

ABSTRACT

Michael A. Casey, BUILDING BRIDGES: EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND BEGINNING TEACHERS (Under the direction of Dr. Larry Hodgkins). Department of Educational Leadership, May, 2024.

Retaining beginning teachers is critical to the success of schools as fewer teachers are entering the profession. Traditional teacher support programs fall short of providing wrap-around support to beginning teachers. This mixed methods action research inquiry examined the benefits of implementing an executive-style coaching framework between beginning teachers and their principal in a Title 1 Elementary School in Eastern North Carolina. This inquiry measured quantitatively the self-efficacy of beginning teacher participants before and after receiving regular coaching through the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey. Qualitative data was collected from beginning teacher participants from each coaching session and a concluding focus group. The results indicated that teacher self-efficacy was positively impacted by their participation in the coaching framework with their principal. Implementing a coaching program may help school administrators positively support beginning teachers in their schools.

BUILDING BRIDGES: EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING
A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION
AND BEGINNING TEACHERS

A Dissertation

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By
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DEDICATION

This dissertation would not have been possible without the love and support of my wife, Jennifer, and son, Patrick. You have given me the time, strength, and motivation to complete this dissertation. This dissertation is dedicated to both of you. Lastly, this dissertation would never have been possible without the lifelong support of my parents, John and Debbie, who have encouraged my pursuit of education from the beginning.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

School districts across the country are struggling to attract and retain beginning teachers. Some teachers change schools or districts, while others leave the profession altogether. The impacts on Title I schools who have students with low socioeconomic status are the greatest, with at least 16% of the teachers from these schools leaving the profession annually (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019). Additionally, many school districts are finding it difficult to find qualified teaching applicants. Between 2009 and 2014, teacher preparation programs saw a 35% decrease in enrollment. This correlates to fewer teachers entering the profession. Schools cannot afford to lose their newly hired teachers (Abitabile, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has not helped to improve teacher retention. In a survey of 700 teachers, 84% stated that teaching had become more stressful than it was pre-pandemic (Loewus, 2021). Keeping our teachers in our classrooms, specifically our newly minted teachers, is critical for the success of our students and schools.

Each year school districts hire teachers who are new to the profession. In North Carolina, teachers who have less than three years of experience are designated as beginning teachers (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020b). Beginning teachers undertake vitally important roles in classrooms across North Carolina each year. Each school district is required to submit teacher employment data to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). According to NCDPI (2020b), beginning teacher attrition for the 2019-2020 school year was 11.7%, while the attrition rate for the remainder of the teaching force was comparatively less at 6.7%. Building leadership plays a large role in selecting, growing, and retaining beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Principals and assistant principals usually engage with beginning teachers for formal teacher evaluations, classroom

walk-through feedback, professional development plans, and basic onboarding. Beginning teachers do not interact often with administrators in a non-evaluative setting. As such, support for beginning teachers could potentially be improved by implementing an administrator beginning teacher coaching model.

Background of the Focus of Practice

The State of North Carolina requires all beginning teachers to receive beginning teacher induction support for three full years. Beginning teachers face a variety of challenges during their first years in the classroom. Being new to the profession, beginning teachers are working to establish a work-life balance, implement new instructional practices, use new management tools and maintain a healthy lifestyle. This is an opportunity for school leadership to help beginning teachers navigate their beginning years through periodic coaching. According to the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) Survey (NCDPI, 2020b), statewide 33% of teachers cited school leadership as a factor in their willingness to continue teaching at their school. Sutchter et al. (2016) found that over half of the teachers who leave the profession attribute their decision to the school culture and climate of support cultivated by their building administration. Despite the impact of school administration on beginning teacher outcomes, beginning teachers are only assigned a mentor teacher (NC GS 115C-300.1). This data opens the door for building leaders to assume an active role in coaching beginning teachers. This inquiry investigated the outcomes associated with implementing an administrator-led beginning teacher coaching model.

Context of Inquiry

River Park Elementary School (River Park ES) is one of 38 schools within the Tar River County School District located in Eastern North Carolina. To maintain a high degree of

confidentiality, the school, district, and employees will be referred to by pseudonyms. The school is a traditional pre-kindergarten through fifth grade public elementary school with approximately 630 students and more than 40 teachers. River Park ES is designated as a Title 1 School. Funding is allocated to the school based on students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch based on demonstrated financial need. Title I “provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, para. 1). Based on 2021-2022 school performance data, River Park ES received the designation of low-performing (NCDPI, 2022a). Annually, River Park ES averages ten or more beginning teachers who are in the first three years of the profession (see Figure 1).

Tar River County School District has created a three-year Beginning Teacher Support Program, or BTSP. The purpose of the program is to provide “direction, support, and feedback” to beginning teachers during their first three years in the classroom (Tar River County Schools, 2021, p. 5) The BTSP includes several resources. Some of the resources include access to professional development, observing other teachers, peer support and mentorship. Beginning teachers are assigned a school-based lead mentor who provides assistance and information in an effort to help acclimate and support the beginning teacher to their new role and school. The lead mentor hosts monthly beginning teacher support meetings where topics related to teaching and support are discussed. Additionally, professional development is offered through each school as well as through the district’s Division of Excellence, Equity, and Leadership (DEEL). Through the BTSP, beginning teachers have access to a career pathway specialist (CPS). The CPS helps assist beginning teachers with questions and issues associated with their teaching license. First

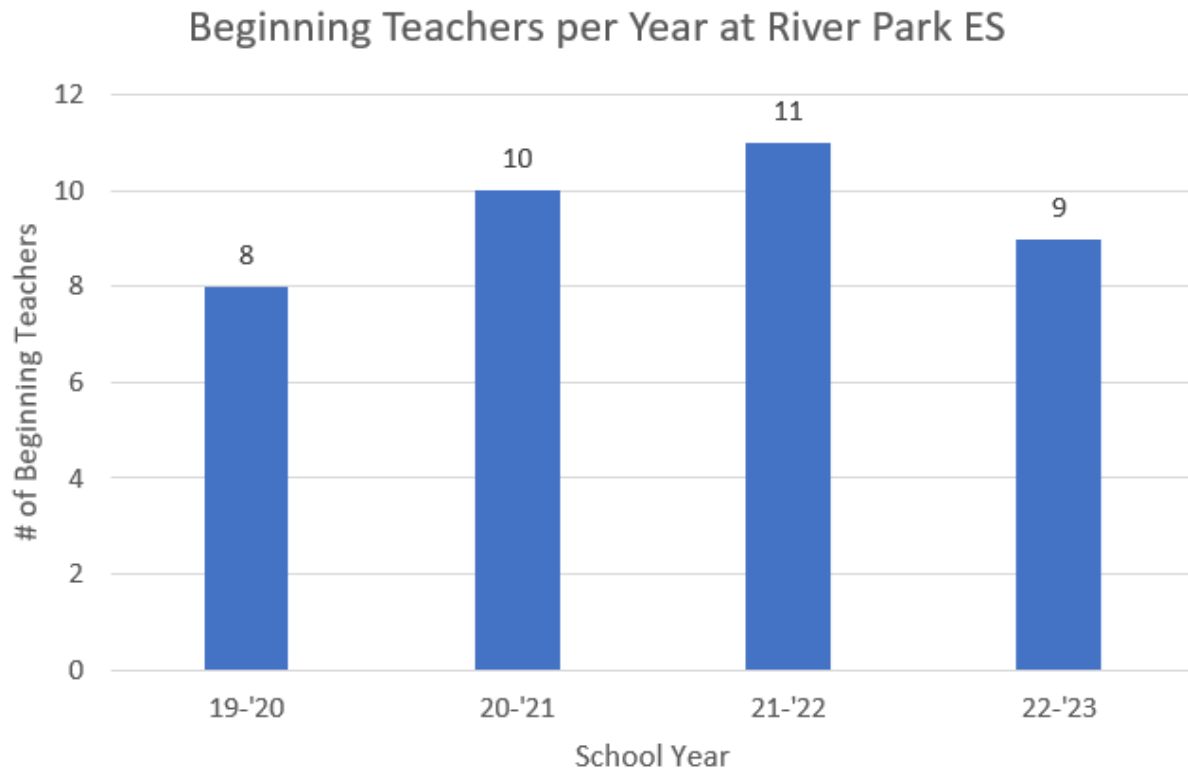
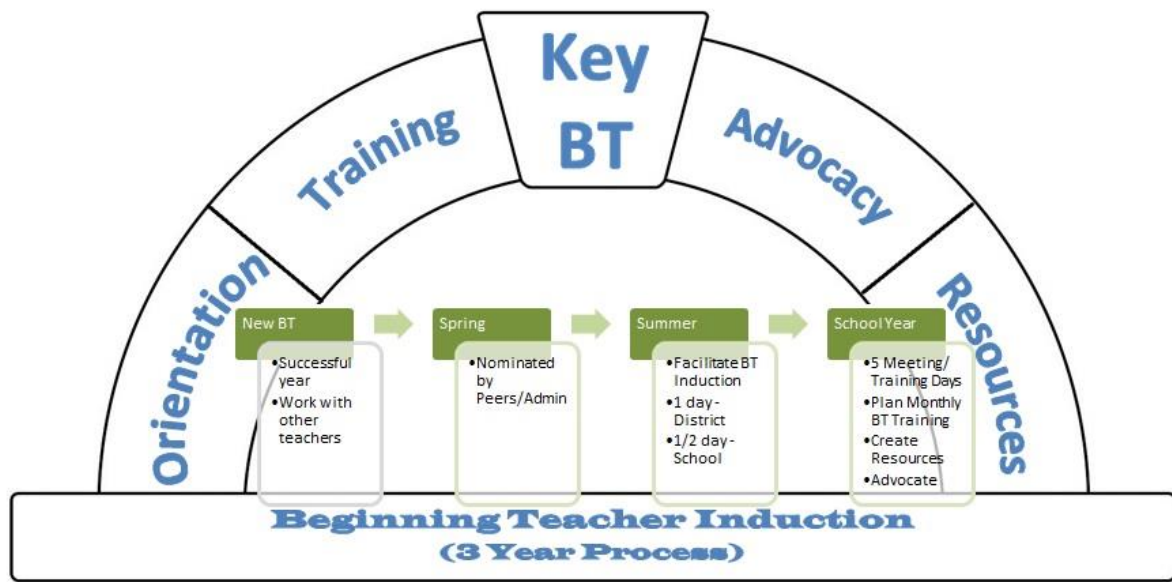


Figure 1. Number of beginning teachers per year at River Park ES.

year beginning teachers also participate in a three-day orientation to review policies and best practices. Lastly, all beginning teachers will receive feedback through observations. The BTSP Handbook states, BTs “will be observed three times by a qualified school administrator and at least once by a teacher. These veteran educators will be able to give you support and feedback regarding classroom practice” (Tar River County Schools, 2021, p. 5).

In Tar River County Schools, building principals can designate one to two beginning teachers in their building as “Key Beginning Teachers,” or Key BT. One of the purposes of the Key BT program is to invest in highly effective beginning teachers. Key BTs receive additional training and support, which serves as an investment towards growing their potential. Key BTs receive ongoing coaching through the Key BT program. The Key BT program “is designed to work with highly effective Beginning Teachers to train and support them to become collaborative leaders with other Beginning Teachers” (Tar River County Schools Department of Equity and Educator Leadership, 2021, para. 2). A goal of the Key BT program is to retain the most effective BTs. Figure 2 illustrates how the Key BT program is implemented within the three-year beginning teacher support framework.

The Key BT program was originally grant-funded in an effort to retain the most effective beginning teachers. Because of the success of the program, the district began funding the Key BT program once the grant funding was exhausted. A 2018 report found that over a 3-year period, Tar River County Schools retained 74% of key beginning teachers versus 39% of non-key beginning teachers (Measurement Incorporated, 2018). This indicates that there may be value to providing additional support to all beginning teachers, not only those designated as Key BTs. The TWC (NCDPI, 2022b) also found that of nine beginning teachers at River Park ES,



Note. <https://sites.google.com/a/pitt.k12.nc.us/pitt-county-teacher-support/key-bt>.

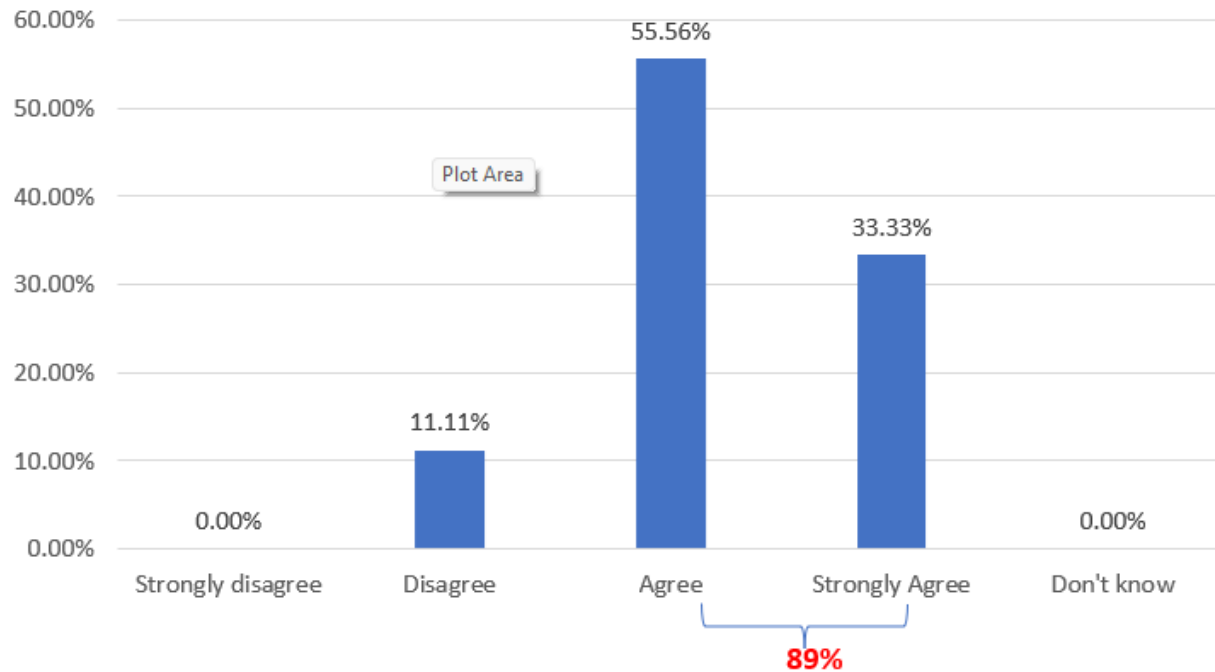
Figure 2. Key BT Framework.

89% or eight of nine, acknowledged that additional support is an important factor in their decision to continue teaching (see Figure 3).

Beginning teachers also have access to building-level supports. Beginning teachers are matched with a teacher mentor who commonly has had success teaching in a similar subject area as the beginning teacher. Mentors help beginning teachers with day-to-day issues. Each building has an instructional coach who assists beginning teachers with professional development and installing instructional frameworks. Administrators evaluate beginning teachers and provide feedback during classroom observations. These interactions are largely seen as evaluative by teachers. This leaves a gap where administrators can take a much more holistic, non-evaluative approach to engage with beginning teachers. Figure 4 graphically depicts the supports available to beginning teachers at the district and building levels.

Tar River County Schools began a program in 2020 to train school leadership to be coaching leaders to develop teachers in schools. The training for administrators is conducted by Building Champions, an executive coaching company. Their approach is based on implementing a coaching framework to engage with employees on an individual level. According to Gallup (2020), 36% of employees are actively engaged in their work. Engaged employees are found to have low levels of turnover and high levels of job satisfaction. This type of coaching framework could be beneficial for administrators to use with beginning teachers. The foundation of this coaching system is based on four conversation areas: well-being, vision, execution, and productivity. Tar River County Schools has adopted this type of coaching for school leaders to use and apply.

Overall, the additional support I received as a new teacher has been important in my decision to continue teaching at this school.



