching of first-year principals which connects pre-certification preparation experience with post-certification support. Using qualitative data sources in a comparative case study design, the focus of this study was to determine if the program enhanced support of new administrators, influenced and shaped coaching practice, and altered the traditional internship experience. A thorough literature review was completed by Silver et al., confirming the findings of this researcher in the regard to a lack of empirical studies which address the effectiveness of a coaching program. Although the empirical literature was minimal, Silver et al. did confirm that administrators with a coaching experience are more likely to positively impact student achievement.

Silver et al.'s (2009) investigation, focused on a university program, was designed to assist beginning administrators as they transitioned from the classroom to the principal's office. Support was provided in assisting the new principal master the managerial and emotional demands of the job and supplying a leadership coach. The sponsoring university provided a coach for three years to beginning principals who had

completed their preparation programs as well as ongoing training for the coaches. The program coordinators identified six assumptions where new administrators, coaches, and the universities training them needed support. They include: (a) effective school leadership is necessary for school improvement, (b) support that mirrors the realities of the job, (c) a coach who is neither supervisor nor judge, but advocate, (d) the coaches require continual training and support, (e) the coaches need coaching, and (f) a new perspective from the universities as they prepare and support their graduates.

Silver et al. (2009) identified two researchers who completed a comparative case study based on multiple-year data sources using multiple qualitative strategies including interviews, observations, and document collection covering a one year period. The research took place at a mid-western university using Bloom's blended coaching model. The coaches were paid and provided three to six hours of coaching per month to the new administrator. Interviews were held with 17 participants who included both coaches and coachees, program staff and internship supervisors. Findings by Silver et al. indicated coaching to be a valuable source of support that is viewed positively by both coaches and coachees. Coaching was viewed as a personal form of staff development with support being a key asset. Silver et al. concluded with the need for additional research in the area of leadership coaching.

Summary

The educational world has been slow to embrace this concept of coaching but is beginning to realize the potential benefits of such a practice. Studies done to date fail to address adequately the impact of a coach on a first year school principal. These benefits

need further investigation and support by the world of education. Many models exist that detail and describe what is needed for an effective coaching program (Bloom et al, 2005; Silver et al, 2009; Villani, 2006). Coaches and coachees have been interviewed during the coaching implementation, and have validated the potential for school improvement with the use of coaching. There exists virtually no information that investigates what happens when the coach is removed and the early career principal is left to fly solo. Do the practices introduced continue once the coach is no longer coaching? Is there a carryover of information and purposeful practice once reminders from the coach are no longer provided?   These are important questions that need to be addressed as we begin to move to professional coaching of beginning principals.

Summary

Many changes have been made in principal preparation programs since Levine (2005) exposed what he believed to be deficiencies in the field. One area of concern was the lack of focus on instructional leadership. This has not gone unnoticed at the university level (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Hale & Moorman, 2003). Principals of the 21st century must be adept at many things which will require a change in preparation (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, 2005; Goldring, Huff, Spillane, and Barnes, 2009). Critics continue to ask why some leadership programs succeed while others fail (Hoyle, 2007). When graduates of leadership programs are asked about their experiences, there are many common responses including: too much theory and too little application, more hands-on experiences, and a need for mentors (Edmonds, Waddle, Murphy, Ozturgut, & Caruthers, 2007; Fleck, 2008).

Mentoring has been identified as very effective with the induction of beginning teachers but less so with beginning principals (Hall, 2008). Principal mentoring programs exist throughout the United States, and most recognize the need for collaboration between the organization providing the mentoring and the school district if the partnership is to be successful (Villani, 2006). The benefits of a positive mentoring experience include socialization into the district, teaching the "ins and outs" of school management, and the importance of being a risk-taker (Daresh, 2007). Although, the benefits are many, there are also obstacles for a successful mentoring experience. These include: no clear definition of what a mentor should be, unclear roles and responsibilities, time constraints, mismatching of mentor and mentee, and an absence of clear goals and expectations (Hall, 2008). Hall pointed to the need for "something more" to assure a successful transition from classroom to principal's office.

That "something more" may be a coach. Corporate America has provided clear evidence that coaching with executives is successful if there is buy in from all concerned parties (Ahearn, 2003). A great amount of the success can be attributed to who the coaches are, what the expectations of the coaching experience are, and why the coaches are needed (Underwood, 2005). Coaches must come with a skill-set that supports the endeavors of the organization. These include but are not limited to: being a good listener, observer, and supporter (Nixon-Witt, 2008). It should again be noted here that much of the information regarding business coaching was found in writings that would be considered marketing techniques.

Educational organizations are just beginning to embrace this concept of coaching and to realize the potential benefits of such a practice. This may be due in part to the success seen in business coaching experiences (Villani, 2006). Although, there are many examples of what "experts" believe coaching should be (Bloom et al., 2003; Bloom et al. 2005; Bloom et al, 2007; Shulman, 2008; Silver et al., 2009; Villani, 2006), there are virtually no studies to indicate if the skills acquired during the coaching experience are sustainable once the coach has been removed. Is there a carryover of information and purposeful practice once reminders from the coach are no longer provided? This and other questions need to be addressed to assure the coaching model is as effective in the educational world as it has proven to be in the corporate world.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Minimal empirical research has been done to investigate the sustainability of a coaching model for beginning school principals. The bulk of the information available is directly tied to corporate coaching and the success of an executive coach assisting Chief Executive Officers, Chief Financial Officers, and/or Chief Operating Officers. The information that can be found with regard to corporate coaching is often focused on marketing a particular program which may overshadow any claims of success. The information regarding educational coaching is largely theoretical in nature with little or no published work which documents the sustainability of such programs. The goal of this study was to investigate the impact of a coaching model once the coach had been removed from the coachee.

This chapter will identify the questions researched, the type of inquiry this study utilized, and the participants studied, as well as the projected sample, the method of data collection, and the method of data analysis. Internal Review Board (IRB) considerations as well as limitations and delimitations of the study are also included.

Research Questions

The following questions were researched to add to the literature on educational coaching and the retention of practices learned in the coaching relationship once the coach has been removed. Specifically, this study addressed:

1. To what extent do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the use of a coaching model contributed to the development of the principal's practice?

2. In what ways do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that a coaching program impacted the principal's first year?

3. In what ways have the principal's practices remained the same or changed during the year when coaching was removed and/or in subsequent years following the coaching?

Type of Study

Many qualitative studies are rooted in the ideology of phenomenology, believing that lived experiences are to be understood through study without any idea or notion of the outcome (Hatch, 2002). Phenomenology is concerned with the perspective of the individual(s) experiencing the phenomenon being studied (Lester, 1999), in this instance coaching. Qualitative research is based on an inductive process, a focus on specific people or situations, and an emphasis on words not number (Maxwell, 2005). This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design to determine how beginning school principals perceived the effectiveness of their coaching model, and how sustainable the effect of the coaching was once the coach was removed.

Selection of Participants and Sampling

Coaching has not become the norm in most school districts. Additionally, in these economic times when financial resources are greatly limited and education budgets have been

cut at the district, state, and federal levels, the availability of qualified coaches may be limited which directly limits the principals who could receive coaching. Both of these factors limited the participants this study addressed. Due to the relatively small number of beginning principals who have worked with coaches, multiple district participation was used. Districts invited to participate in the study included schools from urban, suburban, and rural localities.

The districts were contacted electronically and through phone calls, asking for assistance in identifying and contacting individuals who fit the specific criteria. The individuals who met the sample criteria would include principals who received the support of a coach and had completed at least an initial year as principal without a coach. Principals who received coaching and were in the second, third, or fourth year of a principalship would also be invited to participate. Once the districts had identified these individuals, contact was made with the eligible principals, through the district representative via a flyer, to invite them to participate in this study. The individual principals then voluntarily, and on their own, contacted the researcher and agreed to participate in the study. District and individual anonymity was guaranteed. Efforts were made to preserve as much diversity in the sample as possible. Gender, age, and ethnicity, as well as equitable balance in the numbers of individuals selected from each district were considered.

In phenomenological studies, Creswell (2007) reports the numbers of participants may range from 1 to 325. Dukes (1984) recommends studying 3 to 10 subjects unless a larger pool of participants is needed to develop a collective story. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) point to qualitative processes for sampling as *dynamic, ad hoc*, and *phasic* rather than static or *a priori*. Purposeful samples can range from an *n*=1 to *n*=40 or more. McMillan and Schumacher go on to say a phenomenological study usually has fewer informants than needed in grounded theory.

Furthermore, according to McMillan and Schumacher, once the information becomes redundant, no further sampling is necessary. The processes for sampling, detailed above, were followed in the decision to rely on "expert witness" input from individuals who had experienced the phenomenon of coaching. The individuals who responded did so voluntarily and believed they were "experts" on the topic of coaching. The information they provided did indeed prove to be insightful and expert in nature.

Data Collection

The most common type of qualitative inquiry is the unstructured, interactive interview as it offers the research participant the opportunity to tell his or her story in an open, un-judged, interactive forum (Richards & Morse, 2007). The interview method was employed in this research project. Prior to the interviewing, consent forms (Appendix B) were signed and information regarding the interview protocol (Appendix A) was provided. Merriman (1998) identifies three data collection strategies used in qualitative research design. These include (1) interviewing, (2) observing, and (3) document analysis. This study relied solely on in-depth interviews, using an interview guide (Appendix A), with the participating principals, which provided insight into the perspective of each of the participants. An interview guide (Appendix A), utilizing open-ended questions, was used at each interview to provide consistency in the questioning. The interviews were held in locations and at times that were convenient for the interviewees. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Each interview was approximately one hour in length.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2005) details a method for qualitative analysis used by most researchers: (1) prepare and organize the data for analysis, (2) explore the data, (3) describe and develop themes

from the data, (4) represent and report the findings, (5) interpret the findings, and (6) validate the accuracy and credibility of the findings. These six steps were utilized in this study.

The participants were assigned a number and pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality for the individual, the coach, the school, and the district. Using these numbers and pseudonyms to identify participants, each interview was transcribed and reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. Maxwell (2005) suggests transcription and analysis begin immediately following the interview and continue throughout the research to assure greater accuracy. Once the interviews and transcriptions had been reviewed, additional readings began. Moustakas (1994) identifies an analytical process of horizonalization as a means to provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Using this process of horizonalization, the researcher listed and equally weighted every significant statement provided by the participants relevant to the topic (Appendix F). This method provided opportunity for theme identification in the data. These themes provided the connections needed for creating insight and application for universal meaning in the analysis.

The transcriptions of the interviews have been included in Appendix D. Participants agreed to the inclusion of the transcriptions once all identifying information had been expunged to prevent individual, school, or district identification.

Virginia Commonwealth University IRB

Institutional Review Board approval from Virginia Commonwealth University (Number HM13093 received 9/30/2010, Appendix C) was obtained before any data collection began. Transcription and analysis soon followed after the conduct of each interview.

Delimitations and Limitations

One of the purposes of this study was to determine if coaching induced practices are sustainable once the coach has been removed. It is hoped this information will be useful to individuals entering the field, as well as the institutions that train them, however delimitations and limitations must be taken into consideration. Delimitations of this study include the following: Individuals in this study were in the very early years of their careers, and this created a disparity in the ages of those interviewed. Principals who moved from classroom to principal's office after a long tenure in the classroom possibly came with more maturity, experience, and a different belief system than the principals who spent fewer years in the classroom. Additionally, the gender and the ethnicity of the individuals were not controlled nor a part of the considerations of this study.

Limitations of the study include the following: The individuals interviewed in the study came from an area in central Virginia that includes urban, suburban, and urban localities. The findings will be specific to the settings where these individuals are serving their schools. Only principals who have experienced coaching and are in the second, third, or fourth year of their principalship were invited to participate. Principals beyond this point in their careers were not included in this study. Due to the qualitative design of the study, findings are not generalizable but transferable across similar demographic areas.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate what coaching-induced practices were acquired during novice principals first year as principal, and the sustainability of these coaching-induced practices once the coach was removed. The study identified skills learned while novice principals participated in a coaching program, and the extent to which these practices continued into the second, third, and fourth year of their principalship (as appropriate) once the coaching concluded. Through the use of in-depth interviews with individuals who had experienced coaching as part of a funded endeavor to enhance the leadership skills of the principals, data were gathered to determine if, in fact, the coaching practices had been sustained once the coach was removed. The interviewees were guided through a purposeful interview protocol in an effort to obtain answers to pertinent questions regarding participants' personal coaching relationship and their perception of its subsequent impact on their principalship.

To most effectively explore the data gathered in the study, the remainder of this chapter is divided into five sections under the following headings: demographic information, data gathered and analysis, theme identification, making meaning, and summary, where the questions of the research are answered.

Demographic Information

The demographic information gathered in this study was subsumed into seven demographic categories. These categories were the participants' (a) number, (b) pseudonym, (c) experience in education, (d) years as principal, (e) school level and locality at which participant was serving as principal, (f) support of coach and/or mentor, and (g) number of years without a coach.

As outlined in Chapter 4, in phenomenological studies, the numbers of participants may range from 1 to 325 with one researcher recommending 3 to 10 subjects unless a larger pool of participants is needed to develop a collective story. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) purposeful samples can range from an $n=1$ to $n=40$ or more. Again, according to McMillan and Schumacher, once the information becomes redundant, no further sampling is necessary. During this study's interview and analysis process, redundancy became apparent. Drawing from Creswell (2007), Dukes (1984), McMillan and Schumacher for guidance in sampling, this study interviewed five individuals with expert, personal in-depth knowledge of the coaching relationship. As can be seen in Table 3, their years of experience in the field of education ranged from 15 to 22 years with 1 to 3 years spent in a principalship. Thus, all participants were well-experienced in the educational endeavor at their respective levels. Participants shared one common factor which was the major focus of this study: the support of a coach during their initial year as a principal.

Table 3
Demographic Information of Sample

Participant Number	Participant Pseudonym	Years in Education	Years as Principal	School Level/Locality	Coach, Mentor or Both	Years Without a Coach
1	Betty	15	2	Elementary/Suburban	Coach	1
2	Bonita	17	5	Middle/Urban	Coach	3
3	Georgia	16	3	Elementary/Suburban	Coach	2
4	Henry	22	3	Elementary/Urban	Both	1
5	Winnie	16	3	Middle/Rural	Coach	2

Data Gathered and Analysis

Using a purposeful interview protocol guide, open-ended, broad questions were asked of each participant in the hopes of allowing for a wide array of responses. The construction of the interview protocol was discussed in depth in Chapter 3, and is included as Appendix A. The following initial prompts served to guide further questioning as the conversations ensued:

(Q1) How did the coaching you received contribute to the development of your practice during your first year as a principal?

(Q2) What differences can you attribute to the coaching relationship in what you believed you would do in your first year as a principal when compared to the reality of the first year experience?

(Q3) Since the coaching ended, what are you consciously continuing that you attribute to your coaching relationship?