Note. <https://www.nctwcs.org/>.

Figure 3. River Park ES Teacher Working Conditions Survey- Question 11.7.

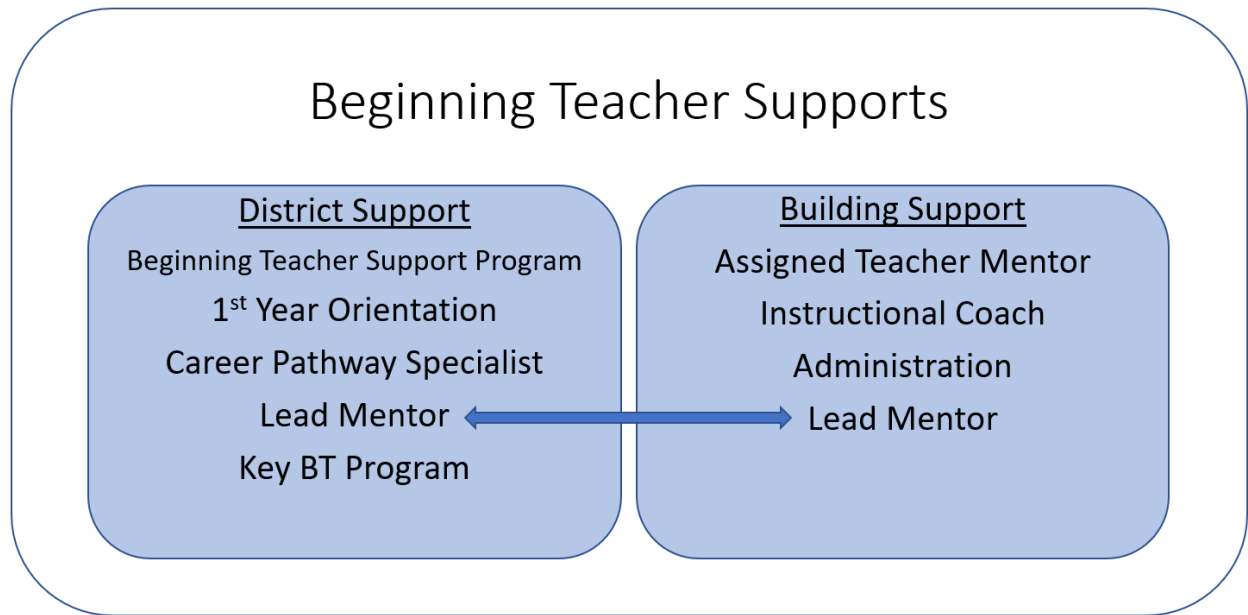


Figure 4. Tar River County Schools beginning teacher supports.

Statement of Focus of Practice

This inquiry will investigate the benefits of implementing a coaching system between school building administrators and beginning teachers. Beginning teachers often face challenges and stressors both inside and outside of the classroom (McCarthy et al., 2020; Plaza & Jamito, 2021; Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Coaching gives administrators the chance to address situations related to, but not limited to beginning teacher stress, beginning teacher workload, instructional capacity, and managerial skills. Utilizing a coaching framework, building leaders will be able to differentiate support and tailor it to the needs of the individual teacher. Through the use of open-ended questions and active listening, building leaders will be able to delve into the root cause of issues. Frequent and ongoing coaching will be provided to beginning teachers. The four conversation areas will help guide coaching conversations and provide opportunities to deepen the relationship between the administrator and beginning teacher.

This type of coaching support is similar to executive coaching found in the private sector but is unique to the teaching profession. Executive coaching was originally directed toward high-level business leaders. Coaching sessions engaged leaders on behavioral changes that could lead to improved personal and professional outcomes. While some of these changes pertained to improving workplace performance, they also address issues like work-life balance and self-improvement (Van Oosten et al., 2019). Executive style coaching or multi-competency coaching is not found in the teaching profession. The current climate of education is often seen as stressful by many teachers (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Coaching is of particular interest when considering teacher support and self-efficacy. The implementation of the coaching framework could impact the self-efficacy of beginning teachers.

The purpose of this inquiry is to implement an administrator-led BT coaching program, specifically the Tar River County Schools Coaching Framework, with beginning teachers. This inquiry intends to provide support to beginning teachers and lead to a greater understanding of how an executive style coaching framework may impact and benefit teachers, including their self-efficacy. I will capture teacher feedback regarding the impact and benefits of this coaching method. Lastly, the inquiry will investigate to what extent non-evaluative coaching impacts beginning teachers' perception of their building administrator, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy.

Focus of Practice Guiding Questions

The following questions will help to guide this inquiry:

1. How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?

By implementing the administrator-led beginning teacher coaching program, I anticipate being able to answer these questions through the collection of data on the program. Additionally, through answering these questions, I will be able to examine the benefits, if any, of the coaching program on beginning teachers. The implementation, inquiry methods, and data collection and analysis practices will be detailed in Chapter 3.

Overview of Inquiry

To best answer the Focus of Practice guiding questions, I will conduct a mixed methods, multiple phase inquiry rooted in action research processes. I chose to conduct a mixed methods inquiry as it allows me to compare a variety of participant perspectives with both quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, I will be better positioned to evaluate both processes and

outcomes of implementing an administrator-beginning teacher executive coaching framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

This inquiry will focus on three phases. Each phase will follow a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle (Langley et al., 2009). The first phase focuses on gathering and analyzing existing data related to administrator-beginning teacher support at River Park ES. Additionally, an area of interest related to beginning teacher self-efficacy was developed. The focus group questions were piloted with 12 teachers. Adjustments were made based on their feedback.

During the second phase of inquiry, the administrator-led beginning teacher coaching process will be established. For this portion of the inquiry, I will apply the executive coaching framework, Tar River County Schools Coaching Framework. As an administrator with Tar River County Schools, I have received training with other administrators in this coaching framework. River Park Elementary School has 9 beginning teachers during the 2022-2023 school year. Four beginning teachers will be selected as participants. Each participant will take a self-efficacy survey before engaging in coaching and after participating in their final coaching session. These beginning teachers will receive 30-minute bi-weekly coaching sessions. Throughout the coaching implementation, I will record field notes on each coaching session.

For the third phase of inquiry, I will develop a plan to collect outcome data by re-administering the self-efficacy survey to the four beginning teacher participants who originally took the survey. Additionally, I will conduct a focus group with beginning teacher coaching participants to understand the benefits and experiences of the coaching that the coaching participants received. The focus group will be conducted by an outside facilitator to ensure that participants will not feel influenced by my position in the school or relationship to the inquiry. The focus group will utilize a semi-structured process with open-ended questions. Qualitative

data from the focus group will be analyzed to determine if any themes, patterns, and conclusions become apparent.

I will utilize several techniques to improve the rigor and validity of this inquiry. I conducted a pilot testing of the data collection instrumentation used. I plan to analyze several data sources: existing data, pre and post self-efficacy surveys, field notes and focus group transcript. Additionally, I will utilize member checking to allow participants an opportunity to ensure that I have accurately captured their experiences and perspectives (Mertler, 2021).

Inquiry Partners

Collaborative partners will be critical to the implementation of this inquiry. These partners will help me maintain the validity and rigor of my inquiry by helping to eliminate bias and assist in implementation, particularly during the data collection and analysis phase. Table 1 describes the name, title, and role that each partner is performing in this inquiry. Chapter 3 includes a detailed discussion of my inquiry partners, their pedigree, and their roles.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This inquiry will use a blended framework. The theoretical framework of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy research will be used to lay the foundation for both action and inquiry within the focus of practice. Bandura's work investigates how the beliefs and aptitudes of a person can impact their self-efficacy (Bandura 1997; Bandura & Wessels, 1994). Self-efficacy may be impacted by coaching conversations between an administrator and beginning teacher. These coaching conversations are conducted with the understanding of Aguilar's transformational coaching philosophy, which is the liaison between the theoretical and conceptual application portion of this inquiry. Aguilar's transformational coaching model concentrates on three areas: beliefs, behaviors, and ways of being. The model considers the context of each individuals work

Table 1

Inquiry Partners by Title and Role

Title	Role
Faculty from East Carolina University	Focus group facilitator, dissertation chair, data analysis, rigor, and validity
Director of Educator Support and Leadership Development Tar River County Schools	Inquiry partner, coaching implementation, data analysis, rigor, and validity
Lead Mentor Support River Park Elementary School	Day to day liaison regarding building level work with BTs

as it related to the actual person and how they are situated related to the institutions and systems that they work and live in (Aguilar, 2013; Aguilar, 2018). Building Champions and the Tar River County Schools Coaching Leader Framework serve as the conceptual component of this inquiry. This framework will be used to guide the coaching conversations with beginning teachers. A more detailed discussion is provided in Chapter 2.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms will be utilized throughout the inquiry. Their associated definitions are as follows:

Beginning Teacher (BT) - Teachers who are new to teaching. Identified as a BT for their first three years in the profession. New and novice teachers are the same as beginning teachers. (NCDPI, 2018).

Executive Coach - traditionally used as a holistic approach to improving performance and career trajectories of business executives. Seeks insights into behavioral and mental mindsets to grow participant towards achieving goals and overcoming challenges (Passamore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Whitmore, 2002).

Instructional Coach (IC) - school staff member(s) who, “partner with teachers to analyze current reality, set goals, identify and explain teaching strategies to hit the goals, and provide support until the goals are met” (Knight, 2016, para. 1).

Self-efficacy - one’s belief in their abilities to “execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments” (Bandura, 1977, p. 191).

Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWC) - survey administered anonymously to staff that “to determine strengths and improvement opportunities in schools and districts” (NCDPI, 2022b, para. 1).

Assumptions

There are several assumptions that could impact the outcome of this inquiry. The first assumption is that participants will be honest and forthcoming throughout the implementation of the coaching model as well as during the data collection phases. To address this assumption, pseudonyms will be used for participants throughout the inquiry and their responses will be kept in confidence.

Another assumption of this inquiry is that participants will make a good faith effort to participate in the coaching sessions. It is assumed that participants will be intentional in their coaching sessions and engage in thoughtful dialogue. To help ensure that participants are interested and willing to participate in the inquiry, I will explain in detail what their participation will entail before their commitment. Participant involvement in the inquiry will be voluntary.

Lastly, it was assumed that participating in this inquiry would have a positive effect on the participants. Participation was not meant to negatively impact any of the beginning teachers who participated.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this inquiry is limited to four participant beginning teachers at River Park ES. Due to the time commitment associated with coaching, beginning teacher participants were capped at four participants. A small sample size ensured that both the participants and I could engage in the coaching sessions with fidelity. The participants in this inquiry participated willingly. The number of teachers that can be coached at any particular time is specific to the administrator and school site in which they serve. The results of this inquiry are specific to River Park ES.

The self-efficacy portion of the inquiry provided an opportunity to survey beginning

teachers who participated in on going coaching. To examine the potential impact of receiving coaching from an administrator on beginning teacher self-efficacy, a survey was used to examine increases or decreases in self-efficacy. This inquiry is only examining changes to self-efficacy as a result of participating in coaching. While beginning teachers receive a variety of supports and experiences, it is the aim of this inquiry to focus on the impact of coaching.

Limitations

There are a few confounding variables that could impact the results of this inquiry. The coaching model being implemented, Tar River County Schools Coaching Leader Framework, recommends two-week coaching intervals. Some factors were out of our control, such as state testing, calendar breaks, and illness. This was combated by establishing expectations for coaching and setting up a coaching calendar with each participant.

There is a limitation that that the inherent power dynamic between my role as a principal at River Park Elementary School and the participant beginning teachers could impact the outcome of the inquiry. To address this limitation, I worked with the assistant principal to share evaluative responsibilities regarding the coaching participants. This allows each participant to be evaluated by multiple administrators, in addition to the required peer observation. The content of the coaching sessions will be kept confidential. Topics or issues discussed in coaching sessions will not impact the participants' evaluations. Additionally, while it is assumed that participating in the coaching will be a positive experience, the participants will not receive any additional benefits.

As an evaluator at my school site, evaluating beginning teacher coaching participants who took the self-efficacy survey could impact survey results. As such, participants may have responded in a manner that was in line with the anticipated outcomes of the inquiry. I was able to

mitigate this limitation for the participants who I coached directly by working with the administrative team to share beginning teacher evaluations rather than being the sole evaluator.

Due to the relationship between myself and the beginning teachers who received coaching, it was necessary to bring in an outside partner to oversee the coaching focus group. While I considered administering the focus group questions myself, participants could have been inclined to respond more favorably due to my position in the school and their desire to provide responses that supported the inquiry. The outside partner was responsible for administering the focus group questions and collecting responses during the focus group session.

Lastly, beginning teachers who were on performance improvement plans or were recipients of any letters of reprimand were excluded from this inquiry. Performance improvement plans generally require specific action steps that a teacher must take to exit the plan. Beginning teachers on performance improvement plans could impact survey and coaching results if being on a plan is viewed negatively by the teacher. Beginning teachers in good professional standing were eligible to participate in the inquiry.

Significance of Inquiry

Advances in Equity

This inquiry will implement an executive style coaching framework adopted for educators. This coaching model will be the first venture into administrators engaging beginning teachers in holistic coaching in Tar River County Schools. River Park Elementary School is designated a high poverty school with beginning teachers in almost a third of the core classrooms. Retaining teachers and decreasing the number of beginning teachers could positively influence student achievement. Teacher turnover can have a negative impact on student achievement and school communities (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Replacing effective teachers in

high-poverty schools can be challenging (Adnot et al., 2016; Jacob et al., 2012; Young, 2018).

This inquiry will impact students in classrooms staffed with novice teachers. An ancillary benefit of this inquiry may find that coaching beginning teachers could improve classroom practices that will impact student learning outcomes.

Teacher Retention and Support

This coaching framework supports beginning teachers by engaging them in coaching conversations that could impact their decision to continue teaching. Teacher retention is an area of concern in high poverty schools. Schools are facing increased teacher turnover rates (Greenburg et al., 2016). River Park ES is designated as a Title I school that has been labeled an academically low-performing school. Frequently, high performing teachers in low performing high poverty schools leave to teach in schools with low levels of poverty (Boyd et al., 2008). Utilizing this coaching model will help to generate dialogue between the administrator and beginning teacher. This will give the administrator an opportunity to offer support. The executive coaching model targets improving beginning teacher self-efficacy and subsequently retaining teachers in the profession in a high poverty school.

Advances in Practice

This inquiry will be the first research initiative designed to support beginning teachers by implementing a coaching model led by building administration in Tar River County Schools. The current state-required evaluation procedures do not offer a process for school administrators to offer 1:1 individualized coaching to support the needs of beginning teachers (NCDPI, 2018). Through the implementation of an executive style coaching model, this inquiry will address administrator support of beginning teachers. Teacher feeling of administrator support is one of the largest determining factors in whether a teacher stays or leaves their school (Sutcher et al.,

2016). It is a goal of this inquiry to improve the relationship between administrators and beginning teachers by utilizing an executive coaching model.

Summary

Teachers are leaving the profession at a high rate across the United States (Kena et al., 2016). In North Carolina, over 10% of beginning teachers do not return to their classrooms across the state (NCDPI, 2020a). One of the most cited reasons a teacher leaves their school is due to lack of support from their administration (Sutcher et al., 2016). This inquiry will implement an executive style coaching framework between administrator and beginning teachers. The primary aim of this research is to better understand the benefits of coaching and the potential impact on beginning teacher self-efficacy. Chapter 2 will discuss research pertaining to coaching, self-efficacy, beginning teacher retention, induction, and evaluation.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this inquiry is to implement an executive style coaching framework between administrators and beginning teachers in order to support and address the needs of beginning teachers. This inquiry will help to understand the benefits of implementing this framework as well as the impact coaching can have on teacher self-efficacy. The literature has revealed that building administrator plays an important role in supporting beginning teachers and building a positive school culture (Sutcher et al., 2016).

This first section of this chapter discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework of this inquiry. Bandura's self-efficacy research serves as a basis for a theoretical understanding while the Tar River County Schools Coaching Framework, influenced by Building Champions, will be the conceptual coaching framework used in this inquiry. The following sections will address beginning teacher retention and working conditions including research that considers the extent to which the principal can impact these areas positively or negatively. The literature also recognizes a potential gap in how teachers receive feedback and support from their building administrator. This section will also review literature pertaining the self-efficacy of teachers. Teacher self-efficacy is built through different experiences and interactions with people (Bandura, 1977). The belief in a teacher's own ability to not only perform well in their classroom but as also impact student learning is at the core of individual teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Lastly, the executive coaching model put forth by Building Champions and Tar River County Schools will be discussed. While this model has been implemented by Building Champions in the business sector, there is limited literature exploring the application of an executive coaching model between building school administrators and beginning teachers.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Bandura's (1977) work on self-efficacy contributes largely to the theoretical framework of this inquiry. Often, school administrators are concerned with the prerequisite knowledge a beginning teacher has pertaining to curriculum, classroom management, teaching, and assessment. Bandura's self-efficacy framework establishes that knowledge and understanding alone does not necessarily translate into positive performance outcomes. He posits that it is important that the individual have the required beliefs and behaviors to perform and achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). "Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to perform in ways that give them some control over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1999, p. 46). Teacher self-efficacy is derived from the degree to which a teacher feels confident or capable of meeting student learning outcomes through their instruction despite challenges or difficulties (Tschennen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The executive coaching model put forth by Building Champions is largely based on a transformational coaching model. Aguilar (2013) recognizes that teachers operate not only in their own classroom but also as part of a school and even larger, a school system. Transformational coaching moves beyond individual challenges a teacher may face in their classroom and asks the teacher to situate themselves within a collaborative school system or even society. This type of coaching has the teacher looking both inward and outward at an issue (Aguilar, 2018).

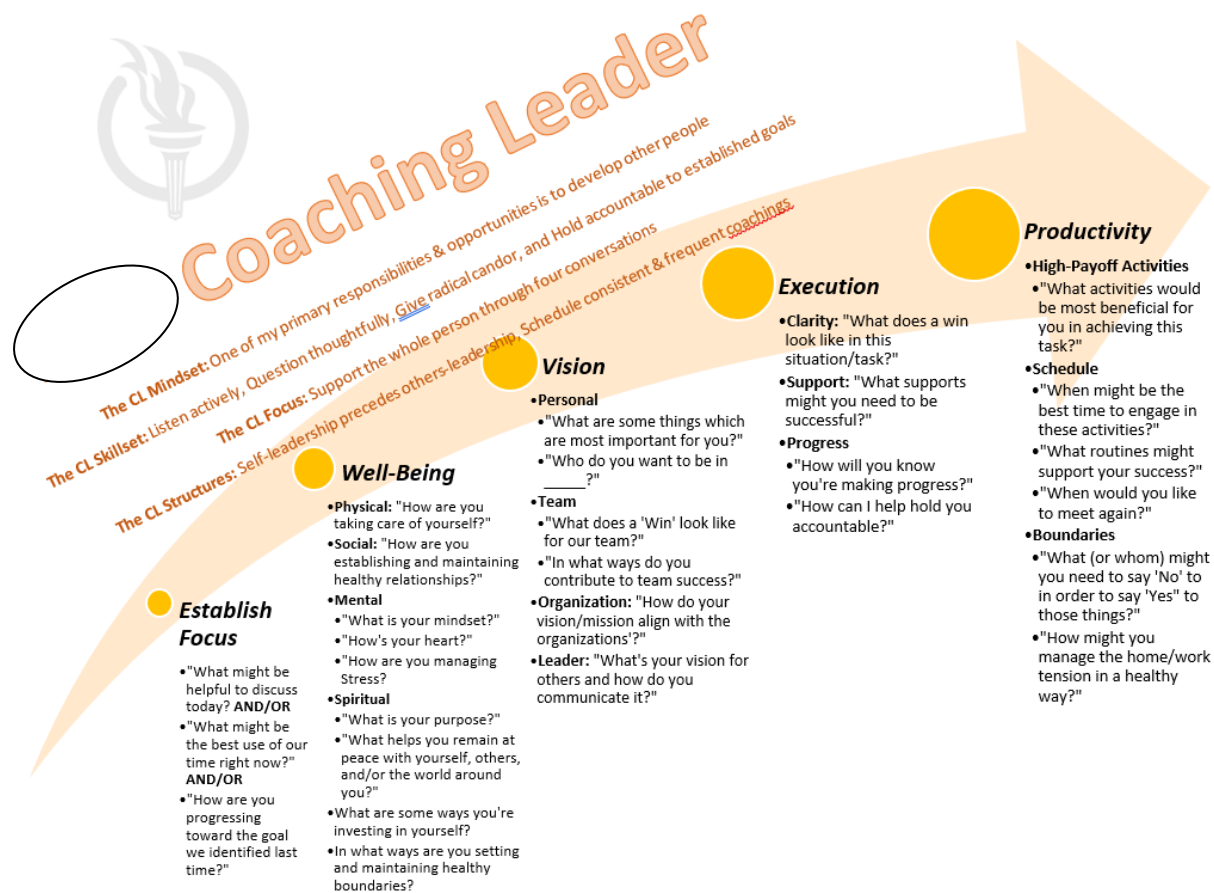
Building Champions is a company that provides executive coaching in the private and public sector. Tar River County Schools (TRCS) adopted their *Becoming a Coaching Leader* coursework in 2021. TRCS is using this coursework to build coaching leaders with school administrators. This inquiry will focus on using the coaching model that is taught as part of the

“Becoming a Coaching Leader” course through “Building Champions.” This will serve as the conceptual framework of this inquiry (see Figure 5). This coaching model utilizes four key coaching conversations: well-being, vision, execution, and productivity (Building Champions, 2021). As part of these conversations, the coach utilizes open ended questions to establish dialogue and reflection surrounding these core four areas (Harkavy, 2007).

This inquiry blends the transformative coaching tenants posed by Aguilar with the TRCS/Building Champion Coaching framework. Aguilar (2013) believes that active listening is one of the highest priority skills for a coach to have. Active listening is defined as “a communication strategy where the listener feedback what the speaker said by restating or paraphrasing what was heard. The listener seeks confirmation that he understood what the speaker was saying” (Aguilar, 2013, p. 317). This parallels the philosophy of Building Champions which puts forth the 70/30 rule, where 30% of your time is spent speaking and asking powerful questions while the majority of your time, 70% is spent listening (Building Champions, 2021). In implementing these coaching conversations, the researcher is interested in understanding the benefits associated with school leaders coaching beginning teachers and the potential implications on the self-efficacy of beginning teachers.

Beginning Teacher Retention

Across the United States, only 50% of beginning teachers remain in the classroom after 5 years (García & Weiss, 2019; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; Olson-Stewart et al., 2021). It has been predicted that over 316,000 new teachers will be needed per year by 2025. It is important to retain beginning teachers as teacher shortages will eclipse more than 110,000 positions annually (Sutcher et al., 2016). Some positions are tougher to fill than others, specifically in the area of



Because better humans make better leaders & teachers

Figure 5. Tar River County Schools Coaching Leader Framework.

exceptional children. Over 11% of beginning teachers in North Carolina left the classroom during the 2019-2020 school year (NCDPI, 2020a).

The effects of teacher attrition impacts schools and students in several ways. According to the Learning Policy Institute (2021), school districts spend upwards of \$20,000 on hiring a single teacher. Outside of the cost, teacher attrition can also impact student learning, especially if high performing teachers leave. High-performing teachers generate 5 to 6 more months of student learning than low-performing teachers. In districts studied by The New Teacher Project, up to 16% of high-performing teachers leave the profession early in their careers (Jacob et al., 2012). Teacher attrition can be attributed to lower student learning outcomes on standardized tests (Hanushek, et al. 2016). Due to teacher shortages, schools are not always able to replace a teacher with a similar or more effective teacher. Students may have teachers who are weaker or less experienced than the teacher who left (Ingersoll, 2001; Jacob et al., 2012). When a teacher leaves, it does not happen in a vacuum, it generally impacts many more teachers in the school community. A revolving door of beginning teachers puts continuous weight and responsibility on veteran teachers, who usually are tasked with supporting their new colleagues (Ozder, 2011). Schools that have an exodus of teachers note that this negatively impacts morale and sense of community. Both induction programs and building principals can help to thwart this from happening by supporting beginning teachers (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

Instead of focusing on the teacher shortage by recruiting more teachers, principals could consider focusing on retaining the teachers that they already have. Some retention methods, like increasing salaries, are outside the control of the building principal. However, increasing classroom support and teacher mentorship can make a difference. All teachers, including beginning teachers, complete the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey every two

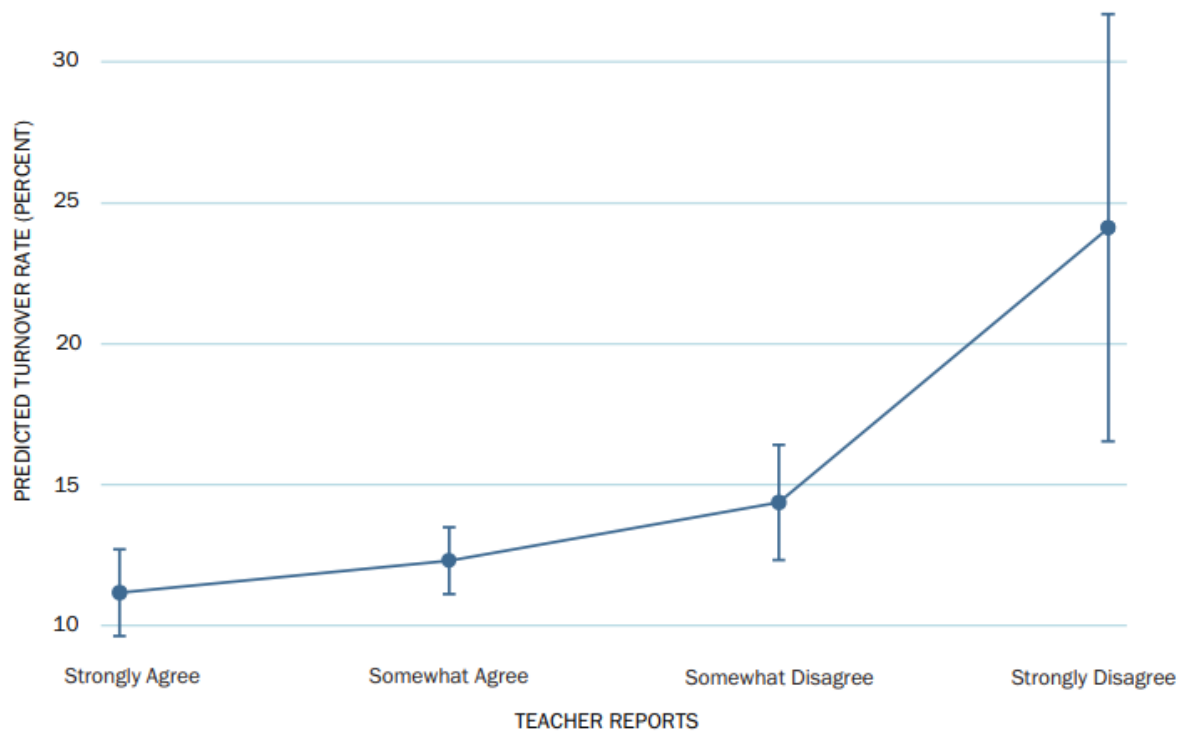
years. The majority of beginning teachers view mentoring as helpful (Hirsh & Emerick, 2007). “Improving teachers' working conditions would contribute to lower rates of new teacher turnover, thereby diminishing school staffing problems and improving the performance of schools” (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 33). The New Teacher Project takes it a step further by suggesting that principals focus on strategically retaining highly effective teachers (Jacobs et al., 2012).

Principal Impact on Working Conditions

Working conditions are linked to teacher retention and attrition. School administration is the most important indicator in whether a teacher stays in their school or leaves (Sutcher et al., 2016). The “single most predictive workplace condition was whether teachers reported lacking administrative support” (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 51). The probability a teacher leaves their school or profession increases as administrative support decreases (see Figure 6).

The Wallace Foundation found that Principals have a substantial impact on a teacher’s perception of their working conditions. Principals have the opportunity to build trust with teachers, improve efficacy and create an atmosphere of feedback, coaching, and collaboration (Grissom et al., 2021). “Either improving a principal’s skill set in addressing teacher concerns, providing useful feedback, or establishing a feeling of mutual respect and trust at the school might enhance teachers’ perceptions of the working environment in a meaningful way” (Burkhauser, 2017, p. 139).

Principals are often the first point of contact for beginning teachers at their new school. More than likely, the principal has recruited and hired the teacher. This allows principals to develop relationships with beginning teachers from the start. Building these relationships helps principals better understand the needs of beginning teachers on their campus. Additionally,



Note. (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Figure 6. Probability of teacher turnover in relation to administrative support.

beginning teachers are generally nervous to speak with their principal. To build strong relationships, principals need to take the time to get to know their beginning teachers (Norman & Sherwood, 2018). Auletto (2021) completed a study that looked into the impact of beginning teacher support and outcomes. Beginning teachers stated that they appreciate “administrator supervision, guidance, and observation.” On the other hand, beginning teachers also “voiced concern that administrator presence was lacking, and in some cases, punitive” (Auletto, 2021, p. 11). This could impact teacher satisfaction and commitment to staying in the education profession.

Principals have the opportunity to impact teacher wellbeing. “A positive sense of wellbeing contributes to work satisfaction and productivity and, most importantly, teachers’ positive influence on their student’s wellbeing and academic achievement” (McCallum, 2021, p. 184). To support teacher wellbeing, principals must be aware of the different stressors that beginning teachers face. Beginning teachers may feel isolated or struggling with classroom management. Other beginning teachers cited stress associated with standardized testing and high-stakes accountability models (Saeki et al., 2018). In a study of teacher well-being, 16% of teachers stated that their job negatively impacted their mental health while 14% responded that their job impacted their physical health. Many teachers cited that they work 50 or more hours a week. There is a correlation between workload and teacher stress (Jerrim & Sims, 2021). Principals can help align professional development and assign mentors to help beginning teachers support areas of beginning teacher stress and wellbeing. Professional learning communities can be used to support beginning teachers who feel isolated by creating collaborative communities of educators (Prilleltensky et al., 2016).

Beginning Teacher Induction

Beginning teachers in North Carolina are supported through new teacher induction programs. School districts are required by statute to have a new teacher induction process (NC GS 115C-300.1). Tar River County Schools states to beginning teachers that the induction process “is designed to provide you direction, support, and feedback during your first years in the classroom so that your experiences are positive and focused on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with effective teaching” (Tar River County Schools, 2021, p. 5).

Principals are tasked with pairing effective teachers, as mentors, with beginning teachers. The role of the principal is important because beginning teachers who leave the profession state that lack of adequate support from school administration is a main factor behind their departure (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Beginning teachers are assigned mentor teachers to help guide new teachers. Mentor teachers meet periodically with beginning teachers to help them acclimate to their new positions and assist as needed (Tar River County Schools, 2021).

Mentors play an important role in transitioning beginning teachers into their new position. They are positioned to guide beginning teachers and help them learn about schoolwide policies and procedures. Mentors also support beginning teachers as they put their policies, structures, and procedures in place. In a review of 15 empirical studies, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that mentoring programs have a positive impact on beginning teachers. Beginning teachers that participated in induction programs improved their teaching practices and felt high levels of commitment and job satisfaction.