(Q4) What are you consciously doing differently from the way you did it in that first year with your coach and why did you change?

Table 4 summarizes selected samples of significant statements gleaned from the

participants who experienced a coaching relationship. Each of the five significant statements is

representative of one of the five themes extracted from the data. The themes were extracted by a

process that is described in detail in the following section.

Table 4
Selected Samples of Significant Statements of Persons Who Experienced a Coaching
Relationship and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
The data has followed. The instructional piece and working with the teachers on how to analyze their data, the action data, from the benchmarks, weekly assessments, daily class time, what is happening in class. So much of what I do in terms of that.	Data Collection and Analysis
I feel that my main weakness was in believing I could do it. I think just having that person to talk to and lots of affirmations, 'I would do the same thing,' that made all the difference in the world.	Confidence
How to provide feedback to teachers was one area she helped me with. Taking apart the lesson plans, for substance, best practices.	Feedback
I would ask her questions about things, you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about. You can't live this job which I do at times, but I actually heard her. She was a firm believer that you have to get away from it sometimes in order to preserve your sanity, so it was a thing I do remember clearly. It cannot be the end all.	Finding a Focus
I still journal. I constantly go back and look at our school improvement plan; I am constantly monitoring myself similar to the monthly monitoring I did with the coach. I may not formally sit down with someone, but I keep the journaling.	Self-Reflection

Theme Identification

Reading and rereading of the interviews, as well as the data analysis reveals patterns, or meaning units (Creswell, 2007), in the responses of the participants. Creswell encourages researchers to look for code segments that can be used to describe information and develop themes. The codes should represent information that the researcher expected to find before the study, surprising information the researcher did not expect to find, and information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to the researcher. In accordance with Creswell's understanding of how to extract meaning from interview data, these patterns were clustered together and formed the context (meaning units) for the findings of this study.

From five verbatim transcripts with identifying information expunged (Appendix C), 82 significant statements were extracted that directly answered the interview questions, as well as assisted in identifying theme clusters and their associated formulated meanings (Creswell, 2007). Table 5 shows the number of units extracted from each participant, as well as a total, and average number of data units per interview.

Table 5

Data Units Identified During Interviews by Interviewee and Interview Number

INTERVIEWEE	INTERVIEW NUMBER	UNITS
Betty	1	18
Bonita	2	18
Georgia	3	13
Henry	4	19
Winnie	5	14
Total Data Units		82
Average Data Units Per Interview		16

Making Meaning

The theme clusters, based on the responses from the participants, were identified as Data Collection and Analysis, Confidence, Feedback, Finding a Focus, and Self-Reflection. A detailed description of each theme, supported by statements made during the interview process by one or more of the participants, is provided in the following sections.

Data collection and analysis

In this era of high-stakes testing, the world of education has been inundated with information regarding the importance of data: collecting it, analyzing it, and using it to drive instruction. This emphasis has not gone unnoticed in the field of coaching—at least as reported by the participants in this study. Each of the participants named "data" as a conversation held at every meeting with the coach.

The middle school principals felt this more deeply and more often than did their elementary peers. Each addressed similar struggles in achieving and maintaining the standard and level of achievement required by their respective districts and the state. Both Bonita and Winnie came to the principal position with a wealth of classroom experience in dealing with data. But when they moved from the classroom to the principal's office, the focus on data collection became more critical, as can be seen in Winnie's remarks. "The love of the kids I brought with me from the classroom but in terms of the plan for the school to achieve state accreditation … the plan for the direction of the school comes from my experience of data analysis that I have learned and implemented from him [her coach]."

Bonita believed she didn't have "as strong a grip on using data prior to the [coaching] experience. She [the coach] helped me with that. She helped me to understand how I needed to

break it down, subgroups, and monitor it. We hadn't lasered down to individual students. She

helped me to do that."

Winnie also found this to be true. [My coach helped me] "to look at the data … helped

guide me toward data, observation and remediation." Winnie went on to say, "The data has

followed me. I have some benefit because we did use him as our consultant last year. This year,

I am totally without him. The data has followed. The instructional piece and working with the

teachers on how to analyze their data, the action data, from the benchmarks, weekly assessments,

daily class time, what is happening in class. So much of what I do is in terms of that."

The principals at the elementary level each reported they also spent time in discussion

with their coaches regarding data. As important as this aspect of the job is, the elementary

principals did not appear to be as consumed with data collection and analysis as did the middle

school principals.

Confidence

The participating principals also reported an increased sense of confidence in their

position due in large part to their coaching experience. Georgia felt "that my main weakness was

in believing I could do it. I think just having that person to talk to and lots of affirmations that I

would do the same thing; that made all the difference in the world." Georgia went on to say, "I

think the thing I was lacking the most was confidence and she [her coach] just really helped with

that. We talked about things and I found out lots of times she agreed and she made me feel

better about my own decision making process. That was the biggest thing. Through the

coaching, she gave me the confidence to do what I knew was right."

Henry agreed with Georgia, "It would help me verbalize things that may dawn in my

head but not so much thought through. It really helped me to touch base on all the different

things I was responsible for." Henry also found "there was a part of me that relied on my coach to affirm some of my feelings of being overwhelmed and being kind of bogged down with managerial tasks at first. There were times I felt like I wasn't doing the right thing, or I wasn't sure and she would talk me through it so I would come up with the answer and then I would be like…Oh…great idea!"

Betty's confidence also grew through her coach's "input. And a lot of the input she [the coach] gave me validated that I made the right decision." During her first year, Betty "started out the 2nd week of school with H1N1 and then into the Presidential address to school aged children, and then I had some personal happenings, and then the Norvo virus and then the governor decided he wanted to come to BES, we had 3 blizzards. Anything that could happen, it was just a year. … It [the coaching] provided a lot of validation. As far as my coach having an impact on my decisions as a first year principal, I wouldn't do anything different." She helped to assure her she would have done the same thing. Again, this provided for the building of self confidence.

Although each of the principals reported the coaching provided much needed validation for decision making, in each instance they reported they made the decisions. More times than not, they do not believe the coach helped them to make the decision. It provided the validation they needed and helped to build their self confidence, which in turn made the next decisions easier to make.

Feedback

Providing, as well as receiving, feedback was reported as being another area where the coaching influenced the beginning principals' practice. Bonita's coach provided guidance in "providing feedback to the teachers. This was one area she helped me with. [Also] taking apart

the lesson plans, for substance, best practices. Holding people accountable." By identifying these different methods of feedback and encouraging Bonita to find time for these activities, Bonita believes she has become a better principal.

Georgia believed "a direct, firm style of communication and that whole [coaching] experience has made me more conscious of different communication styles, how to talk differently with different people." She also is "very conscious of staff input in faculty meetings. I always plan to have staff input." Allowing the teachers to have this input at weekly meetings allows for more immediate and frequent feedback by not only Georgia but also among members of the staff.

Henry summed up his experience of receiving feedback as providing excellent guidance for him when he has to have those difficult conversations with teacher. "It was helpful that she [coach] was like that with me and kind of modeled that when we spoke. There were times I felt like I wasn't doing the right thing, or I wasn't sure and she would talk me through it so I would come up with the answer and then I would be like … Oh … great idea!" Rather than dictate to the teachers what he would do or what he wanted, Henry would "let them [teachers] come up with the ideas." Henry also finds that "when principals get together, they vent just like teachers do. Sometimes when you vent, you find yourself saying it because you need approval from someone, this is how you handled it…no one says…YOU DID WHAT??!! Then you feel better. So sometimes you do sit and think, wow, am I the only person thinking I wouldn't ever do that? You start hearing things, but then you run across people who are very similar to you and that makes it a lot more bearable." Allowing for and providing feedback has become ingrained in Henry's daily practice with his teachers and his peers.

Betty declared she has "continued to do little things for climate. Such as when I am done with an observation, I put notes in teacher's boxes, thank you for the observation." She attributed this directly to her coaching experience. Betty asserted she was also "listening better. I am more of an active listener." When meeting with her coach, Betty believed she "did a lot of talking and in reflection, I think with the coach I talked through that I needed to be a better listener. I adored my coach, but the one thing I am doing differently is I am talking less and listening more, with everybody." Due to the coaching experience, and the excellent example her coach modeled, Betty believes she learned to spend her time more effectively listening rather than talking.

Each of the principals recognized the importance, not only of giving, but also of receiving feedback. The coaches provided a venue to allow the principals to hear feedback regarding their practice, as well as modeling an effective method of providing feedback. The principals believe this is something they do more effectively because of the coaching relationship.

Finding a Focus

Finding the important "thing" in the beginning principal's practice was a direction each participant reported the coach took with their protégé. The "thing," or focus, varied from principal to principal, but each believed the coach helped them to find or define their focus. Henry "would ask her [his coach] questions about things; you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about. I didn't feel like I was leading all the time. I felt like I was getting prepared, hoping to hold on and then the next year, I knew just enough to know that I wasn't doing or wasn't able to do all the things I wanted to do." Knowing that Henry struggled with these questions, his coach "prompted me [him] to create a support system of other principals that were facing the same situations." Henry knows his coach helped him find and redefine his focus.

Betty experienced some serious personnel issues during her first year as the principal. Her coach provided guidance and support with her concerns. Because of this, Betty is much more attuned to what her assistant principal may need as a first year administrator. "I will go ahead and say knowing the coaching process was in place for me, and knowing I am her [assistant principal] coach, may have made me more aware that she might need a little more support and help and not just assume that because she is qualified to be an AP she knows how to do things customary to this building." Due to the struggles she encountered during her first year, she has shifted her focus and has now become the coach for her new assistant principal.

Bonita's coach helped with clarification of her focus. Bonita had made the job, her life. Her coach recognized this as very unhealthy. "She [the coach] helped me to see the job is important but it cannot be everything. You can't live this job which I do at times, but I actually heard her. She was a firm believer that you have to get away from it sometimes in order to preserve your sanity, and that was a thing I do remember clearly. It cannot be the end all."

The coaching experience helped each of these new principals to take a step back and recognize there needed to be a focus in order to assure they would move forward in their practice. In no instance was the "focus" the same for any of the principals. But the coaches helped them to identify the need to find focus and gave these new principals the tools to define and refine their personal focus.

Self-Reflection

Every principal agreed that the importance of self-reflection was stressed by their coach. The coaches instilled the importance of self-reflection and, in each instance, the participants declared this has carried over after the removal of the coach.

Henry felt he often did not know the questions to ask and with his coach's gentle prodding, "self-reflection happened … when we would get to a part where I didn't have much to say. I just haven't thought about it much (laughter) so it really did help lead to the surface the things that I needed to be thinking about." Henry also found that "cycling through the different responsibilities I am trying to do … has become part of my mental processes which have really helped me a lot. It helps me make sure I am touching base with everything, it helps me schedule things, it helps me visualize what I want to do down the road, it helps me fit things in."

Betty declared, "I think she allowed me to vent and in a nonjudgmental way and [knowing] I wasn't going to go to a meeting and see her … it allowed me to really say what was on my mind and how I was feeling, if I was frustrated and with that being said, a lot of positives." Betty reports she "continues to journal." She also, "constantly go[es] back to look at our school improvement plan; I am constantly monitoring myself similar to the monthly monitoring I did with the coach. I may not formally sit down with someone, but I keep the journaling." She also "look[s] through my [her] calendar of last year and this year and I compare where I am as far as my instructional observations. [But] journaling is probably the biggest thing that I still continue to do."

Bonita, a National Board Certified Teacher prior to becoming a principal, credits her coach with reminding her of the importance of self-reflection. "I think she caused me … I had been through National Boards and you have to be reflective, and she got me to start thinking about the same sort of things as an administrator."

Self-reflection was the one area where each of the principals reported they continue the practice regularly even in the absence of a coach. The importance of this practice did not go unnoticed. Whether it be through journaling, monitoring a calendar, or revisiting school plans,

these principals recognize the value of the practice and continue it into their second, third, or fourth year of their principalship.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate what coaching-induced practices were acquired during novice principals first year as principal, and the sustainability of these coaching-induced practices once the coach had been removed. A purposeful interview protocol was developed and followed in order to answer the following research questions: (1) To what extent do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the use of a coaching model contributed to the development of the principal's practice? (2) In what ways do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the coaching program impacted the principal's first year? and (3) In what ways have the principal's practices remained the same or changed during the year when coaching was removed and/or in subsequent years following the coaching?

The following sections draw together the formulated meanings and answer the aforementioned research questions. By clustering the themes from the formulated meanings, and synthesizing these themes, the essence of the phenomenon can be discovered and discussed (Creswell, 2007). The sections that follow are in direct response to the research questions: Development of the practice, Differences in expectations and realities of the first year contributed to the coaching relationship, Consciously continuing practices that you attribute to the coaching relationship, and Consciously doing something differently from the way you did it in that first year with your coach and why did you change?

Development of the practice. All the participants agreed the coaching had certainly contributed to the development of their practice as a principal. The coaching model provided a safe, nonjudgmental venue for sharing and growth. As Betty put it so eloquently, "I think she

allowed me to vent, in a nonjudgmental way, and I wasn't going to go to a meeting and see her. It allowed me to really say what was on my mind and how I was feeling."

Five areas can be identified and attributed to the coaching relationship as being developed during the beginning principals' practice: data collection and analysis, confidence, feedback, finding a focus, and self-reflection.

During principal meetings and gatherings, data collection and analysis were always a hot topic of conversation. Therefore, the concept of data was not new to the beginning principals, but with the guidance of a coach they made it more applicable to their personal situation and began to formulate instruction based on the analysis of their data. The collection and analysis of data became a large part of the beginning principals' day. The coaches helped the beginning principals recognize this as an area that needed much attention. In two instances at the middle school level, not only did the coach point to the importance of data analysis but helped create tracking methods that these principals continue to use.

Confidence building was identified by each of the principals as one area where they needed and appreciated the input from the coach. In most instances, the beginning principals knew what steps were needed to improve their practice or their situation. Although, they knew what was needed, the confidence to move forward in change implementation was often not in place. Georgia summed up their thoughts; "I think the thing I was lacking the most was confidence and she just really helped with that. Through the coaching, she gave me the confidence to do what I knew what was right." Each of the principals felt they made good decisions but with the validation and affirmation from the coach, they did so with more confidence. Although this area is more difficult to attribute to the coaching and even more difficult to point to as sustainable, this researcher believes the principals continue to feel more

confident in their decision making based on the validation and affirmation they received from the coach. Had coaching not been in place, confidence levels during that first year and in subsequent years very likely may have been lower and slower to develop. Coaching accelerated the process.

Feedback, either given or received, also became a part of the practice of these beginning principals and was also identified as being developed under the guide of a coach. They believed they greatly benefited from the feedback received through their coaches. This led them to provide more crucial feedback to the teachers, which in turn resulted in benefits to the students through more powerful instruction. The principals soon realized an effective method of giving and receiving feedback allowed for the building of stronger relationships between teachers and administrator, peers of the principals, or any other appropriate venue. The importance of good feedback was instilled in the principals by the coach and the principals describe this as something they continue to rely on in their day-to-day activities.