Teacher Evaluation and Feedback

In North Carolina, teachers are evaluated through the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System. Beginning teachers are defined as teachers with less than 3 years of

experience. All beginning teachers are placed on the comprehensive evaluation cycle. The comprehensive evaluation cycle includes 4 formal evaluations: 3 completed by an administrator and 1 completed by a peer. Each formal observation should be at least 45 minutes in length or 1 class period. The evaluation guide states that the “intended purpose of the North Carolina Teacher evaluation process is to assess the teacher’s performance concerning the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and to design a plan for professional growth” (NCDPI, 2018, p. 4). The guide also states that as part of the evaluation process that the teacher will “actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s)” (NCDPI, 2018, p. 4). While evaluators are encouraged to provide feedback in the comment boxes, the overall purpose of the evaluation is listed as:

The teacher performance evaluation process will:

- Serve as a measurement of performance for individual teachers;
- Serve as a guide for teachers as they reflect upon and improve their effectiveness;
- Serve as the basis for instructional improvement;
- Focus on the goals and objectives of schools and districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate their teachers;
- Guide professional development programs for teachers;
- Serve as a tool in developing coaching and mentoring programs for teachers;
- Enhance the implementation of the approved curriculum; and
- Inform higher education institutions as they develop the content and requirements for teacher training programs (NCDPI, 2018, p. 5).

Massey completed a qualitative study that investigated the experiences first-year teachers had with the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation process. Participants in this study found that

teachers frequently receive generalized feedback rather than specific actionable feedback (Massey, 2019). Principals are sometimes faced with time constraints that impact their ability to provide direct feedback. This is coupled with the principals' desire to motivate teachers and recognize instructional practices and professional achievements on the evaluation instrument. (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017). In some cases, teachers have felt that the evaluation tool has been completed out of compliance. In these instances, the feedback is imperceptible by teachers as applicable to their classrooms (Massey, 2019). Rosen and Parise (2017) found that on average, "20% of teachers never received useful suggestions for professional development following classroom observations" (p. 5). These studies did not investigate the use of coaching in terms of providing teachers' feedback or support.

Beginning teachers in North Carolina are also required to receive a peer observation as part of the comprehensive evaluation cycle. Peer observers receive training in the evaluation process and are assigned by the building principal (NCDPI, 2018). Peer observations are generally viewed by teachers as a means to reflect and develop teaching skills. Beginning teachers can gain confidence from collaborating with their peers. Strong working relationships are an important facet of a peer observation. Teachers that are too friendly or familiar with each other may not be able to engage in constructive criticism due to their friendship (Hunzicker et al., 2017).

North Carolina teachers are obligated to complete a professional development plan (PDP). Teachers meet with their school administrator at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to review their progress on their PDP (NCDPI, 2018). Massey (2019) shared teacher feedback regarding PDPs that highlighted a disconnect between PDPs, teacher evaluation standards, and professional growth. Berry et al. (2021) acknowledge that PDPs can be used to

support teachers who are entering classrooms from a variety of licensure pathways. PDPs should be based on available data and personalized to meet the individual teacher. Teacher observations should also be focused on each teacher's needs (Rowland et al., 2018). PDPs, in addition to the teacher self-assessment and prior observations, should be used to narrow teacher observations. "...teacher observations conducted by school administrators needed to be explicitly tied to teachers' PDP goals to create a stronger connection among goals, observation, and feedback, and professional development support" (Rowland, 2018, p. 14). Rowland et al. (2018) recognize the need for administrators to provide regular teaching feedback and instructional coaching. Their research also identified that administrators need deeper "knowledge of instructional shifts in the appropriate content standards...to provide teachers with explicit and actionable feedback and coaching" (Rowland, 2018, p. 17).

Walkthrough observations give principals an opportunity to provide teachers with feedback. The definition of a walkthrough classroom observation is numerous. Through exploring different descriptions of classroom walkthroughs, similar themes or elements were found (Kachur et al., 2010). The following are common descriptors of a classroom walkthrough: brief, informal, non-evaluative, frequent, focused on classroom instructional practices and student learning, and provides feedback to teachers. Classroom walkthrough observations should include the collection of qualitative and quantitative data to monitor improvement practice (Downey et al., 2004; Kachur et al., 2010; Waite, 2007; Walker, 2005). Walkthroughs improve the teacher-administrator relationship by fostering trust, respect, and support (Bole & Farizo, 2013; Garza et al., 2016).

Rouleau and Corner (2020) identify three different walkthrough methods: Implementation support, coaching, and instructional rounds. Implementation support

walkthroughs are used to follow up and support teachers with school improvement strategies. This allows the administrator to support teacher development while collecting school improvement data. Coaching walkthroughs are focused on developing the individual teacher. “The look-fors may be related to goals the teacher and principal or coach have identified together or may be entirely teacher-driven” (Rouleau & Corner, 2020, p. 7). Instructional rounds usually include a group of teachers who rotate through classrooms observing instructional practices that are connected to a particular subject area focus or school improvement goal. One of the main goals of instructional round walk-throughs is to identify instructional strategies that can be shared with other staff in the school (Rouleau & Corner, 2020).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy can play a role in the success or failure of a beginning teacher. Perceived self-efficacy impacts a person’s effort, grit, motivation, and confidence. Albert Bandura has long established a conceptual theory on self-efficacy and its impact. Perceived self-efficacy is focused on one’s own beliefs about their skills and aptitudes (Bandura, 1997). “Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave” (Bandura & Wessels, 1994). Self-efficacy can be an important factor in teacher success. Teacher efficacy is focused on the beliefs in the teacher’s abilities and belief that they can influence student learning outcomes (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Bandura (1997) posits that self-efficacy comes from four main areas or experiences: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological responses to experiences. The types of experiences and the depth of the experience impact one’s self-efficacy

differently. Efficacy that is built through mastery experiences improves one's self-efficacy through the learning and accomplishment of completing a new task or challenge (Bandura, 1997). Positive experiences where one experiences great success usually builds self-efficacy. Failures will most likely reduce one's efficacy (Bandura & Wessels, 1994). This is important to keep in mind when considering the successes and failures of beginning teachers.

Role models can play an important role in building ones' self-efficacy through vicarious experiences. Seeing the success peers have in completing a particular task can help one believe that they too can complete a similar task (Bandura, 1997). Beginning teachers frequently work with mentor teachers, instructional coaches, and other support personnel in their school where they might observe effective or successful teaching practices. Modeling helps provide a pathway to learn what is needed to acquire a skill or be successful. This can help improve one's self-efficacy and development (Bandura & Wessels, 1994).

People also build self-efficacy through social persuasion or social communication. One's efficacy is either bolstered or weakened by judgments and feedback provided by others (Zeldin & Parajes, 1997). "People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise" (Bandura & Wessels, 1994). Teachers might encounter these types of experiences when working with mentors, coaches, and other teachers.

Physiological responses to stress and anxiety can also have an impact on one's perceived self-efficacy. For example, stress could be associated with weakness or lack of confidence, which would negatively impact one's self-efficacy. However, a positive disposition or mindset

can improve self-efficacy. Self-doubt can be limiting when shaping one's beliefs and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Wessels, 1994).

Based on Bandura's (1997) social-cognitive theory teacher self-efficacy is most malleable early in their careers. Hoy and Spero (2005) followed teachers from preservice education through their first year in the classroom. During their preservice years, teachers usually engage in student internships or student teaching under a lead teacher. The lead teacher provides feedback and support to the preservice teacher. This experience improved teacher efficacy. However, once a preservice teacher graduated to their own classroom, their self-efficacy dropped during their first year in their position. This is due to changes in support that beginning teachers receive (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Lack of feedback from school leadership does not positively influence teacher self-efficacy. "The perfunctory twice-a-year visit from administrators with a preprinted evaluation form evidently does not provide enough feedback to shape a teacher's belief about his or her capability" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007, p. 954).

Measuring Self-Efficacy

A significant amount of research centers on how principals impact the collective efficacy of their staff. Bandura writes that collective efficacy is "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1977, p. 447). John Hattie (2021) has created a database where he ranks different influences or effect sizes as they relate to student achievement. Based on Hattie's meta-analysis of over 80 studies, collective teacher efficacy is rated as the second most influential factor. Collective efficacy has the "potential to considerably accelerate" student achievement (Hattie, 2021). The research available does not necessarily look at the impact of principal

actions, for example, 1:1 coaching, on individual beginning teacher self-efficacy which represents a gap in current knowledge.

Many researchers have created teacher self-efficacy measurement instruments or tools over the last half-century (Armor, 1976; Ashton et al., 1982; Bandura, 1997; Rose & Meadway, 1981; Rotter et al., 1961; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). It is important to note that there is no one agreed-upon measurement system for measuring self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been measured both quantitatively and qualitatively (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Bandura (1997) and Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) have created surveys that measure a variety of factors that impact teacher self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) created the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. This survey captures teacher beliefs in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management in either short format or long format survey. Bandura's (1997) 30 question teacher efficacy scale evaluates 7 areas: efficacy to influence decision making, efficacy to influence school resources, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental involvement, efficacy to enlist community involvement, and efficacy to create a positive school climate.

Coaching

While beginning teachers are required to be assigned mentors in North Carolina, coaching takes on a different role. The International Coaching Federation (2021) defines coaching as "Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Coaching has been implemented in business and athletics for more than six decades (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2014; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). Coaches in these contexts have been used to support or change the behaviors, mindsets, and performance of their clients. Some athletic coaching models focus on psychological well-

being, mindsets, and self-efficacy in addition to traditional performance improvement (Eklund & Tenenbaum, 2013). Similarly, business coaching is used to primarily focus on behavioral outcomes. Business coaching has grown to help clients challenge and understand their perceptions of their personality, emotionality, and leadership styles. In this context, the coach has expanded their role to include the attributes of a therapist or counselor (Barner & Higgins, 2007).

In the last 20 years, federal legislation has suggested the use of instructional coaches in schools. In 2002, No Child Left Behind established the Reading First initiative to support student reading outcomes. Schools were required to create plans that explained the steps that were being taken to provide professional support for teachers (Kowal & Steiner, 2007). Coaching was included in the legislation as a method to support teachers who were working in high poverty or Title 1 schools (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Additionally, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 continued to stipulate the use of instructional coaches to support classroom teacher instruction and student assessment. Kraft et al. (2018) found that instructional coaching has a positive impact as a development tool for teachers.

Instructional Coaches

In education, the title of coach has a variety of definitions. These definitions may include coaches who focus on data, instruction, or school improvement (Aguilar, 2013). Coaching is usually focused on helping educators improve their instruction. Instructional coaches (ICs) are used to help deliver differentiated professional development to individual teachers through routine support (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009; Kurz et al., 2017). Knight (2007, 2016, 2019) wrote that the role of the IC is to help teachers embed research-based instructional practices into their professional practice. The relationship between the IC and teacher is that of a partnership; a joint effort where the teacher's growth and learning are supported.

Some teachers may not fully understand the role of an IC in their building. As part of building a coaching relationship, it is important to discuss the purpose of coaching between teacher and coach (Aguilar, 2013). Aguilar discusses three types of coaching: directive, facilitative and transformational coaching. Directive coaching is generally focused on changing a coachees behaviors. Facilitative coaching encourages the coachee to expand their thinking through self-awareness and reflection. The coach is focused on helping the coachee develop their mindset and beliefs. The last form of coaching that Aguilar addresses is transformational coaching. This form of coaching borrows from both facilitative and directive coaching models.

Transformational coaching focuses on three domains:

1. The individual client and his behaviors, beliefs, and being
2. The institutions and systems (departments, teams, and schools) in which the client works-and the people who work within those systems (students, teachers, and administrators)
3. The broader educational and social systems in which we live.” (Aguilar, 2013, p. 25)

Executive Coaches

Like instructional coaching, executive coaching has a variety of definitions. Passamore (2020) states that one of the most common definitions of coaching comes from the work of Whitmore (2002), who stated that coaching is about “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them – a facilitation approach” (Whitmore, 2002, p. 8). Whitmore (2002) also reviewed research about sports coaching, where controlling inner dialogue within the mind could contribute to improved performance outcomes. Passamore co-authored his own definition in 2011, “a Socratic-based dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client) where the majority of interventions used by the

facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating that self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant” (Passamore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

In the corporate sector, executive coaches are used to develop employees, act as a sounding board or address derailing behaviors. In a study published by the Harvard Business Review of 140 executive coaches, 76% responded that they assisted with personal issues of the coachee (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009). Jones et al. (2016) completed a metanalysis of 17 studies and found that in each study, executive coaching had a positive impact on coachees.

Building Champions Coaching Model

Building Champions is an executive coaching firm that provides one on one coaching to business executives and leaders. They have designed a coaching approach that equips leaders with the skillset, mindset, and tools to engage employees in one on one coaching sessions (Building Champions, 2021). Daniel Harkavy (2007), CEO of Building Champions, defines coaching as meeting your employees “where they are in order to move them forward by helping them to improve skills, disciplines, and knowledge they need to succeed” (p. 36). Coaches must have skills in the following areas and be able to shift between these roles when coaching: counselor, teacher, trainer, consultant, mentor, and coach.

In Building Champions (2021) *Becoming a Coaching Leader* workshop, Harkavy states that coaches should focus on four conversations centered on: well-being, vision, execution, and productivity. Well-being is focused on how employees show up at work. Harkavy acknowledges that as humans first, employees may face physical, mental, and relational wellbeing challenges. Vision addresses how the employee aligns into the organizational vision. Vision also addresses the employee's purpose and where they want to go. Execution conversations allow coaches to work with the employee to discuss workplace performance. This coaching conversation

establishes what winning looks like for the employee and organization. Productivity helps employees identify high payoff activities, manage their time, and establish daily routines (Building Champions, 2021).

Through experience, Harkavy (2007) suggests structuring coaching sessions in 30-minute increments. Monthly or bi-monthly coaching sessions are preferred over quarterly coaching meetings (Building Champions, 2021). Harkavy states in his Building Champions (2021) training that this coaching methodology that has led to his company's and clients' success is propriety. For this inquiry, Tar River County Schools has adopted the Building Champions coaching framework.

Summary

The literature reviewed discussed the teacher shortage and retention issues across the United States and North Carolina. Some items, like teacher pay, are generally outside the control of the principal to help recruit and retain teachers. The research shared herein strongly emphasizes the role that the principal has in creating a supportive culture and environment in the school.

Beginning teachers are required to be assigned a mentor teacher during their first three years in the classroom. The mentor helps to support the teacher's acclimation to the school environment and provide feedback, as needed. Principals often provide feedback, too. However, they are also tasked with evaluating beginning teachers using a combination of formal and informal tools. This poses a challenge as the relationship between administrator and beginning teacher is commonly seen as evaluative in nature. Instructional coaches are usually implemented in a non-evaluative manner. They are charged with providing support and development to beginning teachers. The experiences, evaluations and feedback beginning teachers receive

contributes to building their self-efficacy. Working with mentor teachers is often reported to build self-efficacy of beginning teachers whereas stress can be a diminishing factor.

There is an overall gap in the literature surrounding the implementation of an executive style coaching framework between administrators and beginning teachers. The vast majority of coaching frequently tends to come from instructional coaches and is focused on classroom practices. The Building Champions coaching framework proposed in this inquiry takes a much more holistic approach to meeting the needs of beginning teachers, opening the door for coaching conversations beyond the instructional realm. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology and implementation of this coaching model with beginning teachers at River Park Elementary School. A multiple phase inquiry design method will be detailed as well as data collection processes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY

Beginning teachers require a variety of supports to overcome challenges and teach at a proficient level. For River Park Elementary School, these supports are provided at both the district and school building level. Support from an administrator can be a deciding factor in teacher attrition and mobility (Sutcher et al., 2016). Currently, administrators may often only engage with beginning teachers for evaluative purposes. This inquiry proposes that an administrator-led beginning teacher coaching model could be an avenue to support beginning teachers.

This mixed methods, multiple phase action research inquiry examined the impact of implementing an administrator-led beginning teacher coaching model. This chapter discussed the methodology of this inquiry as well as outlines the three phases of the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle that provide structure to the inquiry. In this chapter, I examine my role as a scholarly practitioner and identify steps to increase the rigor and reliability of this inquiry while minimizing biases.

Focus of Practice Guiding Questions

This inquiry is guided by the following questions:

1. How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?

The first question serves to investigate to what extent is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted by their participation in regular coaching sessions with a building administrator. A self-efficacy survey was used with teachers who participated in coaching. Outcome data from this survey is used to determine if the coaching positively impacted beginning teacher self-efficacy.

A focus group was conducted to better understand how coaching impacted teacher self-efficacy. The focus group questions help to understand how the administrator-led coaching sessions impacted feelings of beginning teacher support and the professional relationship herein. Field notes captured additional qualitative data and were analyzed to find patterns and themes related to beginning teacher self-efficacy.

The second guiding question identifies how the implementation of this inquiry impacts the leadership skills of the scholarly practitioner. Engaging with beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teaching coaching model provided an opportunity for me to improve my ability to support beginning teachers. Ultimately, supporting and developing beginning teachers can be critical to their success with students in their classrooms. Data for this question was captured reflectively as I worked directly with beginning teachers to conduct coaching support. Throughout the coaching portion of this inquiry, I captured my reflections bi-weekly in a journal. Additionally, reflecting on the outcomes of my guiding questions summarily provided evidence towards my growth.

Inquiry Design and Rationale

The focus of this inquiry was to understand the perceived benefits of implementing an executive-style coaching model between a building administrator and beginning teachers. Additionally, data was collected to determine to what extent these coaching sessions impact beginning teacher self-efficacy. This inquiry addresses the Focus of Practice guiding questions by utilizing a mixed methods action research design approach. A mixed methods approach was selected to collect different forms of qualitative and quantitative data from the participants (Mertler, 2021). Three Plan-Do-Study-ACT (PDSA) cycles guide this multiple-phase inquiry

method. The PDSA framework is an “improvement framework” that allows for “efficient trial-and-learning” (Langley et al., 2009, pp. 25-26).

The mixed methods approach incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research design. Qualitative research design is a process for “understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 250). Written word is generally the basis of qualitative data. The written word may come from a variety of sources including field notes, focus group transcriptions, and individual interview transcripts. Many of these settings allow the researcher to notate participant responses and engagement with questioning. To make sense of qualitative data, a coding process is used to find themes and patterns. The themes and patterns are interpreted to draw conclusions or identify outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This inquiry used field notes, journaling and focus group transcripts to gather qualitative data. A copy of the field note template is available in Appendix E.

Quantitative research design is associated with the collection and analysis of numerical data. For this inquiry, a survey was used as a method of descriptively studying participants. Descriptive research involves “studying the phenomenon of interest as it occurs naturally” (Mertler, 2021, p. 111). Surveys provide “a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 12).

Action research in education is where “school personnel take on the role of researcher and study their own practice within their classrooms and school” (Efron & Ravid, 2019, p. 4). In this inquiry, I conducted research in the school where I serve as an administrator. Action research uses investigative cycles to examine how a problem can be solved on the local level.

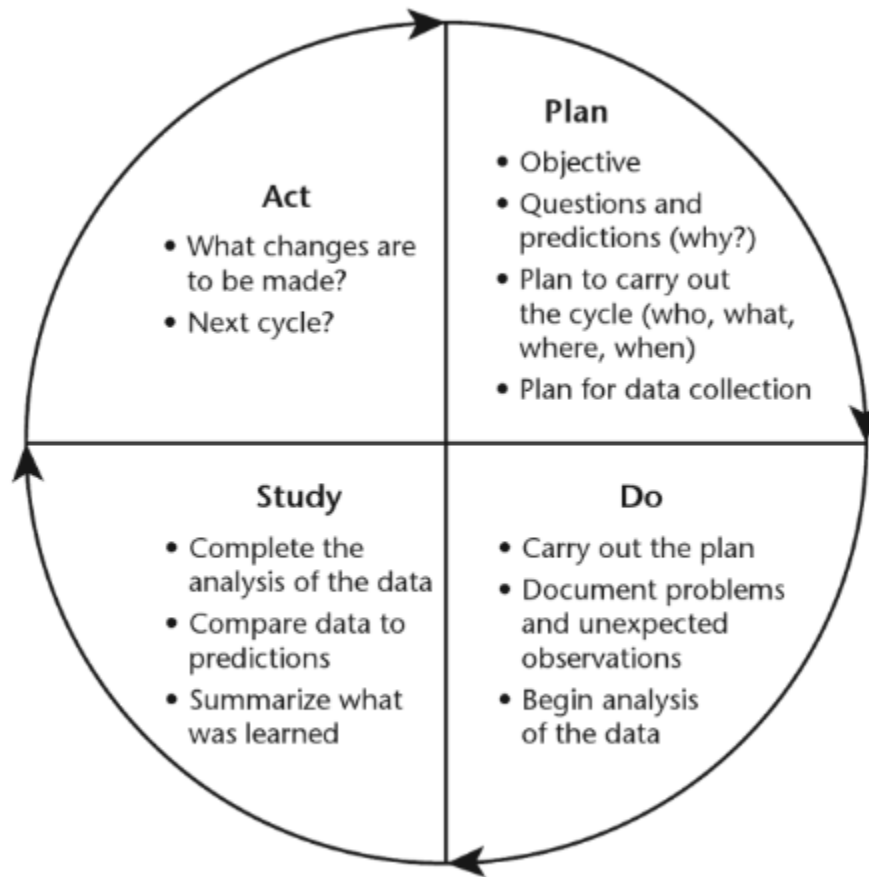
The use of cycles helps to unpack the complexities that face humans in social settings (Stringer, 2008).

Illustrated in Figure 7 is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle was used throughout this inquiry to apply and understand the benefits of an administrator-led beginning teacher coaching model. This inquiry employed three iterative phases of inquiry utilizing PDSA cycles (see Figure 8). Initially, data was collected to support the implementation of my inquiry. As part of this research model, small changes to the coaching process may be made based on participant feedback, particularly in frequency and duration. This is in line with improvement science and allows for application of key learnings to be applied throughout the inquiry (Langley et al., 2009).

In addition to implementing the coaching framework, I developed a plan to collect outcome data. Outcome data was both qualitatively and quantitatively for this inquiry. During the qualitative data collection phase, I organized and coded my field notes and focus group transcription. Saldana (2013) describes coding as “the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis” (p. 5). The PDSA cycles is discussed in more detail later in Chapter 3.

Inquiry Partners

To situate my inquiry within the context of Tar River County Schools and River Park ES, it is important to consider a few key inquiry partners. The Department of Excellence, Equity and Leadership (DEEL) within Tar River County Schools is responsible for providing Building Champions training for school-based leaders. This training is the foundation of Tar River County Schools’ coaching framework that was utilized in this inquiry. I used three inquiry partners with varying degrees of separation from the Tar River County Schools and River Park ES. My



Note. (Langley et al., 2009, p. 97).

Figure 7. The Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle.

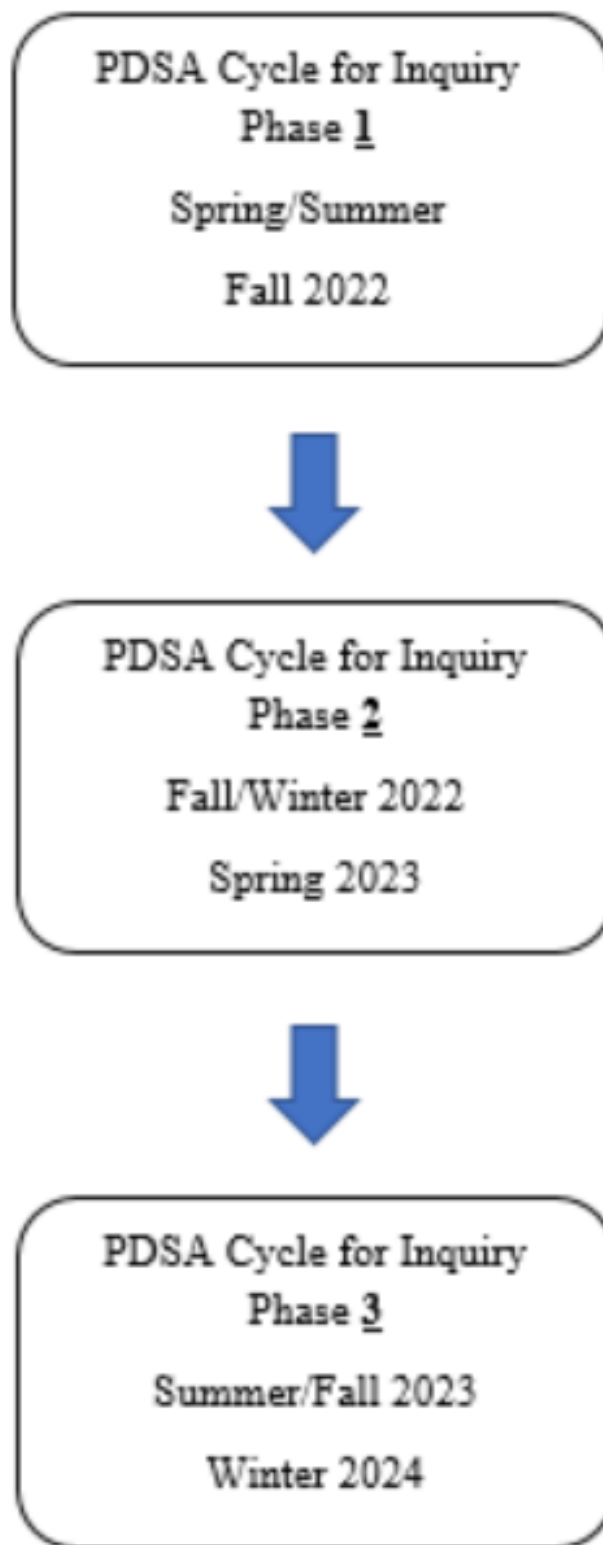


Figure 8. Implementation timeline.

first inquiry partner serves as the Director of Educator Support and Leadership Development for Tar River County Schools. This partner's experience with the coaching framework will help to improve implementation. Additionally, due to this partner's relationship with the practitioner, he will be positioned to help recognize and prevent bias when applicable. The support from this partner will help to improve the fidelity to which this inquiry can be implemented with beginning teachers by ensuring that I have support to conduct my inquiry.

My dissertation chair is an inquiry partner from outside of the Tar River County Schools organization. I collaborated with my chair to discuss implementation of the inquiry. My chair was best situated to discuss issues of validity and help to mitigate bias during the data collection process by assisting with the focus group data collection.

Lastly, I worked with the BT Lead Mentor at my school to ensure that I had access to the beginning teachers as part of the inquiry. By collaborating with this individual, I worked to ensure that the BTs received their traditional supports and that this inquiry did not infringe on any benefits or opportunities available to them through the district support model. Due to the additional commitment of the BT coaching participants, I worked with the Lead Mentor to mitigate any additional duties.

Ethical Considerations

This inquiry was conducted within the parameters of the elementary school where I currently serve as the building principal. Beginning teachers who participated in this inquiry were employed at the same elementary school. Due to the nature of this study, there are ethical considerations that were given appropriate attention.

Prior to conducting the inquiry, I completed The Collaborative Institutional Training

Initiative Certification (CITI) ethics training course. The 13 modules gave me the framework to conduct research with both ethics and integrity at the forefront. After completing the modules, I submitted my application to the Institution Review Board (IRB) and received approval to conduct the inquiry (see Appendix A). In this application, I addressed participant consent, participant privacy and confidentiality of data.

All participants signed an informed consent document indicating their voluntary agreement to participate in the inquiry (see Appendix B). As part of this process, there was “ample opportunity for the investigator and the subject to exchange information and ask questions” (Office of the Commissioner, 2019, Section 5). The participant beginning teachers received comprehensive information regarding the coaching methodology, surveys, and data collection procedures being used in this inquiry. The focus group portion of this inquiry was be conducted by an outside facilitator who utilized aliases or pseudonyms to conceal the identity of teacher participants. I explained the anticipated time commitment required to participate in the coaching and data collection portions of the research. To ensure the privacy of participants, identifiable information was removed to the greatest extent possible. Participants were assigned a pseudonym or alias to increase confidentiality. Data was stored on a password-protected drive and computer.

In order to conduct the inquiry in Tar River County Schools, approval was submitted to the Superintendent or designee as outlined in Board Policy. Permission to conduct research was obtained from the school system prior to conducting research. I also reviewed my inquiry with the school-based leadership team, too.

Inquiry Procedures

The purpose of this inquiry was to identify the outcomes and benefits associated with implementing an administrator-beginning teacher coaching model. Within the inquiry, I looked to gain an understanding of how beginning teacher self-efficacy was impacted through executive-style coaching. To measure teacher self-efficacy, a survey was completed by all beginning teacher coaching participants. I also investigated and developed an understanding of the perceived benefits of administration-beginning teacher coaching on beginning teacher support. After completing the coaching implementation portion of the inquiry, beginning teacher coaching participants met with an outside facilitator in a focus group to respond to questions. The facilitator conducted the focus group and used aliases or pseudonyms to protect participant identities. This inquiry progressed through three phases of inquiry. Each inquiry phase utilized a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.

Sampling

To select participants for this mixed-methods inquiry, I utilized purposeful sampling by targeting beginning teachers at River Park Elementary School. This applicant pool was selected because each teachers position as a beginning teacher makes them best suited to participate in an inquiry that is targeted towards teachers who are new to teaching or in the first three years of the profession (Creswell, 2005; Mertler, 2021). These teachers all shared the same common trait of being in their first three years of teaching. Beginning teachers in good professional standing were considered as part of the coaching pool. Teachers who are on any sort of improvement support plan were not considered. The total available pool of beginning teachers for this inquiry was 9. For both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the inquiry, the same 4 beginning teacher

participants were used from the total beginning teacher pool. These participants completed the self-efficacy survey associated with the inquiry.

The coaching portion of this inquiry, which was reflected in qualitative data collection, required the selection of the same beginning teachers that were used in the quantitative portion of the inquiry. Due to the amount of time required for biweekly coaching, four participants were selected. All participants have a common characteristic in that they are all beginning teachers. Mertler (2021) calls this sampling technique, homogenous sampling. Coaching participants were voluntarily selected from the total beginning teacher pool. Outside of their commitment to this inquiry, cemented through the informed consent process, the last parameter is that they are a teacher in good standing. This means that they have not received a letter of reprimand, negative performance appraisal, or placed on a performance improvement plan.

The diversity of the qualitative sample set is limited to the gender, race, and background of the beginning teachers employed at River Park ES. Stratification “means that specific characteristics of individuals are represented in the sample and that the sample reflects the true proportion in the population of individuals with certain characteristics” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 150). Currently, all beginning teachers at River Park ES are Caucasian females.

Instrumentation

As part of a mixed-methods design approach, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and examined. Incorporating multiple perspectives and data types is a strength of the mixed methods design process (Mertler, 2021). This inquiry has been designed to include the use of a self-efficacy survey and focus group. The focus group questions were pilot tested with 12 teachers before full implementation in the inquiry. Based on feedback from the pilot test, improvements were made to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument. The pilot

feedback received focused on clarity of instructions. Improvements to the directions were made and reshared with pilot study participants to ensure that the directions were clear and understandable. Pilot testing helps to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the data collection instruments used (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The self-efficacy survey used in this inquiry focused on understanding beginning teacher beliefs related to their capabilities as a teacher and their ability to impact their students. The survey is available in Appendix D. This survey captured participant beliefs quantitatively through a numerical rating. I utilized the short form of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale survey created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) tested this survey and have published reliability and validity data to ensure the survey is sound. No changes were made to this survey.

The self-efficacy survey was administered twice to the beginning teacher participants. The survey was initially given prior to participants receiving coaching. Following full implementation of the coaching treatment, these participants completed the survey again. The pre/post survey data was analyzed and coded to determine if any trends or themes developed.