Finding and keeping a "focus" was also identified as an area where the coach helped to bring perspective to the principals. The principals attributed this mostly to the fact that the coaches had "been there" and survived. The coaches were often able to draw from their own personal experiences and provide needed insight. This "focus" varied from person to person. Prioritizing what was important, and then identifying what was most important, became clearer through the coaching process. Henry "would ask her [coach] questions about things; you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about."

Bonita needed help with finding ways to manage personal and professional time. "You can't live this job, which I do at times, but I actually heard her. She was a firm believer that you have to get away from it sometimes in order to preserve your sanity, so it was a thing I do remember clearly. It [the job] cannot be the end all." This practice has definitely been sustained

in subsequent years following the coaching. If someone had not said that to Bonita, would she have been able to identify it on her own? Her coach helped her to find balance in the job.

Each of the principals credited their coach with helping them to take time to be reflective of their practice. Most of the principals found journaling to be an effective method of self-reflection and continue the practice now that the coach has been removed. This is the one area that is easily identified as being sustained since the removal of the coach. Betty, Bonita, Henry, and Winnie admit they did not take the time to reflect or journal prior to their coaching relationship. In fact, all five of the participants admit they did not make time in their day to journal. But at the encouragement of the coach, the five continue to take time for self-reflection, be it through journaling or monitoring their calendar and school plan.

Impact in the first year. In nearly every instance, the participants agreed that they were unsure of what their expectations were as their first year began. Georgia reports, "I don't know if it was a difference in expectation, I don't know if I really expected things, maybe more a lack of expectations." This lack of expectation also translated over to not knowing what to expect or what to ask. With this lack of expectation, it became more of a means of validation for decisions made by the beginning principals. Betty provided this insight. "It provided a lot of validation. As far as my coach having an impact on my decisions as a first year principal, I wouldn't do anything different. So I don't necessarily think I would change anything due to the coaching process." Henry came to the position with no idea of how much of the day would be spent in a managerial role rather that as the instructional leader. "I needed help with the management because there were so many different things that you don't even think of." His coach "prompted me [him] to create a support system of other principals that were facing the same situations."

Each of the principals recognized they came into the principalship with no or unrealistic expectations of the experience. This lack of expectation made this a very difficult question for them to answer. Due to their lack of expectations, they were reluctant to point to differences in expectations and the realities of the first year contributed to their coaching relationship.

Continuing practices attributed to coaching relationship. As outlined in the previous section, the participants had difficulty identifying particular elements of their expectations and the reality of the principal experience. But, they could point to several practices which continue now that the coaching has ended. Every participant continues to monitor data. It is interesting to note the middle school staff more quickly identifies this as the most important aspect of their coaching experience. Both middle school principals believe they are better at data gathering and analysis due in large part to their respective coaching relationships.

The participants feel the feedback they received during their coaching program helped them to become better at providing feedback to their staffs, be it in mass meetings or individually with the teachers. Betty provides notes for her staff as she makes classroom visits and completes observations. This was suggested by her coach as one method to improve climate and morale. She believes it made a difference then and continues today.

Lastly, self-reflection has become engrained in their daily activities. Betty continues to journal, a practice she began with her coach. Although not always in written form, Bonita, Henry and Winnie spend time in personal reflection through self questioning and reflecting on the events of the day. Each of the participants has found a way to self monitor. This is done through the use of a calendar or a written plan for the year. Frequently, they reported, they return to the calendar and plan from the year of coaching and compare where they were then and where they are now. This method helps to assure them they are continuing to move in the

positive direction they discovered during their coaching relationship. Henry discovered "cycling through the different responsibilities I am trying to do has become part of my mental processes which have really helped me a lot. It helps me make sure I am touching base with everything, it helps me schedule things, it helps me visualize what I want to do down the road, it helps me fit things in."

Changed practices from learned method during coaching relationship. Again, the participants had a difficult time identifying things they are doing differently now that the coaching relationship has ended. But 4 of the 5 participants could name one practice they are doing differently and why they have changed their practice. Betty believed she was "listening better. I am more of an active listener. I think I did a lot of talking and in reflection, I think with the coach I talked through that I needed to be a better listener. I adored my coach, but the one thing I am doing differently is I am talking less and listening more with everybody." Bonita wished she "had held people accountable up front because now I have mellowed. I am not so reactive. I think I am more proactive than reactive now. I try to anticipate rather than suffer the consequences." Henry is uncertain if he is "doing it differently because I am no longer with my coach, no, I can say, there was a part of me that relied on my coach to affirm some of my feelings of being overwhelmed and being kind of bogged down with managerial tasks at first. I think having the second year helped me wean from that." And although Winnie continues to closely monitor and use the data findings, she has changed the methods since the removal of the coach. "We no longer use the binders and files; we went to the note card situation. The other just didn't work for us."

Summary

It should be noted here that one participant, Henry, received the support of both a mentor and a coach. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher asked the question, "When you had your support, was it a coach or a mentor or both?" Each answered, "a coach," with the exception of Henry, who answered, "both, actually." At that point in the conversation, the researcher redirected him with, "During the course of our conversation if you could just really focus on the coach aspect, and although I know the mentor is important, please gear your answers toward your coaching experience." Henry responded with, "Okay, great." As difficult as it may have been to separate the influence of the coach and the mentor, this researcher does believe that Henry made every attempt to keep the two experiences separate in his discussions. As Daresh (2007) pointed out, the benefits of a positive mentoring experience include socialization into the district, teaching the "ins and outs" of school management, and the importance of being a risk-taker. These were not areas Henry directly addressed during his interview. Although, he did mention he had a mentor that he continued to discuss district level concerns with on occasion, he did not cross reference his mentor or coach at any time. According to Bloom et al. (2005), ideally, a new principal would have the benefits of both a coach and a mentor to provide objective insights from outside and inside the district. Henry was provided the benefits of both a mentor and a coach. Certainly, he grew and gained from both of these experiences. Keeping that in mind, this researcher believes Henry managed to keep the two experiences separate throughout this interview process, although there are no assurances of that fact. Henry was directed to please focus all his answers on the coaching relationship and experience. There was no reason to believe that he veered from this at anytime during the

interview. All data collected from Henry is based on the belief that he answered with this at the forefront.

In conclusion, as can be seen through the analysis of the information gathered through the interview process, there are certain practices that were sustained once the coach was removed from each beginning principal. These include data collection and analysis, confidence, feedback, finding a focus, and self-reflection—the five themes that emerged from this study. The principals themselves pointed to areas where they felt their practice had evolved and improved through the experience of a coaching model. Although, it is more difficult to point to concrete evidence to support confidence and finding a focus as a sustainable practices attributed to the coaching experience, the participants made this attribution in the course of the interviews.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Using a phenomenological approach, this study's intent was to investigate what coaching-induced practices were acquired during novice principals' first year as principal, and the sustainability of those practices once the coach had been removed. The use of a coaching model for beginning principals, which provided a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individuals and more accomplished peers (Poglinco et al., 2003), was the primary criteria used to identify potential participants for this study. Assumptions of the coaching model included the following (Silver et al., 2009): (a) effective school leadership is necessary for school improvement, (b) support that mirrors the realities of the job, (c) a coach who is neither supervisor nor judge, but advocate, (d) the coaches require continual training and support, and (e) the coaches need coaching. The coaching model included a coach from outside the participant's district lending confidential and expert support. The coaching was a one-year experience for the participants (with one exception in the sample) leading to long-term goal attainment through collegial interactions and conversations. The coach served as an instructional leader and not an evaluator, providing for more open, honest discourse between the coach and coachee - according to the participants in this study.

The researcher sought to identify skills learned while novice principals participated in a coaching program, and the extent to which these practices continued into the second, third,

and/or fourth year of their principalship (as appropriate). The following research questions were explored through the use of face-to-face interviews guided by a purposeful interview protocol: (1) To what extent do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the use of a coaching model contributed to the development of the principal's practice? (2) In what ways do principals in a principal coaching initiative report that the coaching program impacted the principal's first year? (3) In what ways have the principal's practices remained the same or changed during the year when coaching was removed and/or in subsequent years following the coaching?

This chapter includes a summary which addresses the significant findings as related to the literature review, implications, possible limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies, and a concluding discussion regarding outcomes of the research.

Summary

Findings

Creswell (2007) identifies a phenomenological study as one which describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a shared concept or phenomenon. By focusing on what all participants have in common, as well as their differences, through the collection and analysis of data, a composite description of the experience can be formulated, thereby identifying the universal essence of the phenomenon: "a grasp of the very nature of the thing" (p. 58).

Moustakas (1994) identified an analytical process of horizonalization as a means to provide an understanding of how participants experienced phenomenon. In this study, horizonalization involved highlighting significant statements or quotes from the participants which allowed for the clustering of meanings, thus providing themes in the data. The common

themes that emerged from the data included the following: data collection and analysis, confidence, feedback, finding a focus, and self-reflection. This study did not directly investigate the differences found between mentoring and coaching practices in the districts visited. The intent was to glean information regarding a coaching program and its sustainability. Henry was the only participant in the study who identified with having both a mentor and coach. He was asked to specifically gear his answers to the coaching aspects of his experience. Undoubtedly, both experiences have provided Henry with valuable insight into his chosen career. As Bloom et al. (2005) pointed out, ideally, a new principal would have the benefits of both a coach and a mentor to provide objective insights from outside and inside the district. Henry was the only participant having that experience.

Data Collection and Analysis. Data collection and analysis were discussed in detail by all participants with the exception of Georgia. Georgia did not mention data collection or analysis in her reflections. She appeared very comfortable in her position and in the accreditation status of her school. Her school had met state benchmarks for the Virginia Standards of Learning for several years and currently data was not a large concern for her. In contrast, the amount of time dedicated to the discussion of data was recognized as a task requiring large amounts of the other four participants' time, be it in their local school or at district level meetings. It is a practice the four principals felt was developed during their initial year as a building principal and not during their preparation program. Fleck (2008) points to the need for providing better connections between theory and practice in principal preparation programs. Providing a direct connection between the theory and practice in the use of data may be an area where principal programs could expand their programs.

Bonita didn't "think I [Bonita] had as strong a grip on using data prior to the experience. She [the coach] helped me with that." Winnie also attributes her use of data to her coach, "[He] helped guide me toward data, observation, and remediation." Additionally, Winnie makes decisions for the direction of her school "from my experience of data analysis that I have learned and implemented from him [her coach]."

The coaches recognized the need for open discussions regarding data and included this in their regular meetings with the principals. The need for data review and usage has become a part of what these principals do on a daily basis, and a practice they continue. This is one practice they attribute directly to their coaches. Winnie reports, "The data has followed. The instructional piece and working with the teachers on how to analyze their data, the action data, from the benchmarks, weekly assessments, daily class time, what is happening in class. So much of what I continue to do is in terms of that." It was seen as a development in their practice as a principal, and one they have continued once the coach had been removed.

Confidence. Confidence in their ability to do the job was also frequently attributed to the coach and the validation they provided the novice principals. Shulman's (2008) account of the team coach and the hero provides insight into the need to instill confidence in novices. The coach set high expectations and provided techniques and skills to assure success for the beginner. This was seen by three of the participants as a strength in their coaches. For example, Betty realized "a lot of the input she [the coach] gave me validated that I made the right decision." Additionally, Georgia's comment, "I feel that my main weakness was in believing I could do it. I think just having that person to talk to and lots of affirmations … that made all the difference in the world," eloquently summed up the participants' feelings. Henry's confidence was also bolstered via his coach, "There were times I felt like I wasn't doing the right thing, or I wasn't

sure and she would talk me through it so I would come up with the answer and then I would be like…Oh…great idea!" Conversely, neither Bonita nor Winnie ever alluded to the building of confidence through their coaches. It is interesting to note both Bonita and Winnie were principals at the middle school level with coaches who were assigned to novices and to schools under the watchful eye of the state accreditation board. This was due to the schools' failure to meet the expected level of proficiency as outlined in the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Although only one participant used the word "confidence" directly; three of the five directly spoke to the validation they received during their coaching. The manner in which they described validation was interpreted in the context of this study as building confidence in the beginning principals. A question that arises is whether confidence would have been attained at some point during the principals' careers without the support of the coach. Perhaps this would have happened gradually, but arguably this process was accelerated and reached sooner due to the influence of the coach and the boost given to these new principals when they were feeling uncertain about their decision-making skills.

Feedback. Bloom et al. (2005) identified seven elements in the coaching model. One of the key elements identified was the need for the coaching relationship to be based upon trust. Additionally, Bloom pointed to the need for coaches to come with certain skills that include relationship building, good listening, and providing feedback. In each instance, the beginning principals described the importance of knowing they could trust their coach to keep things confidential. The nonevaluative nature of the coaching model provided this assurance. Betty reported, "I think she allowed me to vent and in a nonjudgmental way and it allowed me to really say what was on my mind knowing I wasn't going to see her in a meeting and think, I probably shouldn't have said that." This in turn allowed for the sharing that promoted relationship

building. The relationships that were established between coach and new principal allowed for

the giving and receiving of feedback. The principals believed they could trust their coach to

keep things confidential. Mutual trust created a door for open communication between coach

and principal. Not only did the new principals learn the importance of hearing feedback but they

were also provided an excellent model for giving feedback. For example, Bonita found her

coach helped her "to provide feedback to teachers." Georgia believed the "whole [coaching]

experience has made me more conscious of different communication styles, how to talk

differently with different people." Henry's coach helped him to remember "you really have to be

careful that you are not doing more harm than good with the conversation." The coaching

relationship provided Henry with an excellent model of what effective feedback should look like.

Useful feedback is an integral part of blended coaching.

      Finding a Focus. Underwood (2005) identified two kinds of coaches: executive coaches

and life/career coaches. Executive coaches are interested in the success of the executive but are

also grounded in what is best for the company. By providing for an executive coach, corporate

America has assisted their new executives in finding a focus. In most instances, the focus was

the improvement of the corporation and the "bottom line." Admittedly, the amount of literature

addressing this topic in education is limited, but research (Bloom et al, 2005; Silver et al, 2009;

Villani, 2006) often identifies school improvement as a primary focus needed in the field of

education. For three of the principals who participated in this study, this focus on the "bottom

line" was specifically addressed by them during their interview. Neither Georgia nor Winnie

specifically addressed the area of finding a focus but they both had obviously zeroed in on their

"bottom line." Georgia has been in her school as teacher, assistant principal, and now principal

and was very clear of her focus prior to the start of the coaching – the needs of her school - and

her coach affirmed her in this. Winnie's school has been placed in warning by the state due to the school's failure to meet the Virginia Standards of Learning benchmarks. Due to this state accreditation status, she was very focused on data collection and analysis. Conversely, Bonita and Henry thanked their coaches for leading them to a focus. For example, Bonita's job had become her life, and her coach helped her to identify that "it cannot be the end all. In order to preserve your sanity you have to get away from it sometimes." In contrast, Henry appeared to be unsure what should be his focus. "I would ask her questions about things, you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about." His coach provided insight into how to find his focus and how he could maintain it.

Betty's main concerns during her first year as principal revolved around personnel. Betty did not feel she was an active listener when engaging with her staff. She reports, "I am listening better. I am more of an active listener. I think I did a lot of talking and in reflection, I think with the coach I talked through that I needed to be a better listener." Her coach helped her to focus on the issue and a tool which assisted her in moving her school in a positive direction by providing her staff a means of input.

Betty, Bonita and Henry believe they are better principals because, after the coaching experience, they are able to point to a focus which helps lead them to being healthier individuals.

Self-Reflection. Bloom et al. (2005) identify one of the most important habits a new principal can cultivate as self-reflection. Hall (2008) points to self-reflection as a key to success. Based on Hall's research, school leaders do not take time to self-reflect on a regular basis. One of the goals of coaching is to develop a cycle of reflection in the practice of the coachees. This is the one practice each participant directly pointed to as a practice they are very aware they continued once their coach had been removed. Whether it is through the use of a journal with

written reflection on an almost daily basis, a calendar for review and reflection, or taking moments at the end of the day for mental processing, each one believes this has become an integral part of their career journey. Most of the principals pointed to the lack of time for reflection when they were assistant principals. But now Henry, as well as others, is very aware of how "it helps me make sure I am touching base with everything … it helps me visualize what I want to do down the road, it helps me fit things in." Betty also believes she is more reflective due to the coaching experience. "I constantly go back to look at our school improvement plan; I am constantly monitoring myself similar to the monthly monitoring I did with the coach. I may not formally sit down with someone, but I keep the journaling." These beginning principals point to being able to reflect and visualize as an invaluable tool that has been provided to them by their coach and the coaching experience.

Implications

The findings from this study suggest practical implications. The information gathered from the participants in this study would appear to support the need for more effectively supervised internships providing hands-on, real-life experiences necessary in guiding these early career administrators to successful transition into the principal's office. The perceptions of these participants revealed feelings of unpreparedness for the realities of the day-to-day job at the building level. As preparation programs build additional hours into the core curricula of their leadership track, which allows for supervised coaching, this could provide strengthening of confidence and feelings of readiness for the job tasks. It is important to point out some localities have begun to take steps in this direction to improve educational leadership programs. For example, The Virginia Board of Education requires candidates to complete a minimum of 320 hours in a supervised internship with exposure to multiple sites and diverse student populations

(VCU Internship Manual, 2009). Additionally, as Hall (2008) pointed out, there must be consistency in the implementation of any successful induction/retention program for beginning principals. Therefore, providing and recognizing the need for consistency in their standards would allow for stronger principal preparation, more successful implementation of leadership, and greater longevity in the job.

This study has identified practices acquired during the coaching experience, and sustained once the coaching has ended, such as data collection and analysis, feedback, confidence, finding a focus, and self reflection. Each of these practices has been identified by the participants as keys to their developing effective and efficient leadership as beginning principals and is supported in the literature (Bloom, et al., 2005; Fleck, 2008; Hall, 2008; Shulman, 2008; Silver, 2009; and Villani, 2006). Consequently, as school districts continue to search for ways to improve leadership at the school level; this research would suggest the implementation of a coaching program for all beginning principals. In the absence of district and/or state implementation of such a practice, and with the potential benefits of a coaching relationship, beginning principals may benefit from independently seeking this type of support.

Limitations

Limitations of the study included the following: The individuals who participated in the study came from an area in central Virginia that includes urban, suburban, and rural localities: 2 participants were from urban localities, 2 were from suburban localities, and 1was from a rural district. The findings are specific to the settings where these individuals are serving their schools. An inherent limitation of qualitative studies is lack of generalizability. However, the experience of being unsure in a new position of responsibility is not limited to principals in the districts of Virginia in which the study was conducted. While acknowledging the lack of

generalizability, the findings of this study contribute to the literature supporting the value of coaching as a way to ensure the development of appropriate leadership behaviors among beginning principals.

Recommendations for future studies

This is one of the few studies that have been conducted regarding coaching in the field of education. By contrast, corporate America has provided the majority of information on the topic of coaching, with a substantial amount of the information being used to increase sales of coaching "programs."   Additionally, this is one of the few studies that have investigated the sustainability of the benefits of a coaching program for beginning principals. Due to the limited amounts of literature available on the subject of educational coaching, the field appears wide open in terms of future research.

Therefore, many opportunities are available for further investigation into this topic. One area for further research would be to investigate the perceptions of the coach, as well as the beginning principal, regarding the effectiveness of the pairing and/or its sustainability over a given time period. Another topic of interest would determine what changes specific districts are making to provide for the more effective induction and retention of beginning principals, be it coaching or some other model. An interesting comparative study would investigate the longevity and effectiveness of administrators based on those who had the support of a coach versus those who did not.

Outcomes

The participants, as well as the researcher, in this study believe in the benefits of a coaching program (as defined in this study) for beginning principals. These participants pointed to practices they cultivated under the guidance of a coach and sustained once the coach was

removed. Teachers, students, and parents may believe "The Principal" knows the answers, but these participants spoke of coming to the job unsure of job expectations, even though all had held an administrative position prior to the principalship. The districts which have implemented coaching for beginning principals may be providing an avenue for a smoother, accelerated, more efficient entry into the world of administration. Although some practices may come with time, coaching may shorten, and perhaps even assure, the process. These participants acquired much-needed practices from their more experienced coach and continued the practices once the coach was removed.

This researcher's interest in this subject has been sparked by three factors. Initial interest came from the desire to improve what happens at the school level. Teacher preparation has been researched resulting in improvement in preparation programs and classroom practices. This degree of preparedness is critical for building leadership as well. As Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) asserted, "evidence suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning. Principals' abilities are central to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students" (p. 4). Additionally, Silver et al. (2009) did confirm that administrators with a coaching experience are more likely to positively impact student achievement. Better- prepared administrators, leading well-prepared teachers, can help to assure the success of the students, whatever the measurement.

Secondly, the opportunity to be involved in the administration of a coaching program led this researcher to the question of sustainability of the coaching practices. Through an externship, this researcher was encouraged to delve into the perceptions of the coaches and the coachees regarding their coaching relationship and experience. The insight provided by these individuals

provided an entry into the world of coaching which led to questions that needed answering. This

research is an attempt to answer at least three of those questions.

Lastly, interest in this subject is driven by the researcher's desire to provide leadership in

the area of principal preparedness and effective school administration, be it in her own practice

or the instruction and improvement of others.

In summation, the concept of professional coaching has been introduced to the world of

education through corporate America. The effectiveness of corporate coaching can be found in

executive boardrooms across this country. Principal preparation programs and induction

practices are poised to embrace the concept of coaching as a means to more efficient and

effective sustained school leadership. In this era of accountability, providing assurances for the

success of local schools is critical. As this study has shown, the coaching of school leaders has

merit as a practice worthy of investment - financially and theoretically.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. [Introduction, purpose of interview, anonymity]

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to discuss your perceptions regarding your first year as a principal and the interactions with your coach. You, along with several other beginning principals, will be a part of this important research into coaching for educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking about the time you spent with your coach and your perceptions of the experience.

Thank you for signing the Informed Consent documentation. Let me begin by highlighting some of the key points.

Any and all information you share with me will be confidential. Your name and any other names you may mention in the interview will be not be used; neither will any other information that could identify you.

I would like to voice record our discussions so I can later analyze exactly what you say. During the interview, if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions I ask, please feel free to refrain from answering. I expect the interview to last no more than an hour, but you are welcome to stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we start?

[The interview will then proceed with soliciting information about ideas, concepts and issues in the following areas.]

2. Demographic Information
    How many years have you been in the field of education?
    What positions have you held prior to becoming a building principal?
    How long have you been a building principal?

3. Did you have the support of a coach? Mentor? Both?
    My research is centered only on the coaching aspect, so as we continue, please focus your responses on your coaching experience.

4. What year did you receive the support of a coach?
    So you have been in the principals' role without a coach for _____ years?
    How have those years been?

5. How did the coaching you received in _____ contribute to the development of your practice during your first year as a principal? Can you give me some details? Examples?

6. Specifically, what difference can you attribute to the coaching relationship in what you believed you would do in your first year as a principal when compared to the reality of the first year experience?

7. Specifically, since the coaching ended, what are you consciously continuing that you attribute to your coaching relationship?

8. Finally, again, being as specific as you can, what are you consciously doing differently from the way you did it in that first year with your coach and why did you change?

9. [Wrap up]

I don't have any more questions. Is there anything you would like to add? Is there anything else you would like for me to know that I haven't asked? Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I appreciate your sharing your thoughts and feelings. As I mentioned in the beginning of the interview, you will not be identified in any way with the information you have provided. And again, thank you so much for your time.

Appendix B

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

VCU IRB NO.: The Sustainability of a Coaching Program for Beginning Principals
This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study staff to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This study will investigate what coaching-induced practices are acquired during novice principals first year as principal, and the sustainability of coaching-induced practices once the coach has been removed. This study will identify skills learned while novice principals participate in a coaching program, and the extent to which these practices continue into the second, third, and fourth year of their principalship (as appropriate) once the coaching has concluded. This investigation will provide insight into a way of improving principal induction and success by eliciting the elements that contribute to a principal's continuing in the principalship.
Subjects will be chosen because of their involvement with a coach during their first year as a building level principal.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.
In this study you will be asked to participate in an interview which will last approximately one hour. The interview will be recorded in order to assure accuracy in the information given. No names or indicators will be used that will reveal your or your district's identity.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
If at any time during the interview process you feel uncomfortable or would like to stop the interview, your request will be honored.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS
You may not personally get any direct benefit from this study, but the information we learn from people in this study may help us design better programs for beginning principals and their induction process.

COSTS
There are no costs for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes and recordings. Data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by ID number. All personal identifying information will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted at the completion of this study and will be destroyed at that time. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data and safety monitoring plan is established.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by the sponsor of the research, or by Virginia Commonwealth University. .

The sessions will be recorded, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the session, all members will be asked to use initials only so that no names are recorded. The tapes and the notes will be stored in a locked cabinet. After the information from the audio files is typed up, the audio files will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study

QUESTIONS
In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:
R. Martin Reardon, PhD
Room 2104
Oliver Hall
1015 W. Main Street
Richmond, VA 23284
email: rmreardon@vcu.edu
Phone: 804-828-8698

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

     Office for Research
     Virginia Commonwealth University
     800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113
     P.O. Box 980568
     Richmond, VA 23298
     Telephone: 804-827-2157

CONSENT
I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.

_____

Participant name printed   Participant signature   Date

_____

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness
(Printed)

_____ _____

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent   Date
Discussion / Witness

_____ _____

Principal Investigator Signature (if different from above)   Date

Appendix C

IRB Approval

VCU Memo

Virginia Commonwealth University

DATE: October 1, 2010

TO: R. Martin Reardon, PhD
          School of Education
          Box 842020

FROM: Lisa M. Abrams, PhD
          Chairperson, VCU IRB Panel B
          Box 980568

RE: **VCU IRB #: HM13093**
          Title: **The Sustainability of a Coaching Model for Beginning Principals**

On September 30, 2010, the following research study was *approved* by expedited review according to 45 CFR 46.110 Category 7. The approval reflects the revisions received in the Office of Research Subjects Protection on September 27, 2010. This approval includes the following items reviewed by this Panel:

RESEARCH APPLICATION/PROPOSAL: None

PROTOCOL: The Sustainability of a Coaching Model for Beginning Principals, received 9/27/10, version 4, dated 9/27/10
▪ Interview Protocol, received 7/9/10, version 1, dated 6/25/10

CONSENT/ASSENT (attached):
▪ Research Subject Information and Consent Form, received 9/20/10, version 2, dated 9/20/10, 3 pages

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS (attached):
▪ Flyer: Calling all Principals who have been Provided the Support of a Coach!, received 9/27/10, version 3, dated 9/27/10

This approval expires on August 31, 2011. Federal Regulations/VCU Policy and Procedures require continuing review prior to continuation of approval past that date. Continuing Review report forms will be mailed to you prior to the scheduled review.

The Primary Reviewer assigned to your research study is Melissa Abell, PhD. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Abell at mlaball@vcu.edu and 528-2007; or you may contact Jennifer Rice, IRB Coordinator, VCU Office of Research Subjects Protection, at jlrice@vcu.edu and 828-3992.

[Attachment – Conditions of Approval]

Page 1 of 2

Appendix D

Interview Transcripts

"BETTY" Interview

Me: Thank you for taking a chunk of your day. I am interested in your perceptions of your first year as a principal and your interactions with your coach. You and several other first year principals will be involved with research of coaching and educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking you about the time you spent with your coach and your perceptions of that time.   Any information you share is confidential. No names will be used to identify you, your school, your district or your coaching program. All information is confidential and anonymous. I will be recording in order to assure I capture all the information you provide.   Any time during the interview, if you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we will discontinue recording. Do you have anything you want to ask me before we begin?
The first information is demographic in nature.
How many years have you been in education?

BETTY: 15. I was a first, second and third grade teacher for 10 years in ******. And I taught for 3 in *****, but I have been in VA for 15 years. I was the AP for 4 years here at ***ES and I am beginning my 2nd year as principal.

ME: You have a lot of teaching experience at the primary grades?

BETTY: Yes, I am certified PK – 6.

ME: 2 years as building principal in this building. You had the support of a coach? Did you also have a mentor?

BETTY: Just a coach.

ME: If you had both, I need you to focus on coach side only, but since you had only a coach, it will be easier. If you would focus on the year you received the support of the coach as you answer these questions…Were you assigned a coach?

BETTY: I was assigned a coach through the program, not through my county.

ME: Did they assign them to all new principals?

BETTY: Yes…well, I wouldn't be able to answer that, I know everyone in my specific program were new principals and received a coach. And the program was one my district participated in. I know you know which program. Actually, I have seen you at some of the meetings. The program assigned me a coach.

ME: You have been one year without the coach?

BETTY: Yes.

ME: How is this year going?

BETTY: So much better than last year. We started out the 2nd week of school with H1N1 and then into the Presidential address to school aged children, and then I had some personal happenings, and then the Norvo virus and then the governor decided he wanted to come to ****ES, we had 3 blizzards. Anything that could happen, it was just a year. This year is a walk in the park. This year has been nothing compared to last year.

ME: If you think back to the coaching you received last year, how do you think it contributed to your personal practice as a principal?