A focus group was used to capture qualitative feedback from beginning teachers who were coaching participants. The questions used in the focus group were designed to encourage participant reflection and feedback related to the benefits of the coaching that they have received. The format of the focus group was semi-structured in nature, utilizing predetermined open-ended questions with allowances for the facilitator to ask follow-up questions. A copy of the focus group interview questions are available in Appendix D. The focus group was facilitated by an outside facilitator due to my positionality with the beginning teacher participants. The focus group was recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify different themes and outcomes.

Participant confidentiality was maintained throughout the inquiry by utilizing pseudonyms or aliases.

Field notes were taken during each coaching session. These notes consisted of key talking points from the coaching conversation, potential goals, and items to follow up on at the next coaching session. Additionally, every two weeks I journaled my reflections based on the most recent coaching sessions. Reflections included observations about the coaching process, things that I may improve in the future, and overall thoughts on the coaching process. The journal also served as an opportunity to reflect on my leadership growth throughout the implementation of the inquiry. Table 2 identifies which data collection instruments were used to answer each focus of practice guiding question. Additionally, the survey and focus group questions have been aligned with the inquiry questions. The table identifies when each tool will be used in relation to each inquiry phase.

PDSA Cycle for Inquiry Phase 1

Before conducting research, I obtained permission from the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Programs and Services to conduct research and implement my inquiry at River Park ES. Following East Carolina University's research procedures, I submitted my inquiry for approval to the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Once approval was granted, I contacted the beginning teachers at River Park ES via email. I set up a brief meeting after school to introduce the inquiry and discuss several aspects of the inquiry regarding their participation, data collection, and confidentiality. Each participant received an informed consent form and was informed of their voluntary participation in the inquiry (see Appendix B).

Plan

The planning stage of the first inquiry phase involved identifying data sources that would highlight the need for beginning teacher support. Literature related to and supporting my inquiry

Table 2

Data Collection Instrument with Guiding Questions

Inquiry Questions	Instrument	Phases of Inquiry
1. How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?	Self-Efficacy Survey (SQ)	Phase 1 & Phase 3
	Focus Group (FG)	Phase 3
	Field Notes	Phase 2
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?	Practitioner Journal	Phases 1-3

was reviewed in Chapter 2. The 2020 and 2022 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey completed by River Park Elementary School staff and a report issued by Measurement Incorporated (2018) are catalysts for this inquiry. During this phase, I met with my inquiry Partners to discuss utilizing the district coaching model, which I had been trained to employ.

Do

After reviewing self-efficacy surveys from Bandura (2006) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), I selected the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale to capture survey responses from participants. The survey was uploaded into Qualtrics to capture survey responses pre and post coaching. The focus group questions were piloted with 12 non-participant teachers in order to confirm that the questions would solicit dialogue relative to the inquiry.

Study

I analyzed data related to my inquiry. A report issued by Measurement Incorporated (2018) found that beginning teachers who were selected by their principal for additional support and development were more likely to be retained than those who did not receive any additional development. Additionally, the 2022 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey found that over 80% of teachers at River Park ES rated that additional support was an important factor in continuing to be a teacher (NCDPI, 2022b). From this data, a conclusion could be drawn that providing beginning teachers additional support would have favorable implications.

I analyzed the feedback from the piloted focus group questions. Feedback from the pilot indicated a need to improve the clarity of the focus group questions. I made changes to the directions and shared them with the pilot participants as a method of member checking. Member checking will improve the validity and reliability of the focus group questions and process

(Mertler, 2021). The changes made to the focus group directions were shared with inquiry partners for further inspection.

Act

During this phase, I met with inquiry partners and established a plan for implementing coaching between myself and beginning teachers at River Park ES. During this meeting, considerations were discussed relating to beginning teacher workload and continued support from the building lead mentor. It may be necessary to remove a commitment or responsibility from the beginning teacher coaching participants if it appears their time or capacity to fully participate is impacted.

PDSA Cycle for Inquiry Phase 2

The purpose of the second inquiry phase was to implement the coaching model with four beginning teachers. During this phase, I collected field notes and documented the coaching experience from the administrator's perspective. If necessary, based on dialogue during coaching sessions, small adjustments were made to the frequency or duration of the coaching sessions. Planning for the focus group occurred during this stage.

Plan

The first part of the second phase involved meeting with all beginning teacher participants to explain the inquiry, timeline, and request four volunteers who are interested in receiving coaching. During this stage, I put forth a coaching schedule for all coaching participants based on each beginning teacher's availability.

Do

During this part of the inquiry, I implemented the coaching framework between beginning teachers and myself. Beginning teacher coaching participants met biweekly for 30

minutes as described in the Building Champions protocol (Harkavy, 2007). Coaching continued for the duration of the Spring 2023 semester for approximately 90 days. During each coaching session, I captured shorthand written field notes related to the dialogue between the beginning teacher and myself. After each cycle, approximately every two weeks, I reflected on my experiences in a journal.

The four coaching participants took a self-efficacy survey prior to starting coaching. This survey was later administered again during Phase 3 at the conclusion of the coaching portion of the inquiry.

Study

During the coaching, I utilized dialogue from participants in their coaching sessions to determine if any changes to the model needed to be made. After completing the implementation of the coaching model, I organized and transcribed all field notes and observations. I reviewed this data for initial themes and trends.

Act

Adjustments to coaching frequency and duration were considered based on data from the field notes. I reviewed potential adjustments with inquiry partners as not to change the core coaching framework.

PDSA Cycle for Inquiry Phase 3

The final phase of inquiry involved creating a plan to collect, code, and analyze data. During the third phase, the self-efficacy survey was re-administered to all beginning teacher coaching participants at River Park ES. Additionally, coaching participants participated in a focus group. In the end, data from all sources was compiled and analyzed to generate conclusions, observations, and recommendations.

Plan

During this phase, I administered the self-efficacy survey to all beginning teacher coaching participants. Additionally, I met with inquiry partners to create and review focus group questions aligned with the focus of practice guiding questions. A date was selected to conduct the focus group. Lastly, I transcribed, coded and analyzed focus group data.

Do

Beginning teacher coaching participants completed the self-efficacy survey via Qualtrics. The survey asked beginning teacher participants to respond to questions by rating themselves on a scale ranging from 1-None at all to 9- A great deal (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The survey is located in Appendix C.

The beginning teachers who participated in coaching were also invited to participate in a focus group. The focus group consisted of the four beginning teacher coaching participants, an outside facilitator, and a note-taker. The outside facilitator was used to maintain the validity of the focus group data. Due to my position as a building administrator, the outside facilitator helps maintain the integrity of the focus group. The design of the focus group questioning protocol was semi-structured, where the facilitator asked several base questions while having the liberty to ask follow-up questions (Mertler, 2021). The focus group was held in a school conference room with adequate space for participants to gather while maintaining privacy. Two recording devices were used: (1) Laptop with Microsoft Teams, Recording Audio and Video, (2) Digital Voice Recorder. The facilitator was responsible for ensuring that all participants understood the ground rules and that each participant had the opportunity to contribute to the focus group (Kreuger & Casey, 2002).

Study

All data was collected and organized. Qualitative data underwent inductive analysis (Mertler, 2021). Coded transcriptions will be gone through multiple times to refine coding and develop themes and patterns that may emerge. Inductive coding was used to capture themes, concepts, and ideas. This type of coding allowed for themes or trends to present themselves during analysis (Noblit et al., 1988; Saldana, 2013). Beginning teacher participants had an opportunity to review the focus group transcriptions to ensure that I captured their answers accurately. Mertler (2021) refers to this practice as member checking. Quantitative data was placed into a spreadsheet for analysis. Quantitative data from the self-efficacy survey and qualitative data from the focus groups were used to answer the inquiry questions. When possible, both sources were used in conjunction with each other to further substantiate conclusions and claims (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Act

All inquiry partners reviewed the findings of the inquiry. The key findings from this inquiry were shared with the school leadership team. Results about the benefits of the coaching framework and participant focus group feedback were shared with the districts' Division of Excellence, Equity and Leadership (DEEL). DEEL is responsible for professional development and training opportunities for educators, including the coaching framework used in this inquiry.

Rigor of Inquiry

Multiple steps have been taken to ensure the validity of the data collected in this inquiry meets a high level of trustworthiness. Mertler (2021) states that “trustworthiness is established by examining the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” of the inquiry’s findings and data (p. 203). Establishing a high level of trustworthiness is central to maintaining a

high level of rigor and validity throughout this inquiry. The validity of this inquiry was improved by using a reliable self-efficacy survey, maintaining participant confidentiality, monitoring the inquiry with inquiry partners, and member checking.

This inquiry involved three main sources of outcome data: self-efficacy surveys, field notes, and focus group transcript. Coaching field notes contained rich descriptions of my coaching meetings with beginning teachers. These field notes included my interpretation regarding each coaching as well as my reflections. Coaching participants also participated in a culminating focus group. The focus group facilitator utilized a semi-structured interview protocol with follow-up questions to collect detailed information from the coaching participants. Through transcription, coding, and analysis, an abundance of data was available to review.

I looked for opportunities to triangulate data or draw connections between more than one data source (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The field notes, survey data, and focus group responses were used to inform the outcomes of this inquiry. My inquiry partners helped me with data analysis, collection, and reflection. Mertler (2021) describes this process as peer debriefing. Inquiry partners were also be used to review procedures, data, and outcomes. The use of these non-participants improved the validity of the inquiry. Their knowledge of best practices and familiarity with the researcher aided in ensuring that I remained impartial and unbiased when conducting the inquiry.

Member checking was an important tool that I used to maintain the rigor and validity of the inquiry. The act of member checking involved participant beginning teachers reviewing the “accuracy of the research report” (Mertler, 2021, p. 205). Given the commitment required of beginning teacher coaching participants, member checking allowed these participants to review and provide feedback regarding the results to certify the credibility of the data.

Lastly, I used purposive sampling to improve the rigor and validity of the inquiry. For this inquiry, one of the criteria for participation is that each participant is a beginning teacher at River Park Elementary School. Another criterion is that each participant must be in good professional standing. This selective sampling practice will improved my ability to draw comparisons between each participant as each participant is part of the same representative population.

Assumptions

There were a few assumptions that could have impacted the implementation and results of this inquiry. It was an assumption that all participants participated with a high level of trustworthiness and honesty. This level of fidelity is required so that the coaching implementation and data collection can be completed with rigor and validity. Participants reviewed and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix B). During this process, it was explained to participants that an earnest level of commitment is required for this inquiry and the fidelity of coaching. Participant involvement was strictly voluntary. Participant data was kept in a secure drive. Pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, the self-efficacy survey was be administered via Qualtrics which kept participant information secure and anonymous.

There is an assumption that this inquiry provided a positive benefit to the participants. Participating in ongoing coaching was assumed to have a positive effect on the participants. It was assumed that participating in the inquiry would not have any negative repercussions or effects.

Lastly, there was an assumption that this inquiry could have been impacted by the power dynamic between beginning teacher participants and myself. Due to district and state

requirements, it was not possible to eliminate all evaluative situations between the participants and myself. However, this was addressed by working with the assistant principal to evaluate and observe the beginning teacher participants more than myself. As part of the informed consent process, it was addressed that participant data would be kept in strict confidence. This included but was not limited to survey data, coaching conversations and focus group participation. Participation was voluntary and beginning teacher participations were not remunerated in any way.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this inquiry is limited to four participant beginning teachers at River Park ES and is not necessarily generalizable to other schools. The goal of this inquiry was to examine the benefits of an administrator-led beginning teacher coaching framework at my school. I chose to limit the inquiry to four beginning teacher coaching participants due to the time commitment required for bi-weekly coaching sessions. Additionally, as a new principal, it was agreed upon by inquiry partners that implementing the inquiry with four coaching participants would ensure a high level of fidelity. All beginning teachers participated voluntarily and willingly.

The self-efficacy portion of the inquiry provided an opportunity to survey the four beginning teacher coaching participants pre and post coaching implementation. This survey was administered via Qualtrics to ensure participant confidentiality. It was understood that there may be other supports that these participants receive as a beginning teacher. However, this inquiry was focused on the impact coaching may have on beginning teachers.

Limitations

There are several confounding variables that could have impacted the results of this inquiry. Participants were expected to engage in coaching once every two weeks. The district

calendar, weather events, and participant illness impacted coaching frequency and implementation. Due to the flexible nature of scheduling, the next anticipated coaching meeting was set up at each coaching session utilizing a calendar.

As an evaluator at my school site, I was required to evaluate all beginning teachers. Additionally, the Tar River County School District expects administrators to provide feedback through classroom walkthroughs. This could have influenced how beginning teachers engaged in both the coaching and the survey. Participants may have felt inclined to support the desired outcomes of the inquiry during the data collection portion of the inquiry. To address the impact of my positionality to the participants, the assistant principal was assigned to observe or provide feedback more frequently than I was. As part of evaluating teachers, some beginning teachers may be placed on support plans. Any beginning teacher who was on an improvement plan or had received any letters of reprimand was excluded from the inquiry.

To ensure that validity of the focus group and the data collected, I utilized an outside facilitator who did not have any previous interaction with the participants. Due to my position in the school, participants could have felt influenced to respond in a manner that would have supported the coaching implementation. The facilitator was responsible for using the open-ended focus group interview questions and asking any pertinent follow-up questions. Additionally, the note taker was be responsible for recording the focus group so that the recording could be transcribed.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

To maintain the validity of this inquiry, it is important to explain my positionality as it relates to being both the principal investigator and principal at River Park Elementary School. River Park Elementary School is one of fourteen traditional elementary schools in Pitt County.

The school encompasses Pre-K through 5th grade. River Park ES serves approximately 630 students and 35 teachers. The school currently has 9 teachers that are designated as beginning teachers. I have been employed as an assistant principal with Tar River County Schools for four years. This is my first year as a principal and my first year at River Park ES. Through Tar River County School's Academy for Transformational School Leadership, I received multiple days of training on the Building Champion coaching model through the Becoming a Coaching Leader workshop. This training was provided directly by Building Champions facilitators. Through this training, I was able to practice the coaching model that was selected for this inquiry. As part of this training, I received multiple coaching sessions from Building Champions. In the Academy, I received two years of monthly coaching.

To mitigate any ethical issues and obstacles to conducting this inquiry, I received approval through East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB.) IRB requires each researcher to complete coursework to fully understand the practices associated with conducting research with human subjects. All participants were informed of my role as both principal and principal investigator. To maintain the confidence and trust of all coaching participants, my involvement in evaluation and observing participants was explained prior to beginning the inquiry during the informed consent process. The district level inquiry partner and school-based mentor helped to mitigate bias and limit any impact of my positionality.

The protocol for the focus group involved the use of an outside facilitator. This facilitator did not have any previous relationship with the school or participants. This helped maintain the integrity of the data collected from the focus group and mitigate any bias. Throughout the inquiry, my inquiry partners reviewed the implementation of my methodology to ensure the validity of the data and that all ethical guidelines are adhered to (Mertler, 2021).

Summary

This mixed methods action research inquiry sought to explore the benefits of implementing a coaching framework between beginning teachers and myself, a building administrator. In this inquiry, self-efficacy was measured through a survey with the beginning teacher coaching participants. In Chapter 4, quantitative results of this survey are delineated and analyzed to determine any outcomes between pre and post coaching treatment. A focus group was conducted to seek feedback from beginning teacher coaching participants. Chapter 4 includes the qualitative feedback results from this focus group. A thorough analysis of the data was conducted in order to assist in answering the questions guiding this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The focus of this action research inquiry is to understand the benefits of implementing an executive style coaching framework with beginning teachers. This inquiry investigated the impact that participants experienced related to their self-efficacy. The goal of this inquiry was to have a positive impact on beginning teacher self-efficacy while developing the leadership skills of the scholarly practitioner. The inquiry questions that framed the methodology and data collection are as follows:

1. How is beginning teacher self- efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?

Participants

This mixed methods action research inquiry utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. The four beginning teacher participants were selected via random sampling to participate from a potential field of nine beginning teachers (Mertler, 2021). The applicant pool contained all Caucasian females; consequently, all participants fit this description. Experience and grade levels were different for each participant (see Table 3). Each participant completed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale survey prior to participating in coaching and after the final coaching session. The data from this survey provides the quantitative data for this inquiry. The qualitative data is comprised of three different components: field notes, focus group interview and practitioner journal. Field notes were kept for every participant and completed routinely at the end of each coaching session. The field notes captured key topics, thoughts and next steps to guide future coaching sessions. A focus group interview was conducted after the coaching

Table 3

Participant Grade Level, Experience & Number of Coaching Sessions

Pseudonym	Grade Level Taught	Experience	Number of Coaching Sessions
Participant A	1 st grade teacher	1 st Year	8
Participant B	2 nd grade teacher	1 st Year	8
Participant C	3 rd grade teacher	2 nd Year	7
Participant D	3 rd grade teacher	3 rd Year	8

sessions were completed. Participant responses during the focus group were recorded and transcribed by the scholarly practitioner and have been coded to deduce patterns, themes and results. The last qualitative component is the practitioner journal. I journaled every two weeks to document my reflections on this inquiry and the coaching sessions.

Data Collection

This mixed methods action research inquiry was conducted in three inquiry phases. Each inquiry phase followed the PDSA model. During the first inquiry phase participants were voluntarily selected based on their status as a beginning teacher at River Park ES. Additionally, all participants were beginning teachers in good standing. A pilot study of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES) was conducted during the first phase of inquiry. This study utilized the short form of the TSES survey with non-inquiry partners utilizing the Qualtrics platform. This platform was selected as it provided a level of security to keep participant data safe while also providing a robust data disaggregation tool set. Additionally, the authors of the TSES have published reliability data that indicates that this survey is a valid data collection instrument (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Based on feedback from the pilot study, I adjusted survey workflow and procedures in Qualtrics. I met with my inquiry partners to discuss the pilot study results and the coaching program.

During the second phase of inquiry, I met with the beginning teacher participants and implemented the coaching program. The participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this inquiry. Prior to the start of the inquiry, the participants met with me at River Park ES during Fall 2022 to discuss the inquiry and ask questions. During this meeting each participant was given a copy of the informed consent and was given time to review the coaching model, survey questions and focus group questions. Each beginning teacher participant returned a signed copy

of the informed consent within one week of the meeting. We discussed a coaching schedule and agreed to begin coaching in January 2023. Each participant took the TSES pre-survey to gather pre-coaching efficacy data.

The coaching program began in January 2023 and concluded in early May 2023. During each coaching session, I captured field notes that contained discussion points from the coaching conversation. The field notes contain topics that were discussed during the coaching session. Depending on the nature of the coaching conversation, I would make a note to help me follow-up with the beginning teacher participant at our next coaching conversation. One participant received seven coaching sessions while the other three participants received eight sessions each. The coaching sessions were scheduled before or after school or during planning time. Due to scheduled calendar breaks, school events, participant illness and professional development it was necessary to extend the 90-day cycle to approximately 110 days. Throughout the implementation of the coaching program, I wrote reflections and observations in my practitioner journal. After the coaching implementation concluded, I organized my field notes and practitioner journal.

During the third inquiry phase, the TSES post-survey was administered via Qualtrics to all beginning teacher coaching participants. The results were stored securely in the Qualtrics platform. As part of the third inquiry phase, it was important to ensure the rigor and validity of the inquiry remained at high levels. To ensure the validity of the focus group, I met with my inquiry partners to discuss the progress of the inquiry and to review the focus group protocol and questions. Participants were given a copy of the focus group questions and were given an opportunity to ask any questions or opt-out of the focus group. All participants agreed to participate in the focus group. The focus group was conducted in May 2023 with a facilitator and recorder. An audio recording was made and secured from a digital voice recorder that contains

the participant dialogue in response to the focus group questions. This recording was transcribed for analysis. While a video recording was made in Microsoft Teams, a technical issue prevented the audio from being recorded.

An inductive coding process was used on both the field notes and the focus group transcription. Due to the conciseness of the field notes compared to the focus group transcript, I coded the field notes by hand. I utilized NVivo 12 software to code the focus group transcript. Both data sources were coded multiple times; each iteration was more refined to be able to identify key themes in the data (Saldana, 2013). Participants were given the opportunity to review data for reliability purposes. Inquiry partners met with me to discuss the data collected and discuss the collection and analysis process. This was done to ensure reliability and validity of the data. Due to my positionality as the participant's principal and coach, I wanted to account for and eliminate as much potential bias as possible during the data collection and analysis process. I frequently utilized my assistant principal to conduct evaluations and lead professional interactions with participants to ensure that I remained impartial throughout the implementation of this inquiry. The results of this inquiry were shared with the school leadership team. The team discussed the impact that coaching made at River Park Elementary School. The leadership team also discussed opportunities for the coaching program to continue in the future.

Data Analysis

In this section I will discuss the data analysis process as it relates to each data collection instrument. The four beginning teacher participants participated in ongoing coaching from the end of January 2023 to the beginning of May 2023. While every effort was made to maintain a coaching cadence of every two weeks, circumstances such as participant scheduling conflicts, district professional development, spring break and participant availability affected the frequency

of the coaching. On average, the participants received one coaching session every two to three weeks. The number of coaching sessions that each participant received is noted in Table 3. Each coaching session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

This mixed methods inquiry collected qualitative and quantitative data as part of a multiple phase inquiry PDSA model. During the first phase of inquiry, pilot study data was conducted utilizing the short form, 12 question version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES). This pilot study was conducted ensure the validity of the survey questions and Qualtrics survey platform.

The coaching program was implemented between the beginning teacher participants and me during the second phase of inquiry. Pre and Post TSES survey data was collected and analyzed during the second phase and third phase of inquiry. The survey captured self-efficacy data from the beginning teacher participants in three areas: classroom management, student engagement and instructional strategies. Utilizing Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel, I disaggregated and analyzed the data as it relates to the whole survey and by participant. During each coaching session, I collected field notes, which were shorthand records of the coaching conversation and topics discussed. Additionally, throughout the second phase of inquiry a practitioner journal was kept to capture personal reflections and observations on the coaching program experience and implementation.

During the third phase of inquiry, the focus group was conducted and transcribed. Both the field notes and focus group were coded to determine prevalent topics and themes. Mertler (2021, p. 207) describes the coding process as an iterative process that “involves the reduction” of a large quantity of qualitative data. I utilized Nvivo12 to help organize the coding process. I utilized the work of Saldana (2013) to direct my coding and analysis of the field notes and the

focus group transcription. Prior to beginning the coding process I read the focus group transcript multiple times. I utilized a descriptive coding process to assign codes to the data (Saldana, 2013). After coding the material, I was able to create categories by making connections between different codes. Once categories were created, the qualitative data became easier to synthesize into themes. Themes were created that related to the inquiry questions and outcomes associated with coaching program. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate how the coding process resulted in several themes developing from both the focus group transcription and the field notes.

Results

This section will provide a thorough examination and analysis of the results of this inquiry by each instrument. Detailed information on the coaching framework is included to provide insight into the coaching outcomes. Field notes, focus group interview transcript and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey provide the basis of qualitative and quantitative data.

Field Notes

The field notes and allowed me to make notes about topics, conversations and follow-up material for our next meeting. To guide my coaching work, I utilized questions from the TRCS Coaching Leader Framework's four coaching conversations: well-being, vision, execution and productivity. I captured the frequency of each one of the four coaching conversations in Table 4. Throughout the coaching dialogue, I made notes about the participant responses and the topics that they were interested in discussing. Themes or topics that were frequently discussed with the coaching participants are noted in Table 5.

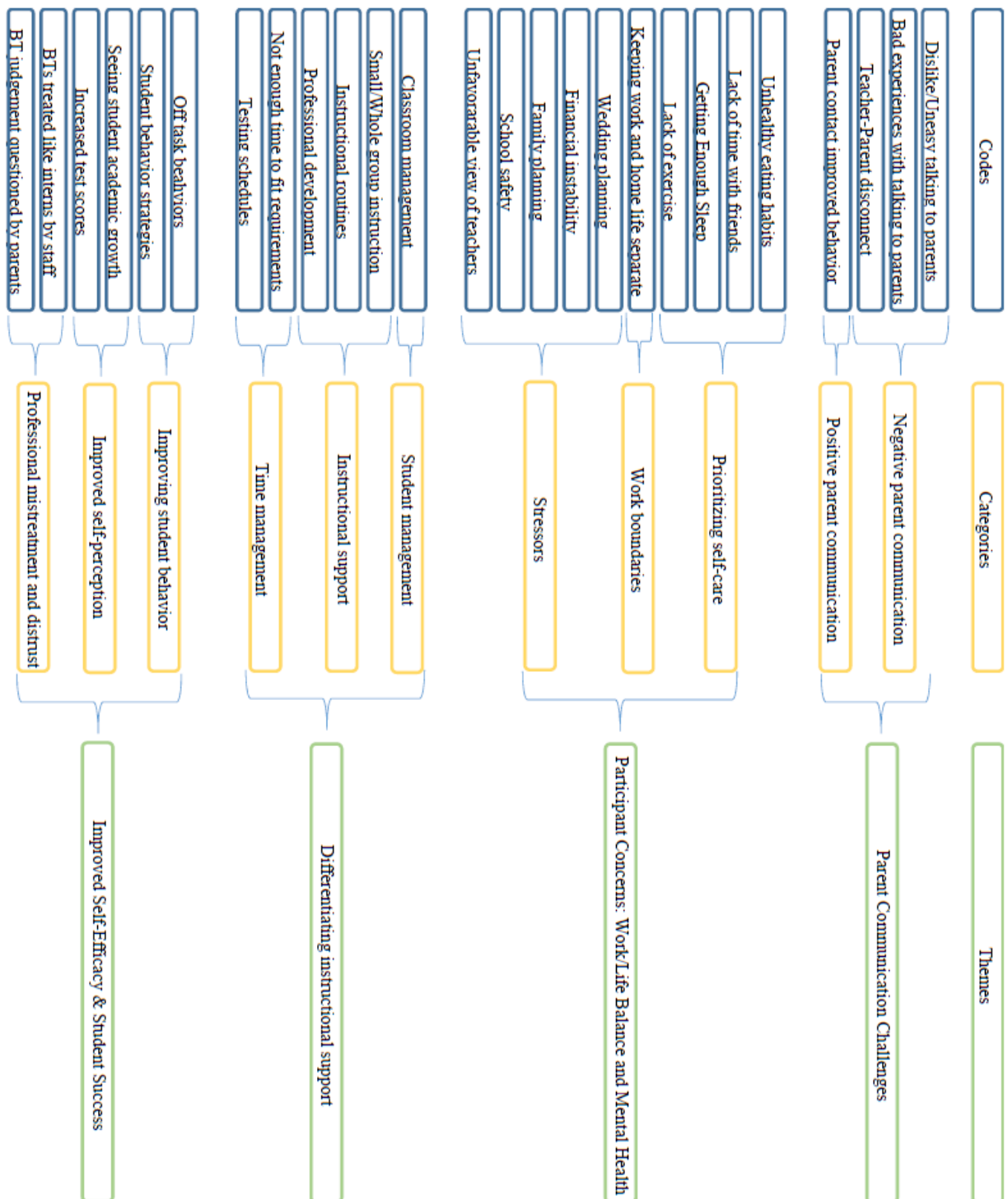


Figure 9. Field note coding schematic.

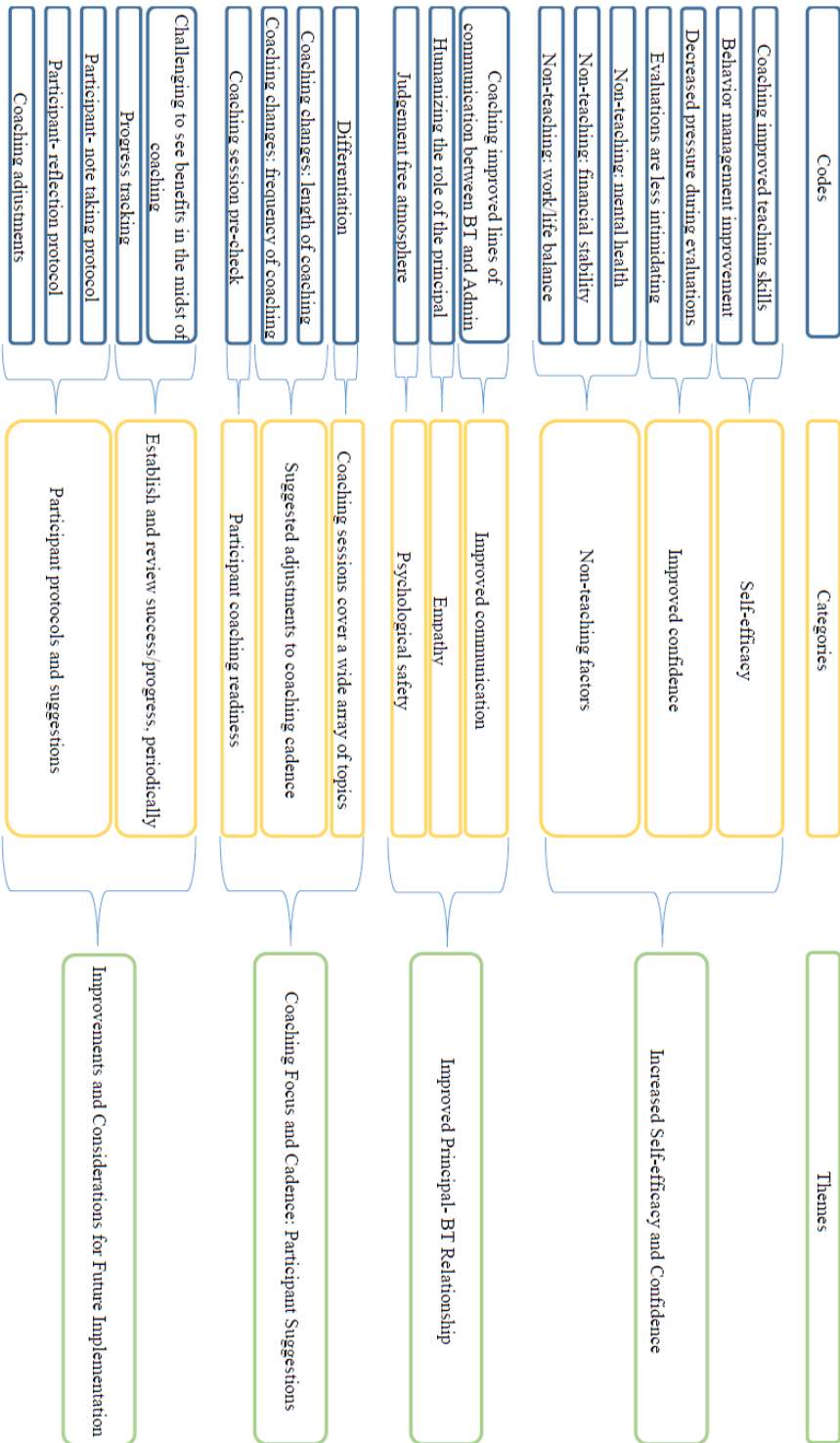


Figure 10. Focus group transcription coding schematic.

Table 4

TRCS Leadership Framework: Four Coaching Conversations

Topic/Theme	Tot. Freq.	Frequency by Participant			
		A	B	C	D
Well-Being	15	5	4	3	3
Vision	10	3	2	3	2
Execution	12	3	3	4	2
Productivity	6	1	1	2	2

Table 5

Coaching Theme and Frequency

Theme	Tot. Freq.	Frequency by Participant			
		A	B	C	D
Parent Communication Challenges	8	3	2	3	0
Participant Concerns: Work/Life Balance & Mental Health	14	4	5	2	3
Differentiating Instructional Support	10	3	3	2	2
Improved Self-Efficacy & Student Success	12	4	3	3	2

TRCS Coaching Leader Framework

The TRCS Coaching Leader Framework was utilized during each coaching session. I kept the framework in front of me as I took field notes and dialogued with the beginning teacher participant. The framework contained questions related to the four coaching conversation areas: well-being, vision, execution and productivity. I would use the coaching questions contained in the framework to help guide the coaching conversations or as follow-up questions to encourage deeper reflection and dialogue. Table 4 contains the frequency of each coaching conversation area based on the questions that I asked participants. The TRCS Coaching Leader Framework suggests several questions to establish the focus of the coaching session. I frequently asked participants: “What might be helpful to discuss today?” This question was used to begin the coaching conversation with the participant. Depending on the nature of the dialogue, follow-up questions were asked. I focused on asking open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and participant reflection. Each coaching session would also start with a brief check-in to see how the participant was doing while establishing a focus for the coaching session.