BETTY: I think she allowed me to vent and in a nonjudgmental way and I wasn't going to go to a meeting and see her and it allowed me to really say what was on my mind and how I was feeling, if I was frustrated and with that being said, a lot of positives too. All my test scores went

up last year. There wasn't a dip in anything. If I had a subcategory, we would have made AYP. So, as far as the data goes, 99% passing in lots of different areas. I think the personal practices, she just allowed me to talk to someone in a nonjudgmental, I wasn't going to see her in a meeting and think I probably shouldn't have said that.

ME: Can you give me some examples and you have, but can you name some specific details you talked about?

BETTY: We talked about several things. We talked about data, we talked about my 90 day transition plan, we talked about my emersion report. Over the summer I interviewed 83 people, all the staff and created an emersion report. We had short and long term goals. We talked about the budget, about how I analyzed data. She found it very interesting, how I track and analyze data. We talked about the master schedule because for 10 years, the principal before me did the master schedule a certain way and I found that during the emersion report, it kept coming up that we don't have common planning. So, I talked to her about how I was going to go about changing the master schedule during the 2nd year because during the first year, I didn't do a lot of changing. We often talked about how it was amazing the perspective that as the AP, I got talked to and as the Principal, I am talked about. But for the most part, we talked about instruction, data analysis, budget, finance, discipline, parents, crisis, how I handled the H1N1, many different things.

ME: Sounds like you had a great coach. And your coach, did they have a common background in elementary?

BETTY: She was elementary.

ME: Being as specific as you can about things you just mentioned, can you think of any differences you can attribute to the coaching relationship that you believe were different

BETTY: No. I enjoyed her input. And a lot of the input she gave me validated that I made the right decision.

ME: And I am sure that was a big asset for you.

BETTY: It was, it provided a lot of validation. As far as my coach having an impact on my decisions as a first year principal, I wouldn't do anything different. I believe the information I used came from the immersion report. And of course, my prior experience and background in elementary education, with relationships and being the AP here. So I don't necessarily think I would change anything due to the coaching process.

ME: When you think back to the year prior to becoming a principal, do you think your expectations of what it would be were any different to the realities of it?

BETTY: Absolutely. I think my expectations were skewed as to what it really entailed to be an administrator. When I was doing my internship, I got a small taste of it and then when I became an AP, I had no idea, in fact the very first month, I thought what have I done? I don't know if this is for me. And I wasn't assigned a coach as an AP because the principal is more or less the coach. I know as a principal, I have chosen to do things differently with my AP here than I had because I think if things had been done differently as a first year AP, I would have started out a little bit stronger than I would have. I really sometimes think principals, and I can speak for myself, have an idea what an AP should know and you don't know the special process until you have been through it. You don't know timelines and when you say 504, who's the case manager, that is by the building so if you aren't from the county you don't know what the county's expectations are, I just found that I immersed myself into becoming more of a mentor for the AP here so she can actually learn faster and work smarter and not harder.

ME: Do you think your having a coach helped you with that? You already knew she would need that because you didn't have it, but do you think the support from the coach prompted that?

BETTY: I will go ahead and say knowing the coaching process was in place for me and knowing I am her coach may have made me more aware that she might need a little more support

and help and not just assume that because she is qualified to be an AP she knows how to do things customary to this building.

ME: The next questions deal with the time without your coach.   Specifically, you have named some things you felt were beneficial from the coaching process. Since it ended are you consciously continuing the things you felt you gained from your coaching relationship?

BETTY: Yes, I still journal. I constantly go back and look at our school improvement plan; I am constantly monitoring myself similar to the monthly monitoring I did with the coach. I may not formally sit down with someone, but I keep the journaling. I look through my calendar of last year and this year and I compare where I am as far as my instructional observations. It is funny; the 3rd week of school last year, I talked to over 90 parents on the phone due to the H1N1 and this year was a walk in the park. I can't begin to compare last year and this year. Journaling is probably the biggest thing that I still continue to do.

ME: Do you encourage that with your AP as well?

BETTY: No, I don't. She does journal because she is currently involved in a program. The 90 day plan we did together. Let me rephrase that, I did the 90 day plan and then asked for her input. She is coming from middle school to elementary, she had a whole different viewpoint, her strong points are math, and mine are reading. We are a good team. She is dynamic.

ME: Journaling, you would keep doing. As far as going back to look at your calendar, that is an expectation during your coaching process?

BETTY: No.

ME: Alright. Again, being as specific as you can, what do you consciously think you are doing differently as a result of the relationship with your coach?

BETTY: I am listening better. I am more of an active listener. I think I did a lot of talking and in reflection, I think with the coach I talked through that I needed to be a better listener. I adored my coach, but the one thing I am doing differently is I am talking less and listening more with everybody.

ME: Okay, that is good. You changed that because you felt you needed to do that? Are there any things the coach suggested you try or guided you that you consciously have chosen not to continue?

BETTY: No. I wouldn't say so. Any suggestions she had were very, very positive. Again, I knew the building well since I have been here 6 years and if anything I have continued to do, little things for climate. Such as when I am done with an observation, I put notes in teacher's boxes, thank you for the observation. I read the book, Monday Mornings, which was a good book. But no, being a good listener and journaling, there isn't anything that I can think of off the top of my head that she tried to steer me in that I am consciously choosing not to do.

ME: That is all the questions I have. Thank you so much. Is there anything you want to add or cover as far as the coaching experience went?

BETTY: I think the coaching experience is a great experience and everyone should have the opportunity to have a coach. I was asked if I wanted to have the coach again and I chose not to.

ME: For a second year?

BETTY: Yes. They asked would I be interested in staying with my coach for a second year and I said no. I am currently in SCOPE. It is through a local university, it is a 2 year leadership cohort - School Communities of Practicing Excellence. I chose to do that instead. I loved my coach.

ME: It is interesting to hear a 2nd year was offered in the coaching.

BETTY: They asked if I needed anything extra. And I said no.   They then said would you be interested in the 2 year SCOPE and I said sure.

ME: Anything you want to ask me about?

BETTY: No and good luck to you with your dissertation.

ME: Thank you so much for your time. If you have any colleagues that you know of who had a coach and you think might be willing to talk to me, please forward my information to them. What year was your coaching in?

BETTY: 2009-2010.

ME: Thank you for your time. Here is a small token to thank you for taking your time to do this.

"BONITA" Interview

ME: Here is a copy of my consent form if you don't mind signing. This is your copy so you can read what the requirements are for IRB when you are ready.

Thank you for taking a chunk of your day to talk with me. I am interested in your perceptions of your first year as a principal and your interactions with your coach. You and several other beginning principals will be involved with research of coaching and educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking you about the time you spent with your coach and some time since that experience and your perceptions of that time.   Any information you share is confidential. No names will be used to identify you, your school, your district or your coaching program. All information you provide is confidential and anonymous. I will be recording in order to assure I capture all the information you provide. Following the interview, I will transcribe the information. Any time during the interview, if you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we will discontinue recording. This should take a bit less than an hour. I know you are very busy and I appreciate your willingness. Do you have anything you want to ask me before we begin?

BONITA: No.

ME: How many years have you been in education?

BONITA: 17 years, including my instructional assistant.

ME: What positions have you held other than principal?

BONITA: Instructional assistant, teacher, director of the planetarium, assistant principal and principal.

ME: How long have you been a building principal?

BONITA: 5 years.

ME: I knew you were going to be close because I cannot go over 5 years. My methodology requires a 5 year window. Did you have the support of a coach, mentor or both?

BONITA: A coach.

ME: So what year did you receive the support of a coach?

BONITA: I am trying to remember the year. Was she my first year? She was with me for 2 years. It was my second year. 2007-2008.

ME: So you have been without a coach for 3 years?

BONITA: I got a new coach last year so I had her for two years.

ME: How have you done without a coach? You don't have one this year?

BONITA: No, I have Edison now and that is a whole different situation, an educational partner.

ME: They are in and out of the building all the time?

BONITA: I have a full time person. The person I have is good so it has proven to be a good thing. I was a little leery….

ME: So, how has the year been without a coach per say?

BONITA: I can't say it has been too much different because I am under a different model. Based on a comparison, how has the year been without a coach? That is hard to say.

ME: Maybe it has been no different without a coach…I don't know.

BONITA: I am trying to remember when she was here…really, it hasn't been that different.

ME: So thinking back to when you had the coach, how do you think having that coach contributed to the development of your practice as a principal?

BONITA: It really helped because I was transitioning back from HS to MS, she had a wealth of information and a realistic view of what MS life was all about so her perspective was a good one. She wasn't that far retired or removed from the same situation herself and I felt her experience with the urban was comparable to mine so… Also, I don't think I had as strong a grip on using data prior to the experience. She helped me with that.

ME: Other than data, can you give me some other details of what she helped you with? How did she help with the data? Were there other things she helped you with?

BONITA: How to provide feedback to teachers was one area she helped me with. Taking apart the lesson plans, for substance, best practices.   We worked the state's school improvement plan, so we actually, I don't want to say went through the Wise Ways, but she promoted the things from Wise Ways and the school improvement plan but as far as data is concerned, she helped me to understand how I needed to break it down, subgroups, and monitor it.   We had numbers, we hadn't done AYP calculator per say and identified…we hadn't lasered down to individual students. She helped me to do that.

ME: How many students do you have here?

BONITA: 415.

ME: 415, wow. That is how it has always been?

BONITA: It is down from previous years due to our status, we are still under School Choice.

ME: So they are opting to go elsewhere?

BONITA: I don't know that we have that many that are opting out. It used to be around 6 or 700. It has been as many as 1000. But the neighborhood is going through a change also. I grew up in this neighborhood and it is going through a generation of empty nesters.

ME: Are you picking up Hispanics?

BONITA: Yes, this is the first year when we have had a subgroup of Hispanics.

ME: Next question, can you specifically tell me prior to becoming a principal, can you think of ways your expectations did not match the realities of that first year?

BONITA: I thought there would be more autonomy in your building. That is not the case in our district. I came in here with expectations of doing a lot of innovative things and there are limitations that the division places on you. You are not able to do all the things you wish to do. That was my biggest surprise.

ME: You came as a turnaround?

BONITA: Uh huh.

ME: Did you finish the program before beginning here?

BONITA: Actually I wasn't credentialed until after we made significant gains. You don't get your certificate until you actually have done something.

ME: So did they set expectations for you or did they just say go do it? Or what?

BONITA: It was weird. We were in a 3 year program, secondly, I found out I was going to be principal, a few days later I got a call saying I need you to be at a local university at 8 AM

tomorrow and I need you to be able to stay for 3 days which ended up being a week, thank God I over packed. I had no idea what being a principal was like much less a turnaround principal. I'm a turnaround principal! What is that? (laughter) I guess that first year, it was just that autonomy piece was the biggest thing.

ME: When you think back on your coach, do you think she helped you with that?

BONITA: No, she wasn't from our school division, she had a fairly good understanding of our district, she had never worked under the system that we work under. And they do things differently in other places.

ME: When you think about the coaching since it has ended, can you specifically think of things you consciously continue to do as a principal that you can contribute to that coaching relationship?

BONITA: Monitoring the data, gathering and monitoring data. Providing feedback to the teachers. Holding people accountable. Some personal things, you can't live this job which I do at times, but I actually heard her. She was a firm believer that you have to get away from it sometimes in order to preserve your sanity, so it was a thing I do remember clearly. It cannot be the end all.

ME: Keeping a perspective on what is really important?

BONITA: Yes, you have to step outside in order to see inside sometimes.

ME: Again, as specific as you can be, is there anything you think you do differently than the way you did that first year with your coach and if yes, why did you change?

BONITA: I just wish I had held people accountable up front because it is hard to …I held people accountable but not to the extent I should have, I was too nice to some folk and it took a while for them to understand how serious I was. I guess they didn't take me seriously. I wish

our district had something like an administrative assistant program like they have in the county. When a principal is retiring, they bring in a new principal to work with them as they are going out, sort of a transitioning and I wish I could have had some sort of transition prior to coming into this rather than once I was in. Let's see what is going wrong and try to fix it rather than you might want to look for this and try to fix it. New principals need to be in some, I don't want to call it a leadership academy because our district does have that and I went through one of those, but it wasn't a principal preparation and they had me reading a book but it needs to be less formal, it needs to be a dialogue kind of thing so the only thing I would change was that the coach was paired with me prior to the year starting. In a neighboring county, my sister is an administrative aide, she has an extra free period. The principal, first you have to make appointments to see the principal, the principal has an AP for each grade level, every AP has an administrative intern which handles all the discipline and anything else directed. It is a rare occasion when the principal observes anyone; it is the AP's job.

ME: Anything else you can name specifically you are doing differently than you did with your coach?

BONITA: One thing, I have mellowed. I am not so reactive. I think I am more proactive than reactive now. I try to anticipate rather than suffer the consequences.

ME: Is that something you think the coach helped you with? Or did it just happen over time?

BONITA: I think she caused me…I had been through National Boards and you have to be reflective and she got me to start thinking about the same sort of things as an administrator.

ME: Self-reflective? Did you journal?

BONITA: No, more dialogue. I didn't have time to journal…(laughter)…

ME: Well, I don't have any more questions. Is there anything you want to add or ask?

BONITA: No, I just wish you well….

"GEORGIA" Interview

ME: Here is a copy of my consent form if you don't mind signing. This is your copy so you can read what the requirements are for IRB when you are ready.

Thank you for taking a chunk of your day to talk with me. I am interested in your perceptions of your first year as a principal and your interactions with your coach. You and several other beginning principals will be involved with research of coaching and educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking you about the time you spent with your coach and some time since that experience and your perceptions of that time.   Any information you share is confidential. No names will be used to identify you, your school, your district or your coaching program. All information you provide is confidential and anonymous. I will be recording in order to assure I capture all the information you provide. Following the interview, I will transcribe the information. Any time during the interview, if you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we will discontinue recording. This should take a bit less than an hour. I know you are very busy and I appreciate your willingness. Do you have anything you want to ask me before we begin?

GEORGIA: I don't.

ME: Okay, we will start with some demographics. How many years have you been in education?

GEORGIA: 16 years.

ME: Prior to being building principal what positions did you hold?

GEORGIA: Assistant principal, middle school teacher, reading specialist. Always in this district.

ME: How long have you been a building principal?

GEORGIA: This is my 3rd year.

ME: How many students do you have?

GEORGIA: About 290.

ME: This is the nicest school, it is so nice and everyone is so calm. It was nice to sit and watch them come in. Monday morning…my experience is quite different. It has been quite a year but I love it. But it is time to do something different. So 290 and you have an AP. Did you have the support of a coach, mentor or both?

GEORGIA: Coach.

ME: Great, I am interested in hearing about your experience with the coach. Could you tell me the year you received the support of a coach?

GEORGIA: 2008-2009.

ME: So you have been without a coach for 2 years?

GEORGIA: Yes.

ME: How do you feel the coaching you received contributed to the development of your practice during the first year as a principal?

GEORGIA: Let me think about that. I think the two things are, one, for me, and in talking to other folks in my program, the fact that I was matched up with a compatible coach both personally and professionally made all the difference. It is had not been that way, it would really not have worked. So I think the administrator knew us and that made it work. I think the thing I

was lacking the most was confidence and she just really helped with that. We talked about things and I found out lots of times she agreed and she made me feel better about my own decision making process. That was the biggest thing.

ME: Can you give me some details or examples around that?

GEORGIA: Yes, I can give you a big example. None of this is identifiable, right?

ME: Right.

GEORGIA: Okay, my assistant principal had to go and that is what we worked on almost all year. It was a challenge anyway but through the coach, just having the objective experience helped me to say this is not acceptable. She gave suggestions of how to approach that. We really developed a friendship so that was the whole thing, how to approach him, what to document, so many things go into that. He had been a teacher for 5 years and came in as kind of the golden boy and so I perceived it as a challenge with the superintendent and assistant superintendent because they had picked him out and here I was a brand new principal saying, uhmm, bad choice. Through the coaching, she gave me the confidence to do what I knew what was right. For two years, I worked without an AP, because he was so bad it was easier to do it myself. I had to document everything, so now with a good AP; I don't know what to do with myself.

ME: Being as specific as you can be, when you reflect on your first year, can you name any differences in your expectations and the reality of the experience?

GEORGIA: I don't know if it was a difference in expectation, I don't know if I really expected things, maybe more a lack of expectations. Some of the minutiae like one big one is managing facilities use. We have people that rent the facility/building and managing that is incredibly time consuming that I just never really thought about it. I spend a lot of time on the phone with community explaining the facility use process and checking the facility use calendar, balancing it out, making sure the custodians are working that it all gets cleaned. That was probably the

biggest shock, it was not instructional things. None of the instruction, that matched my expectations. It is noninstructional stuff.

ME: Can you contribute any of the help you received from your coach as beneficial to this?

GEORGIA: No, not really. The things that surprised me the most were not the things I initiated wanting coaching on. Because facility use was a big pain and I didn't expect to have to do it but it is a main focus of the job. I was worried about instruction and the trouble with the assistant principal, that is where we focused. I am sure she would have but we spent our time on other things.

ME: Can you think of anything you consciously continue to do that you can contribute to that relationship?

GEORGIA: I do, I think she really coached me through working with this AP and he needed a real direct, firm style of communication and that whole experience has made me more conscious of different communication styles, how to talk differently with different people.

ME: So she helped you with him, do you think that carried over to the rest of your staff?

GEORGIA: It did, it did. It made me very aware of it and again, the whole confidence thing, because I don't tend to be "you need to do this" but such a time, but it made me realize it is okay to do that and some people need that.

ME: A lot of direction?

GEORGIA: Yes.

ME: Can you think of other things you continue to do since the coaching ended? Any things you feel you have carried over? Other than communication?

GEORGIA: Being very conscious of staff input in faculty meetings. I always plan to have staff input. I always have something on the agenda where someone besides me is responsible for.

ME: She suggested that?

GEORGIA: Yes, to provide for buy in.

ME: Again, being as specific as you can, are there any things that you are doing differently than you did with the coach?

GEORGIA: No, not really. I guess we were really specific. She had the list of topics we were to discuss; we looked over them each time to jog my memory. We were really specific on the issue I had going on…

ME: You spent a lot of time on that?

GEORGIA: A lot of time on that, and not so much on other specific stuff.

ME: Personnel was a big issue and focus that year and does that continue to be or do you feel you have a handle on that?

GEORGIA: Since he is gone, everything is good! (laughter) The one thing, if anyone ever asks, I think you should have your coach for more than one year.

ME: Tell me about that.

GEORGIA: It really should be more than one year. I could see the need for it especially if you were new to a school because your first year you are just figuring things out. The 2nd or 3rd year might be the time you want to tackle some issues and make some changes and I can see how a coach would be beneficial to those substantial needy things.

ME: Some districts have offered that.

GEORGIA: Really?

ME: The previous program I was involved in indicated that the coaching was needed for an additional year. As you said, the first year you are just trying to figure it out, the 2nd year you know more the questions to ask. Alright, so you don't feel you are doing anything differently than you did with your coach? Do you feel that coaching experience was a positive one that helped you build your practice?

GEORGIA: It was very positive.

ME: Can you give me some specifics?

GEORGIA: I feel that my main weakness was believing I could do it.   I think just having that person to talk to and lots of affirmations, I would do the same thing, that made all the difference in the world. My coach was from a different district and she didn't know anyone here so there was a lot of confidentiality.

ME: So, those are all my questions. Thank you for your answers. Is there anything you would like to add?

GEORGIA: No.

ME: Anything else you would like me to know or you would like to ask me?

GEORGIA: No. Your dissertation is trying to say …

ME: I am trying to find out if the coaching carries over once it is over. Is there a hang on?   Or is it something that happens only while the coach is there? I still have some questions about that. But the question comes, are the "sustainable" things areas that would have come anyway? The

confidence? That is what I am trying to nail down. What is really sustainable? I do think I have a couple of things that have happened because I had a coach and I continue to do them. Like journaling. That is what I am trying to find out.

"HENRY" Interview

ME: Thank you for taking time from your day to talk with me. I am interested in your perceptions of your first year as a principal and your interactions with your coach. You and several other first year principals will be involved with research of coaching and educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking you about the time you spent with your coach and your perceptions of that time.   Any and all information you share with me is confidential. No names will be used to identify you, your school, your district or your coaching program. All information is confidential and anonymous. Any names you may use will be removed or changed. There will be no way to identify you as a part of this study. I will be recording in order to assure I capture all the information you provide. If at any time during the interview, you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we will discontinue recording. The interview will take less than an hour. Do you have anything you want to ask me before we begin?

HENRY: No, I am ready to go.

ME: The first information is demographic in nature. I know you work in an elementary school. How many years have you been in education?

HENRY: In education, 22.

ME: What positions did you hold before this one?

HENRY: I taught 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and AP.

ME: How long were you AP?

HENRY: 3 years.

ME: And so you have been in this position, how long?

HENRY: This is my 3rd year.

ME: Before becoming the Principal, you were in a different county. And then came here?

HENRY: Yes, I have only been here for my principalship.

ME: When you had your support, was it a coach or a mentor or both?

HENRY: Both, actually.

ME: The county provided the mentor?

HENRY: Who I still use. I use him as a sounding board. Even called him today with a few questions.

ME: That is wonderful support to have, just to call.

HENRY: I don't know if they did this on purpose, but they matched me up with someone who is very similar to my personality.

ME: My principal is good for me in that. He grounds me. I tend to be very detail oriented, he says you need to let that go…(laughter). It is good you have both. During the course of our conversation if you could just really focus on the coach aspect and although I know the mentor is just as important, please gear your answers toward your coaching experience.

HENRY: Ok, great.

ME: Which year did you receive the support of the coach?

HENRY: 2008-2009.

ME: So you have been 2 years without your coach?

HENRY: Actually, they allowed me, they asked me if I wanted to keep him for the second year as a kind of consult to go back to.

ME: And you did?

HENRY: I chose to. I feel the second year was more profitable than the first year.

ME: I am happy to hear they moved in that direction. So you had two years with a coach which is fabulous. So I guess we will think of the year without the coach. How has that year been?

HENRY: Well, you know I will say everyone always says your 3rd year is your magic year, for teaching. I know for me my 3rd year, I know something at least. And so, even though I am on my own, I feel much more confident, mentally I approached the job differently than I did the first two years. I don't think it is because I was relying on the coach. I just feel I have finally gotten to the point where some things have been established and I feel more confident in what I am doing. Before, I would use the sounding board a lot for a lot of things. Not that I am not asking any questions, I am just asking different questions now. Because I know the coach is someone I can still call if I need. It is a decidedly different year altogether. I feel …

ME: Positive, it sounds like.

HENRY: Positive, yes. Several things go on your first 3 years, especially for me, a new county, new job, new population. I have never worked with a very diverse population. So, it was such a big learning curve my first year that I didn't feel like I was leading all the time. I felt like I was getting prepared, hoping to hold on and then the next year, I knew just enough to know that I wasn't doing or wasn't able to do all the things I wanted to do. And now, I feel like I've gone from a day to day planning or attack mode to thinking about what are we gonna do in the next few months or this will be great for next year. I can broaden my vision a little more. It is

exciting. It suits me, I am much more a big picture person. I am much more the visionary type. It is nice to be here, finally.

ME: Breath a little bit, I think.

HENRY: Absolutely.

ME: I have always heard of that 3rd year anomaly and I know in teaching even when changing grade levels, I am finally getting it and then they would move me again. (Laughter) Hopefully, that will happen as principal as well.
So during 2008, when you received your coaching, how do you feel it contributed to the development of your practice as a principal, the specific things you talked with your coach about, or guided you, can you name examples I could point to and say yes that was established during that time or made you a better principal?

HENRY: Oh definitely. One of the things established from the very beginning, every time there were specific things we would touch base on. And there were some things that, there are so many things you are responsible for there are often times you go, oh yeah…so what was so good about that was it kept bringing morale, data, discipline, you know, all these different, communication, all these different things to the forefront to talk about and forced me to keep cycling through my thought processes. Normally, I may be sitting here completely overwhelmed with everything and she would systematically walk me through some things, very calmly, nice and easy conversations…where would you say your school is with morale right now and I would say I think they are a little stressed right now. It would help me verbalize things that may dawn in my head but not so much thought through. It really helped me to touch base on all the different things I was responsible for. I think it carries on today. I still think in that cycle. I kind of go through some of those talking points. In fact, it would probably be great for me to pull out that little chart that she used and remind myself that I am not forgetting something.

ME: You still use that?

HENRY: Yes, that was a practice that she brought me, it was not something that I brought to the table. It kind of naturally happened. Every time we sat down it kind of guided conversation. I would ask her questions about things, you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about. She was great in that, she would say, that's an email you can put in the round folder. I really appreciate it.

ME: Self reflection, maybe?

HENRY: Very much. Very much. Then self reflection happened often when we would get to a part where I didn't have much to say. I just haven't thought about it much (laughter) so it really did help lead to the surface the things that I needed to be thinking about. In a way, there were times she would leave and I would be a little overwhelmed at first but then she also would comment on those things you don't need necessarily worry about those things, just know what is going on in those areas. I think that is where I started taking on some of the nuances where there are things to worry about and then there are things to just know about and that was extremely helpful.

ME: Is there anything else you would like to add? Anything that helped to mold you into the principal you are now?

HENRY: She also was, as principal you go in and you really get the data driven speech all the time.
Everybody is talking about it. This is where they are, this is where they should be, you know. You tend to think about everything in that regard sometimes and I am very much that type. When I was teaching, I was looking at the whole child. It was very important to me, so that was the limiting factor deciding whether to go into administration. I was waiting to see some principals demonstrate my type of leadership style. Thankfully, I worked under some. I don't think I would have gone into it if I didn't. My coach was very much like me in that regard. We would talk about the data, we would see where some areas needed work, but then she would take it to the next step and say, how are you going to do this? What are you going to say when you sit down with your teachers? That is the part where you don't get a lot of information about it. Yes,

they tell you to sit down and talk to your teachers. But in college or grad school they don't teach you how to have those conversations. What do you say in order to bring about them wanting to do something? Let them come up with the ideas. I think that's what kind of helped me be able to sit down and not be … I was always on the other side of the table thinking he thinks I am not doing a very good job.

ME: They are hard conversations to have.

HENRY: Yes, you feel you are walking the fence with some. Some come right out and say tell me what it is and I'll take care of it and then there are others that you really have to be careful that you are not doing more harm than good with the conversation. It was helpful that she was like that with me and kind of modeled that when we spoke. There were times I felt like I wasn't doing the right thing, or I wasn't sure and she would talk me through it so I would come up with the answer and then I would be like…Oh…great idea!

ME: So you feel she helped you by modeling so it made it easier to model it with the teachers?

HENRY: Yes, very much. And I feel myself doing that now oftentimes. You know, even with the hard conversations, when you have difficult situations you have to talk through, they don't have to be shouting matches, you can diplomatically work your way through it so the person understands why you need to talk to them about this and it does make a big difference. I personally shoot for how to talk to them about serious things and it has helped me not to be someone I am not. I can still be myself yet still be effective.

ME: That is important. Any other examples?

HENRY: No, not off my head.

ME: When you reflect on your first, or second year in your case, with your personal expectations of when I become principal it is going to be like this. The mindset of this is how it is going to be and then you had the first year of it and the reality of what it was really like, can

you name some differences in your expectations and the reality of what your first year turned out to be?

HENRY: There was a lot more managerial things that I had to do that I didn't expect to be doing. And I think it may just be personal to my situation. I came in and had 13 new staff members when I came in the door. The resource teacher [AP] had to be hired so she was new and new to her in that position, she is wonderful. So I have her who is new, me who is new, secretaries were less than a year old, they hadn't even opened a school yet, new clinic attendant who also does attendance, so it was like opening a new school. A lot of what I felt like the first year was to put processes in place or procedures in place that I had always taken for granted everywhere I had ever been. They were always in place; I just had to learn what they were and make sure I followed them. But in this case, the former principal had been out a lot for personal reasons and so a lot of those procedures didn't need to be in place. People were just kind of doing everything. It took me my whole first year to get some of these things in place and feel like I wasn't pulled into everything and the main thing I learned from there to here was that you do have to set these things up and not feel guilty about not doing it because you have to be back here in order to make some of these decisions…to see the big picture. It is hard because you are set up, and this is the part I have always wondered about. I think they put you in the AP position and you're the person who does everything, can you do this? can you do this? You get all the forwarded emails of things that need to be taken care of. You have your hands on absolutely everything and you are in a whole new situation and you are so used to having your hands on everything that it is hard to just all of a sudden let everybody else do it. And especially when you are in a position where so many other people are trying to figure out what to do. I had a hard time not doing things. For example, we slowly set up a kind of disciplinary process so that I don't handle, I handle the bigger situations with discipline but Ms. Drake handles discipline [resource teacher/AP]. Unfortunately, she doesn't get paid to do the job she does. She and our guidance counselor do some of the soft visits we need to do and then it comes to me if needed. And of course, I step in and do some things when they need to be. But this is the first year where I feel like that process is gelled so that I really don't feel guilty about not doing those things. There are people to take care of those things and I can step back and take care of the other things that need to be done, which is hard. And I will say, I have probably gone beyond the question,

but I think what happens you start your first year and you think it is all managerial and they pound into you, you are the instructional leader, you are the instructional leader….and I had nothing to do with instruction the first. I am hoping instruction went on (laughter) and then all of a sudden this year, more of the conversations that I am having with teachers are more about instruction. I am thinking more about instruction and less about the kids who are giving us a daily problem. My mind is getting freed up to do more of the instructional leadership piece. It is not 100% there but I can feel it is moving in that direction and that is great because that is why I got into it.

ME: I think it should be or is a process.

HENRY: I will say it was never explained to me that way. I think had I known going in you are going in you are going to have to put in a couple of years of just keeping your nose to it and trying to make everything right. I felt like last year I was a little disappointed thinking it would have been a little easier and it wasn't. I was still doing a lot of the same things. But, all I got was your third year is magic! (laughter) It really has been.

ME: So, just hang on until the 3rd year.

HENRY: They don't tell you what to hang on to, just hang on. But looking back, I am just blown away in what my focus was my first year and what it is now and going from a firefighter to putting fires out every day to looking at why the fires are starting and being on that. We are actually looking at a program for the whole school, The Leader in Me, the Franklin Covey, are you familiar?

ME: Yes, we read that book for leadership this year. They find some good things that we just need to hold on to…grasp it and hold on.

HENRY: It's true. We visited the school in NC that has championed that and we have been working on those 7 habits to make better schools.

ME: Do you feel that when you came into the principalship, generally you were looking to be the instructional leader/visionary and you were more managing things?

HENRY: Yeah, pretty much.

ME: So that was your reality versus your expectation? Do you feel having the coach in place helped your perception become a reality or did it just help you manage that?

HENRY: Probably a bit of both. I needed help with the management because there were so many different things that you don't even think of, especially when you think they are already set up or they have always been set up wherever you were and all of a sudden you are faced with what do you do when a child wants to change transportation? That should be a basic thing…there needs to be a form somewhere…you are all of a sudden faced with opening a new school. I am opening a new school now all over again. I think that was where when I sat down with my coach and I would say these are the things I am doing, if anything she would confirm that my feelings about being kind of overwhelmed by managerial stuff were typical. If nothing else, a sounding board to say I was there and that is how I felt too. That made it, since no one had told me that before, that made it a little more bearable, I thought everybody seems to have to go through this and I do too.   I am not an awful principal, it happens to everyone. You go through this period where you just think…I was just so hard on myself. I could feel my self esteem going down the tubes, and I would think I am supposed to be standing in front of these people and know what I am talking about, I am in trouble…

ME: When you look at your coaching experience, then you feel like your coach did help you firm up some of your hopes and dreams?

HENRY: Definitely.

ME: Specifically, since the coaching ended, are you consciously continuing things you can attribute to your coaching relationship? Specific things.

HENRY: For example, cycling through the different responsibilities I am trying to do. That has become part of my mental processes which have really helped me a lot. It helps me make sure I am touching base with everything, it helps me schedule things, it helps me visualize what I want to do down the road, it helps me fit things in. I will have teachers come in and say we have this great idea and I can kind of think through all the things that go on and it helps me see how that fits into everything and if it doesn't and I can say there other things we need to consider before we move on to that. I think there is a lot of attending to and touching base on different things that I have to do each day or even each month and it doesn't have to be on a daily basis. And not being driven by some report that is due, there are always those things that need to be done. I feel like that was kind of the most important things when I first started. Now I am making sure the things that are most important, the kids themselves, are getting done well and the reports are in that cycle but they don't necessarily fall at the top every time. That helped me to feel like here is someone who has been through this whole principalship life and has recognized that everyone in central office wants to know what you are doing, you want to make sure you are in control of what you are doing, that you are touching base on everything here and then you can send a report, but as they say…put the first thing first.

ME: Again, being as specific as you can, do you feel you are consciously feel you are doing anything differently than you did those first years with your coach?

HENRY: Yeah, I don't know if I can say I am doing it differently because I am no longer with my coach, no, I can say, there was a part of me that relied on my coach to affirm some of my feelings of being overwhelmed and being kind of bogged down with managerial tasks at first. I think having the second year helped me wean from that, interestingly enough; I was the one that set forth that I would like her for a second year if that was possible.   And they made that possible and then during the course of my second year, our meetings were less frequent and were prompted by me. It was almost like a natural weaning of me off of my dependency on that person and I felt like this year it was okay. I wasn't missing that support that she had ushered me to my own feet. I was able to move forward and she also knew I had a mentor and she would encourage me to use my mentor and others. She prompted me to create a support system of other principals that were facing the same situations, especially the same year. We meet almost

monthly outside of school and just throw out where we are and if nothing else just to hear that other people are having the same worries and the same concerns and sometimes the same joys. There are some good things. (laughter) But I will say I think she did provide a level of support at the right time whether it happened naturally or she craftily stepped back at the right time, but there was a very natural feeling of I am ready to face my third year on my own and it wasn't scary at all. It was very natural is the word that comes to mind.

ME: So it sounds like a lot of the things you gained from that relationship you are still holding on to and you haven't let go of a lot, you have made them a part of who you are as the principal.

HENRY: Yes, that sounds right. Some of the things she brought were there and I didn't know.

ME: She helped you find them?

HENRY: Yes, yeah…she helped me find them…helped me identify my leadership style a little bit more and let me know it is okay to have that?????????….. I don't have to be the same as this person and that is okay. I think it is because of the isolation of the position. When principals get together, they vent just like teachers do. Sometimes when you vent, you find yourself saying it because you need approval from someone, this is how you handled it…no one says…YOU DID WHAT??!! Then you feel better. A lot of that goes on and sometimes you hear how people handle and I think I wouldn't have handled it that way, not that it was wrong but it's just not the way I would do it. So sometimes you do sit and think wow, am I the only person thinking I wouldn't ever do that? Maybe I am not cut out for this. You start hearing things, but then you run across people who are very similar to you and that makes it a lot more bearable.

ME: Affirmation makes us feel better. You are kind of in here (the office) and we don't talk to you. (laughter)

HENRY: Exactly!

ME: Sounds like you had a wonderful experience with your coach. Well, I don't have any more questions. You have done a great job answering my questions. Is there anything you would like to add about your coaching relationship that I haven't asked you about?

HENRY: Just to reemphasize, if the second year is possible, I think you are able to have conversations that are more geared to what your future as a principal is going to be like as opposed to getting beyond the day to day management.

ME: Keeping your head above water?

HENRY: Right. And I sometimes wonder if the amount of time they can devote to one principal, may be starting later in the first year and into the second year would be better. There is just so much to take in. I don't think I even knew the questions to ask my first year. I had no idea what to ask. Tell me something I need to know! (laughter)

ME: It sounds like you had a great coach. Is there anything you want to ask me about?

HENRY: What is the general focus of your study?

ME: I am looking for sustainability of a coaching program and the commonalities found among several principals. I am really looking for 2 or 3 things I can specifically point to because of the coaching experience, these folks are doing this. And do you continue it once the coach is gone? When forced to do something, you do it, but when the coach is gone, does it continue? I was very interested in working with student teachers but as my program continued I found I was very interested in the leadership side. It has been very interesting.
But anyway, thank you for meeting with me and sharing with me. If you think of anything else you would like to share, please email or call me.

HENRY: Actually, I just thought of one thing. I am curious if there is a way to match up leadership styles in the coach and the principal. I was fortunate that my person was very much like me. I wonder if there is a way to do that or if they do that. Or do they do that?

ME: I believe there is an effort to match personalities or leadership styles so they do work. I believe they are cognizant of that and work to avoid placing coaches with principals that would be unsuccessful.

HENRY: Good, I think that makes a big difference.

ME: Again, if you think of anything else or you have any colleagues who would be willing to talk with me, please feel free to give them my contact information. Thank you again.

"WINNIE"

ME: Thank you for taking a chunk of your day to talk with me. I am interested in your perceptions of your first year as a principal and your interactions with your coach. You and several other beginning principals will be involved with research of coaching and educational leadership and its sustainability. I will be asking you about the time you spent with your coach and some time since that experience and your perceptions of that time.   Any information you share is confidential. No names will be used to identify you, your school, your district or your coaching program. All information you provide is confidential and anonymous. I will be recording in order to assure I capture all the information you provide. Following the interview, I will transcribe the information. Any time during the interview, if you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we will discontinue recording. This should take a bit less than an hour. I know you are very busy and I appreciate your willingness. Do you have anything you want to ask me before we begin?

WINNIE: No, except are you kin to Shelley Ryder-Loving? She is at VDOE in testing and your last names are so unusual, that would be such a coincidence.

ME: No, she is a VA Loving and I am a WV Loving. I have met her but there is no relation. If you have no questions… The first information is demographic in nature. I know you are in a middle school. Can you tell me how many years have you been in the field of education?   And what positions have you held?

WINNIE: This is my 16th year. I was a classroom teacher for several years in primarily 9th grade world history. I served for 2 years as AP and then this is my 3rd year as principal. I have 2 schools separated by a parking lot. I would love to tell you I divide my time equally but it takes more time at ***MS 2. It is interesting.

ME: That sounds totally overwhelming to me. I have trouble with just one so I can't imagine. You have been the building principal for 3 years. Okay, great. So when you had your coaching experience did you have a coach solely or a mentor as well?

WINNIE: I had a coach when coming to MS. MS was in bad straits academically. So the state brought in a coach to work with us. The school was about to be taken over because they had not made SOL accreditation and so when we first came on board, our state coach came in. We emailed in the summer but the nuts and bolts began in October.

ME: So this to prevent state intervention?

WINNIE: Yes.

ME: And what year did you have the coach?

WINNIE: 2008-2009, my first year.

ME: So you were not provided a mentor, just a coach?

WINNIE: Right, the central office staff, the assistant superintendent, assisted because of MS is no man's land. No one wanted MS, but I did. I did. I did my internship at MS. I knew what I was facing. Well, I say that, I knew some of what I was facing. Nothing could have prepared me for all of it except getting in there and doing it. I wanted to go there. I have loved the school since my internship.

ME: As we go through the questions, please focus on the coach, which I know you will because you are obviously a fan of the coaching program, that is the part that I am interested in. You had a coach the first year, so you have been two years without the coach?

WINNIE: Yes, the state cut us lose when we made full accreditation and AYP. Historically, there was no consistency in the leadership. There was a high rate of turnover in the principal position. So the second year, our Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, paid for the coach to work with us as a consultant. But I have been without the coach component for 2 years.

ME: You made accreditation, so the years have been pretty good. But how would you describe the years based on the year with the coach and the year without the coach in comparison?

WINNIE: A little bit difficult because our coach was phenomenal. We still talk. I will call him with things are really vexing me. The things he worked with us to put in place and the value of the things he showed us, there is no principal prep program I am aware of that prepared me to look at data that way, to look at the whole reform model the way he did. There were certainly times when I wanted to probably pull his hair out and times he wanted to pull my hair out due to the level of frustration and the resistance of teachers and I know that is a long winded answer for what you are asking. It was difficult. He was such an incredible person to work with so that part, having to stand totally alone was a little bit difficult. But he taught us so well, I couldn't ask for a better experience.

ME: That is wonderful. So, based on that answer as well as other things during your practice, how did the coaching you received in 2008, how do you think that helped you develop your practice during your first year as a principal? Can you name specific things you think he helped you with in the formation of your practice as a principal?

WINNIE: To look at the data. I think it is something as a classroom teacher, I tracked and monitored. It was a hard lesson when I became an administrator to realize not everyone did things the same way I did. I shut my door and did my only little thing, others were doing the same things. I never knew until I became an administrator that you could tell the principal that you are not going to do something. With that, with the data, I tracked my data, I monitored what was going on. We tried data notebooks, I did data files, I made some of the most beautiful data notebooks on the planet. Finally, he just pushed me and pushed me and pushed me to have a room dedicated to data, called the WAR room. It is an acronym for Worthy of Academic Results. It was tough in the beginning; we would develop note cards with action data. I could look at historical data and see poor little Winnie is failing. And that is great for me as a classroom teacher to look at and see if I have a lot of students not passing one part that is my fault, but historical really doesn't do us as much good as the action data and that is the purpose of the room. I fought it for so long because no one wants to be faced with that every day, to have to

see that. But it is a great motivator. I put the data on the wall in a secure location in the building. When a student moves, all four teachers have to be ready to move the child. It forces conversations…what are you doing in your classroom because the child is not failing in your classroom and I need to have that. So it really forces conversations, sometimes very heated about what is happening with the kids and it is a beautiful thing to see. We went so far last year to put pictures on the cards because it adds another component to it. The cards travel. This year's 8th graders started with us as 5th graders. I think that wall had 70 note cards on it for 6th graders and as 8th graders this year, we only have 7 on the wall. In the beginning, you are put on the wall because of your past SOL scores, as we move through benchmarks, students are added to the wall based on that data. It is unique in there. We meet once a week. I meet with the teams to talk about what is going on, if it is a discipline problem. There are no excuses now. We don't entertain the fact that so many of our kids come from poverty stricken homes. Many of them have no homes; they sleep at different places throughout the week. We don't look at free/reduced lunch data, because that doesn't mean anything to us in terms of our expectations. It means a lot in other areas of school but not in terms of what we expect of our kids and what we expect of ourselves to do for the children. It is a whole other way of looking at the data that he gave us. One of his favorite lines is, once we know what a child can't do, then the game is over. As professionals that is where we take over. We start out in the beginning with a broad focus on classroom observation, teachers know what we are going to do.

ME: So he kind of helped guide you in terms of observations?

WINNIE: Then we move into January and the focus begins to narrow. But we tell the teachers. They know up front what we are looking for. Oftentimes, they will help us design our observation templates that changes all the time. In just looking at remediation, we remediate during the day and working with the exploratory teachers to pull the students because I can't make the child stay after school and how they come on board with that. It is not perfect, or Shangri-La, but when exploratory teachers begin to ask for bellringers for the SOL tested classes to help prepare at the beginning of our classes, we have come a long way. He helped to bring that out. That is something that when I came to this new role, with the additional school, so

much of what I did with the data doesn't change. No matter which school, there are still just good practices.

ME: So he helped guide you toward data, observation and remediation. You feel he was instrumental in these three areas?

WINNIE: Yes. I really do feel I don't want to turn into a data nerd, that is why we put the pictures on the cards. That card represents someone, someone's child, someone who sits in your classroom. We add the human piece to it. If buildings emit a feeling, some buildings feel like a cloud of oppression. That isn't the case here, the students are greeted. I just think that another thing we can never lose sight of. I know people become frustrated. Teachers become frustrated. They don't have their homework, they don't have this or that, they are not getting it, but we have to remember they are human. We can't become so focused on everything else, that we don't lose sight of that. It is a key component.

ME: It makes it very personal.

WINNIE: It really is. I really do think the WAR room with the pictures is an added component to make it about the children.

ME: The next question, when you think of your first year and you envisioned what it would be like and then the reality of it sets in, during the experience, do you think the coach helped to formulate some differences in what were your beliefs and the realities?

WINNIE: You know when you get your first building, you imagine so many things you can or will do. It is like a first year teacher. We were a little different because I knew what we were up against when I took the job.

ME: You had also done an internship there?

WINNIE: Yes, there were days it went exactly like I thought it would go and there were other days that were just sheer frustration. It wasn't the coach's fault. It was my personality where you want things to be right. It was difficult to sit and listen. He came twice a month for a visit. It was a full day event. I cleared the calendar for an entire day. It was frustrating and it was hurtful. Not that he would ever in a million years hurt my feelings, but it is personal because you put blood, sweat, and tears in it. You have held conferences and you have done everything you know to do and he would visit and it still would not be where it needs to be. It hurt my feelings. It was a struggle I had to realize it is never going to be perfect. At the end of the day we leave saying we have done the best we can do for our students, that has been the biggest lesson I have learned on that end of it. There were days when he would look at me and say stop it, you have to just let it go, it is so much better than where it has been. He could see the frustration build in me. Other times, he could see I needed the frustration and anger to motivate me to get moving so it wouldn't continue like this. The hardest part of my job is to reprimand a teacher, when I have to bring a teacher in and give them a written letter of reprimand. I hate doing that, it is something I'll do if my kids are suffering, the line has to be drawn. It is a hard part because you want to believe everyone is a professional and believe they are bringing all they can to the table. Sometimes he would let that fester in me because he knew I needed that to bring that teacher in and say this is not working and here is your letter and here is a plan of assistance and this is what we need to do from this point forward.

ME: I think that is a perfect example.

WINNIE: One of the first recommendations that was given was that there was a feeling that the teachers didn't have high expectations, didn't have a vested sense of interest for the children. It scared me. We talked about it and he just looked at me. He had worked with previous administrators here. I told him it was unacceptable. I can't work with people who don't like children. He let me rant and rave about it. It only took a week of my being there, I had told everyone that MS needed someone, I didn't know it was me, but truly because of the turnover of administrators, I don't want to say there had been teacher neglect but they felt they had been left out, they felt here is another administrator, what is she going to do, how long is she going to be here before she gets yanked. It wasn't so much how they felt about the kids, but that is how it

manifested itself someway and that is the feeling people got. But that is the furthest thing from the truth. They are dedicated to these children. So when we first sat down to talk about that report, he just let me go with it and then a couple of weeks later, he called me and I said that was really something. I told him it was the feeling but it wasn't the truth of the situation.

ME: Now, we are going to move from the year with the coach to the year to the years without the coach. Now we are going to focus on when you were without the coach. So specifically, since that relationship has ended, can you think of anything you consciously continue to do that you can contribute to that coaching relationship?

WINNIE: I would say the vast majority of what I do as a principal now.

ME: Can you give me some specifics?

WINNIE: The data has followed me. I have some benefit because we did use him as our consultant last year. This year, I am totally without him. The data has followed. The instructional piece and working with the teachers on how to analyze their data, the action data, from the benchmarks, weekly assessments, daily class time, what is happening in class. So much of what I do in terms of that. The love of the kids I brought with me from the classroom but in terms of the plan for the school to achieve state accreditation, but the plan for the direction of the school comes from my experience and what I have learned and implemented from him. There are things that may have fallen by the wayside that didn't work, but the vast majority of it, I continue to us.

ME: Well, since you have mentioned what has fallen by the wayside, can you specifically name some things you consciously are doing differently than the way you did it with the coach and why did you change that?

WINNIE: The first example would be the data, we no longer use the binders and files, we went to the note card situation. The other just didn't work for us. There are lots of things but they have escaped me.

ME: If you think of anything you can email it to me.

WINNIE: Maybe some of the … he was big on the rewards for the students and we do a lot of that. We have been very fortunate to have a 21st century grant, but we have to be cognizant of time so I think some of the things he wanted us to pursue in that way we have gone other routes with it due to time constraints. I am so focused on how good it was, the other things have escaped me.

ME: That is fine. Those are all my questions. Do you have anything you would like to add that I haven't asked you about or anything you feel would be pertinent?

WINNIE: I think in the principal prep program there should be more of this. Because even schools, I joke about there is no sitting back and eating bonbons now that we made full accreditation last year, the bar is constantly being raised. So even schools not in academic trouble in any way, be it AYP or SOLs, I do think there needs to be that data component, there needs to be the instructional focus, what is happening in the classroom. I can go and observe a Latin classroom, I may not know what they are talking about, but I recognize good instruction when I see it. So I think the supervision model, a lot of time is spent on preconference and post conference but really what does good instruction look like. I think often times as principals, I don't know if we go in thinking we know that because we thought we were good teachers, but I think begin able to talk to the faculty about that would help to find a process that will work. But I wish there was a component in the principal prep programs, I know it must cost the state a small fortune to have the coaches, but I think all the schools could benefit from what we did. It isn't a certain one size fits all, but there are components to it that you could mold and make your own for each individual school. I can't say enough good things about it. I believe wholeheartedly there is so much to be said for it. I am so thankful for my part in it because I know it has made me a better principal, it has made the teachers stronger, our kids…they know about data. They know they are going to have to go back after a test and analyze why they chose answers. These are life lessons about the choices you make. It isn't only about passing that test,

it can be tied into how we are making our students better citizens for the world by the choices they are making. I do so believe in that part of it so much.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about it.

For people to realize that having a PASS coach and talking about things, don't get me wrong, the WAR room hasn't been a hit with everyone, but they now know that after each test, there will be a discussion about what needs to be done. They automatically know this is what we are going to do, we meet as a team, they meet as a team, without me and talk about the students and it is just powerful. It is one of the beautiful things about middle school. I think about how it would work at a large high school, it could be done, it would be tricky, but it could be done. It works perfectly at middle school due to the team model.

ME: Our middle schools are also struggling and they also talk about the team model and how middle school is the place to make this work. It seems it just lends itself to middle school success. If you have no other questions for me, let me thank you again for taking the time to talk me. If you have colleagues you believe would be willing to talk to me, please feel free to give them my contact information.

WINNIE: I will certainly pass along your information. Thank you for listening.

ME: If you have any further questions or anything else you would like to share with me or would like me to include, please be in touch. And thank you again.

Appendix E

Invitation to Participate Flyer

Calling all Principals who have been
Provided the Support of a Coach!

My name is Virginia Loving. I am a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University. I am conducting my research through the School of Education where I am seeking to complete my doctoral work in Educational Leadership. I am in the data collection stage of my project and I *__really need your help__*. My dissertation topic is the Sustainability of a Coaching Model on Beginning Principals. Your voluntary participation would involve approximately one hour of your time in an interview setting at a local library. All information will be maintained in a secure, confidential setting. No information provided by you will be used in any way other than anonymously in my findings. No information will be shared with your school district or the provider of your coach.

Your experiences and insight into the coaching program are crucial to my project. Please contact me using the information below. Thank you in advance for your support of this study. Those who have lived the experience provide abundant information on this practice. Your voice and opinions need to be heard. Take this opportunity to share and discuss your coaching experience.

Please contact me by phone (804-512-4165) or email (ginlov@aol.com) at your earliest convenience. I look forward to hearing from you and again thank you for your participation!

Appendix F

Horizonalization of Pertinent Participant Responses

Question	Participant	Response	Researcher Comment
Q1 – Coaching Contribution to Development of Practice	1 - Betty	I think she allowed me to vent and in a nonjudgmental way and I wasn't going to go to a meeting and see her and it allowed me to really say what was on my mind and how I was feeling, if I was frustrated and with that being said, a lot of positives too.	Feedback
		We talked about data.	Data
		We set short and long term goals.	Data
	2 – Bonita	It really helped because I was transitioning back from HS to MS, she had a wealth of information and a realistic view of what MS life was all about so her perspective was a good one. She wasn't that far retired or removed from the same situation herself and I felt her experience with the urban was comparable to mine so.	Feedback
		I don't think I had as strong a grip on using data prior to the experience. She helped me with that.	Data
		How to provide feedback to teachers was one area she helped me with. Taking apart the lesson plans, for substance, best practices.	Feedback
		She helped me to understand how I needed to break it	Data

		down, subgroups, and monitor it.	
		We hadn't lasered down to individual students. She helped me to do that.	Data
	3 - Georgia	I think the thing I was lacking the most was confidence and she just really helped with that. We talked about things and I found out lots of times she agreed and she made me feel better about my own decision making process. That was the biggest thing. Through the coaching, she gave me the confidence to do what I knew what was right.	Self Reflection
		A direct, firm style of communication and that whole experience has made me more conscious of different communication styles, how to talk differently with different people.	Feedback
		I feel that my main weakness was in believing I could do it. I think just having that person to talk to and lots of affirmations, I would do the same thing; that made all the difference in the world.	Confidence
	4 - Henry	I would ask her questions about things, you want to know what to worry about and what not to worry about.	Finding a Focus
		I didn't feel like I was leading all the time. I felt like I was getting prepared, hoping to hold on and then the next year, I knew just enough to know that I wasn't doing or wasn't able to do all the things I wanted to do.	Confidence
		It would help me verbalize things that may dawn in my head but not so much thought	Confidence

		through. It really helped me to touch base on all the different things I was responsible for.	
		Then self reflection happened often when we would get to a part where I didn't have much to say. I just haven't thought about it much (laughter) so it really did help lead to the surface the things that I needed to be thinking about.	Self Reflection
		We would talk about the data.	Data
	5 - Winnie	To look at the data.	Data
		Helped guide me toward data, observation and remediation	Data
		The love of the kids I brought with me from the classroom but in terms of the plan for the school to achieve state accreditation … the plan for the direction of the school comes from my experience and what I have learned and implemented from him.	Data
Q2 – Differences in Practice Attributed to Coaching	1 - Betty	I enjoyed her input. And a lot of the input she gave me validated that I made the right decision.	Confidence
		It provided a lot of validation. As far as my coach having an impact on my decisions as a first year principal, I wouldn't do anything different.	Confidence
		So I don't necessarily think I would change anything due to the coaching process.	Self-Reflection
		I will go ahead and say knowing the coaching process was in place for me and knowing I am her [assistant principal] coach may have made me more aware that she might need a little more	Feedback

		support and help and not just assume that because she is qualified to be an AP she knows how to do things customary to this building.	
	2 - Georgia	I don't know if it was a difference in expectation, I don't know if I really expected things, maybe more a lack of expectations.	Self-Reflection
	3 - Henry	Some come right out and say tell me what it is and I'll take care of it and then there are others that you really have to be careful that you are not doing more harm than good with the conversation. It was helpful that she was like that with me and kind of modeled that when we spoke. There were times I felt like I wasn't doing the right thing, or I wasn't sure and she would talk me through it so I would come up with the answer and then I would be like…Oh…great idea!	Feedback and/or Self Reflection
		Let them[teachers] come up with the ideas.	Feedback
		You know, even with the hard conversations, when you have difficult situations you have to talk through, they don't have to be shouting matches, you can diplomatically work your way through it so the person understands why you need to talk to them about this and it does make a big difference. I personally shoot for how to talk to them about serious things and it has helped me not to be someone I am not. I can still be myself yet still be	Feedback

		effective.	
		I needed help with the management because there were so many different things that you don't even think of.	Self-Reflection
		Prompted me to create a support system of other principals that were facing the same situations.	Feedback
Q3 – Continue to Do Now That Coach Has Been Removed	1 - Betty	I still journal. I constantly go back and look at our school improvement plan; I am constantly monitoring myself similar to the monthly monitoring I did with the coach. I may not formally sit down with someone, but I keep the journaling.	Self Reflection
		I look through my calendar of last year and this year and I compare where I am as far as my instructional observations.	Self Reflection
		Journaling is probably the biggest thing that I still continue to do.	Self Reflection
		I have continued to do little things for climate. Such as when I am done with an observation, I put notes in teacher's boxes, thank you for the observation.	Feedback
	2 - Bonita	Monitoring the data, gathering and monitoring data.	Data
		Providing feedback to the teachers. Holding people accountable.	Feedback
		Some personal things, you can't live this job which I do at times, but I actually heard her. She was a firm believer that you have to get away from it sometimes in order to preserve your sanity, so it was a thing I do remember clearly. It cannot be the end all.	Finding a Focus

		I think she caused me…I had been through National Boards and you have to be reflective and she got me to start thinking about the same sort of things as an administrator.	Self Reflection
	3 - Georgia	Being very conscious of staff input in faculty meetings. I always plan to have staff input.	Feedback
	4 - Henry	It would help me verbalize things that may dawn in my head but not so much thought through. It really helped me to touch base on all the different things I was responsible for. I think it carries on today.	Finding a Focus
		Cycling through the different responsibilities I am trying to do. That has become part of my mental processes which have really helped me a lot. It helps me make sure I am touching base with everything, it helps me schedule things, it helps me visualize what I want to do down the road, it helps me fit things in.	Self Reflection
	5 – Winnie	I would say the vast majority of what I do as a principal now	Self-Reflection
		The data has followed me. I have some benefit because we did use him as our consultant last year. This year, I am totally without him. The data has followed. The instructional piece and working with the teachers on how to analyze their data, the action data, from the benchmarks, weekly assessments, daily class time, what is happening in class.	Data

		So much of what I do in terms of that.	
		He was big on the rewards for the students and we do a lot of that.	Feedback
4 – Doing Differently Now that Coach Has Been Removed	1 – Betty	I am listening better. I am more of an active listener. I think I did a lot of talking and in reflection, I think with the coach I talked through that I needed to be a better listener. I adored my coach, but the one thing I am doing differently is I am talking less and listening more with everybody.	Feedback
	2 - Bonita	I just wish I had held people accountable up front because	Self-Reflection
		I have mellowed. I am not so reactive. I think I am more proactive than reactive now. I try to anticipate rather than suffer the consequences	
	4 - Henry	I don't know if I can say I am doing it differently because I am no longer with my coach, no, I can say, there was a part of me that relied on my coach to affirm some of my feelings of being overwhelmed and being kind of bogged down with managerial tasks at first. I think having the second year helped me wean from that.	Confidence
	5 - Winnie	The first example would be the data, we no longer use the binders and files, we went to the note card situation. The other just didn't work for us.	Data

Vita

Virginia (Ginny) F. Loving has been in the field of education for over 30 years. She currently serves as an Assistant Principal with Richmond City Public Schools. Prior to her current administrative position, Ginny was a classroom teacher, also with RPS, spending many years in the primary grades.

Ginny was born August 19, 1955 in Louisa County, was raised, and continues to reside in Goochland County, Virginia. She graduated from Longwood College in 1977 where she earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Elementary Education. In1998, she completed a Master of Education (MEd) degree at Virginia Commonwealth University in Educational Leadership with concentrations in Administration and Supervision. In 2011, Ginny received her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Virginia Commonwealth University in Educational Leadership.

Ginny's research interests are in the areas of improving school performance through the improvement of teacher and leadership practices at the school building level. Her intention is to continue researching these areas and providing instruction to those who are most able to make these improvements happen.

Currently, Ginny is considering retirement and dreaming of what's next!