Of the four coaching conversation areas, I frequently used well-being questions to help the beginning teacher participant think about how they were taking care of themselves. Well-being questions made up close to 1/3 of the coaching conversations. These types of questions helped me support the mental-physical needs of the participant. The two most common questions I used under the well-being coaching area were “How are you taking care of yourself?” and “In what ways are you setting and maintaining healthy boundaries?” For example, the first question helped me dialogue with a participant who was trying to improve their physical fitness and sleep habits. While the second question was used with several of the participants who were working to improve their work/life balance.

The second most common coaching focus area utilized the questions in the execution category. Questions in this area helped me to dialogue with participants about topics like classroom management or parent communication. The question that I utilized the most was, “What supports might you need to be successful?” This question helped me understand the level of support the participant needed. The question would also help the participant and myself understand the root of the particular challenge that they were facing.

The coaching focus areas of vision and productivity and their questions were used to a slightly lesser extent with participants. Vision questioning was utilized to determine underlying mindsets while helping to understand the direction the participant wanted to move towards with a given situation. I found that these questions worked well as follow-up questions with beginning teacher participants. An example of this was when I was coaching a participant regarding their classroom management. Initially, this coaching conversation started with questions about the participant’s execution of their classroom management. It was important to understand how their classroom management vision. Through asking vision questions, I was able to understand the classroom management beliefs and goals of the participant. As the coaching conversations continued, the dialogue shifted to consistency of management routines. I utilized productivity questions to help identify structures and routines that would help the participant automate their classroom management actions.

Field Note Analysis by Participant

The following contains a synopsis of a portion of each participant’s coaching sessions created from the field notes that I have collected. As coaching is at the center of this inquiry, this section will help to provide insight into the different topics of conversation as well as the applicable TRCS Coaching Leaders coaching questioning strands. Each participant synopsis

highlights the coaching relationship with each participant. Due to the sensitive nature of the conversations, pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the beginning teacher. An analysis of the field notes will occur at the end of this section.

Participant A. Participant A is a third-grade teacher who is in her third year of teaching. She started teaching in a different school district in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. This participant was in their second year at River Park ES at the time of the coaching. Their first coaching session was January 20, 2023 and their last coaching session was May 11, 2023. At our first coaching session we discussed how to interpret common formative assessment data (CFA) as the participant stated that she was taking the results of her students' performance very personally. The conversation started as a vision conversation about the participant's experiences and beliefs about assessments. The coaching dialogue transitioned into an execution conversation about how they utilize reflection to improve their instruction. The conversation about CFAs included finding positive areas in student performance and looking at deficiencies in student performance as growth opportunities. The participant shared that they were seeing some growth and that they felt like their abilities were improving. As coaching continued the participant shared that sometimes they felt like they were thriving in the classroom and at other times coasting. This was an improvement from their previous years of teaching which the participant shared that they felt like they were regularly sinking.

In another coaching conversation we discussed walkthrough feedback. Participant A discussed that walkthroughs often caused panic and anxiety for her. Previously, she shared that the staff at River Park ES did not regularly receive feedback and that the walkthrough feedback was new for her this school year. Through asking open ended questions, we talked about these

feelings. The participant shared that she often had the same feelings in college about turning assignments in and receiving feedback.

Deep dialogue was had about an experience that really caused Participant A to question her career as an educator. Her first position as a teacher in a different school district was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to virtual learning and faculty wearing masks, the participant shared that she did not feel connected to her colleagues. At the end of the school year, the principal informed her that due to enrollment, they would be losing some teaching positions. Consequently, Participant A did not receive a contract. She had to move out of her apartment and almost lost her car. This negative experience has weighed on the participant significantly. This experience negatively impacted their vision of the profession and their own well-being.

Parent communication was discussed in numerous coaching sessions where the participant shared that they were fearful to talk to parents. The unpredictable nature of what the parents might say during the conversation caused anxiety for the participant. Additionally, the participant had several negative experiences with talking to parents who had different perspectives or educational beliefs than her. To help me coaching the participant about parent communication, I utilized execution questions. I coached her through some strategies for talking to parents and shared some personal experiences. When we followed up about this concern in the following weeks, the participant reported that the parent communication had improved. As a result of contacting parents, the participant noticed that the behaviors of students whose parents were contacted improved in the classroom.

This participant also frequently discussed the work/life balance with teaching and stresses associated with the profession. I utilized well-being and execution questions to when coaching the participant in this area. Through open dialogue, we pin pointed specific items that caused

stress at school and what reasonable boundaries might look like. The participant also discussed some financial stresses she was going through that included food insecurity towards the end of each month. During the coaching program, the participant brought up the school shooting that had occurred in Tennessee in March 2023. The participant was upset by the school shooting. I asked the participant a few questions to determine the root cause of her stress pertaining to school safety. The participant shared that she felt that it was her sole responsibility to keep her students safe every day at school. She shared that in a culture where school shootings are more prevalent, the thought of protecting students during an active shooter situation was overwhelming and scary. The participant also shared that other teachers were also very upset about the Tennessee school shooting. As a coach, I was able to acknowledge and validate the participant's feelings. I addressed the staff at the next staff meeting and shared updated information pertaining to school safety. The participant shared that they felt supported by me as their principal.

One of the coaching conversations with this participant was about failure. The participant applied but was not accepted into a district leadership program. The participant shared that they always had struggled with failure. Both herself and family members had always set a high standard for her, even if other family members were not held to that standard. This made failing particularly difficult for the participant. Through open-ended questioning about their vision and mindset, we worked together to reframe her failure as disappointment and discussed how to use perceived setbacks as growth opportunities.

Participant B. Participant B is a third-grade teacher who is in her second year of teaching. This is her first-year teaching at River Park ES. She has taught 3rd grade both years. Her first coaching session was January 23, 2023 and her final session was May 9, 2023. During

her first coaching session we discussed the instructional progress she had made this year. The participant shared that she was struggling to differentiate her instruction for higher performing students. I relied on execution and productivity questions to generate two-way dialogue. Her classroom had an additional staff member twice a week to help both the students and the participant. Per our coaching conversation the participant felt that the extra help being provided was not effective or helpful. The additional staff member was a retired teacher and the participant felt like due to the large age and experience difference that the retired teacher was not taking direction from her. We coached through what a conversation might sound between the participant and the additional staff member. The participant shared at a following coaching session that she held the conversation, and it was overall positive. Throughout the coaching program we addressed other instructional concerns such as preparing for the end of grade tests and small group instruction.

Towards the middle of February, Participant B had a new student enroll. According to the participant this student was very loud and did not like to listen. Consequently, the classroom management was becoming very challenging for the participant. During a coaching session we discussed the new student and the participant's classroom management. This continued to be an ongoing topic in future coaching sessions. The new student brought some unique behavioral challenges to the participant's classroom, making teaching very hard. Additionally, while implementing her positive behavior incentive program, a different student stole several of the rewards used for the incentive program. The participant shared her frustrations with this student's behavior and that she had personally bought the items with her own money. This particular situation gave me an opportunity to coach the participant using well-being, execution and productivity questions. We discussed the behavior of these students and worked to create a

plan to support her classroom management. After another coaching session, the participant concluded that her classroom management might improve if she could improve her classroom organization and time management. The participant implemented the changes that we discussed and at a subsequent coaching session shared that her classroom management was improving.

Another area of coaching centered on parent communication. The participant shared that they had not experienced much success with calling parents. We dialogued about setting up phone calls and conferences. The participant was bothered by the lack of parental support as it related to student behavior. We utilized productivity questions to help brainstorm some additional strategies to help in this area and to improve her consistency with communication routines.

As March 2023 approached, the participant started having back issues. The participant was struggling to physically teach due to back pain. I utilized well-being questions to create dialogue about the participant's health. Over a number of weeks, the participant sought out treatment and slowly their back pain improved. It was challenging for the participant to navigate the classroom and manage student behavior while in pain. As the principal, I was able to allocate building level resources to support this teacher.

By the end of the coaching program the participant noted that due to her improved health and classroom management that she was experiencing more positive days at school. We routinely had coaching conversations about the execution of her classroom management. She noted an improvement in student behavior and her instructional effectiveness.

Participant C. Participant C is a second-grade teacher who was in her first year of teaching during the inquiry. Prior to becoming a teacher, she was a kindergarten teaching assistant. Participant C had her first coaching session on January 26, 2023 and their last on May

9, 2023. From the beginning of the first session to the end of the last session, a common topic of conversation was parent communication. The participant shared that she was nervous to call parents and needed a system to be more accountable for making calls. During the coaching sessions, we focused on addressing this nervous energy by putting strong routines in place. I utilized execution coaching questions to dialogue with the participant about supports that could be implemented. We discussed methods to track calls and log communication. After some dialogue about parent communication, we agreed that I would check-in with the participant at future coaching sessions to follow-up on parent communication. By the end of the coaching program, the participant had shared that her parent communication improved, and she was not as nervous about talking with parents.

Classroom management was also a topic that was regularly discussed. I utilized execution coaching questions to identify the participants perceived classroom management strengths and focus on opportunities. One of the concepts we talked about was trying different forms of praise. The participant tried employing both oral/visual praise and written praise. At one of the sessions, the participant came up with an idea to send home written positive notes to students and parents called “happy mail.” The participant noticed a difference in the students that received “happy mail.” After spring break, the participant also started sending home pictures of exemplary work. She noticed her classroom management and parent support steadily improving.

During one of the coaching sessions the participant came into my office and shared immediately that they had a very trying conversation with a parent that the participant stated was rude to her. The participant shared her disdain for rude people with me. I was concerned about the participants mental health and how this experience would also impact their vision for parent communication. I utilized well-being and vision questions to generate dialogue about the

participant's experience. I shared that while it is normal not to like rude people, we cannot always control the other party. I asked her for some of the details of this parental conversation. The participant shared that she called a parent to inform them that their child was sick and vomited in class. She expected the parent to be concerned for her sick child. Instead, the parent asked the teacher if there were any issues in the classroom that they should know about. The parent stated that their child does not get sick like that. The participant felt that the conversation with the parent made her feel like that parent was insinuating that their child's illness was that teacher's fault. The participant felt like they could have handled the call better. Through coaching about execution, we role played how to handle these types of calls. We also discussed about her nature to take things personally or assume that they did something wrong. By the end of the coaching session, the participant realized that they most likely did not do anything wrong, and that the parent's reaction was out of her locus of control.

As a first-year teacher, we discussed work/life balance. I utilized well-being and productivity questions to have coaching conversations in this area. In February, the participant noticed that they were more tired and had even lost their voice for two days. They shared that it was frustrating and difficult to teach without a voice. I asked the participant what would be some steps that they could take to invest in their self-care. Through dialogue, the participant realized that they needed to get more sleep. The participant made a conscious effort to get more sleep and take care of herself. During spring break, the participant took a vacation and continued to increase her sleep. After spring break, the participant shared that she was regularly going to the gym. During coaching sessions, we discussed how to make these long-term habits.

Participant D. Participant D was in her first year of teaching and taught first grade during the implementation of this inquiry. She was an intern at River Park ES during the

previous school year in first grade. Her first coaching session was January 25, 2023 and she concluded the program on May 11, 2023. Our initial coaching sessions had an instructional focus where I utilized execution questions to discuss topics like diagnostic testing, phonics program implementation and small group instruction. We discussed small group instruction and planning for differentiation. During a coaching session, the participant shared that resources for high performing students were not easy for her to find. With the participant's permission, I was able to schedule one of our instructional coaches to follow up with the participant for support and help in this area.

In one of our coaching sessions, this participant shared that it really bothered her that some staff members treat first year teachers like interns or baby teachers, BTs. Although this participant was a first-year teacher, she was performing well in the classroom and with her student performance data. Through open-ended questioning utilizing vision questions, we discussed the discomfort this caused her. She felt like other teachers were looking down on her as a beginning teacher who was potentially doing better than some of her veteran colleagues. I shared with her that being in your first year of teaching does not mean you are starting on the bottom rung of the teaching ladder. In subsequent coaching sessions we discussed leadership. Through our coaching dialogue, the participant stated that the idea of being a leader causes her anxiety. She stated that being a leader could mean being alone. Being alone was an uncomfortable feeling. Again, I utilized a vision coaching conversation with the participant. I gave the participant some homework to reflect on what leadership means to them. At our next session, I followed up with this same question. The participant shared that "a leader is a person that people go to or look up to (field notes, 2023)." The participant also shared that they felt they had to be good at public speaking to become a leader. She stated that public speaking caused

anxiety. Through execution and vision coaching, we discussed taking small steps towards being a leader. I shared with her that being a leader does not mean being the principal, as a teacher she can lead in her classroom and with her colleagues. We discussed that a good starting point would be sharing her ideas and instructional suggestions during our weekly grade level professional learning community meetings. At the beginning of her second-year teaching, the participant is her grade level school improvement team representative.

During the implementation of the coaching portion of this inquiry, the participant got married and went on her honeymoon. Leading up to her wedding, we frequently discussed work/life balance. I utilized well-being questions to check in with the participant throughout the coaching program. While the participant generally stated that their work/life balance was fine, wedding planning was the one area that did increase her stress level. We had multiple coaching conversations about maintaining boundaries between work and home. Through execution and productivity coaching, we discussed that it is important to develop routines and procedures for maintaining a healthy work/life balance. The participant shared that they had instituted a practice of finishing any work that needed to be completed at school rather than bringing the work home to work on in the evenings and weekends.

Field Note Analysis

In addition to analyzing the frequency of each topic and theme in totality, I also disaggregated the data into the frequency of topic/theme by participant. This breakdown is available in Table 5. Parent communication was the only topic that was not discussed with Participant D. Out of the four topics, work/life balance and mental health was a predominant theme for three out of the four participants. The other topics were discussed with varying

frequency between each participant. Each topic or theme is presented below with insight into the coaching conversations.

Parent Communication Challenges. Parent communication was a theme in coaching conversations for three out of the four participants. Participants noted that communicating with parents caused anxiety and stress. Beginning teachers were worried that they might choose the wrong words or make a parent upset if the call was pertaining to a student's behavior. We discussed parent communication throughout the duration of the coaching program. One participant reported that student behavior improved after calling home and was greeted with support from the parent. A different participant discussed the challenges of working with parents who had different educational points of view. The participant reported that it was difficult to get parents to understand both the behavioral and academic expectations of her classroom and grade level. Overall, this is a topic that was of particular interest to the beginning teacher coaching participants.

Participant Concerns: Work/Life Balance & Mental Health. The linkage between work life balance and mental health were evident based on coaching conversations held with beginning teacher coaching participants. Participants discussed challenges to balance their personal life with their professional life. Three out of four participants were working towards ensuring that they were getting adequate sleep. Other participants were working to establish other healthy living habits like exercising or making time for friends and loved ones. One participant shared that they were working towards a habit of not taking work home. Topics such as personal finance, public support, marriage, family planning, physical health and current events were discussed.

Current events were woven into several coaching conversations. In March 2023, a school shooting occurred in Nashville, Tennessee that resulted in the fatalities of three students and three faculty members (Wurm, 2023). One participant discussed concerns about school safety and was upset by the tragic events in Nashville. A different participant reported sadness about the event and the heavy responsibility teachers have to keep students safe. Also, over the course of the coaching implementation, North Carolina was preparing the budget for the 2023-2024 school year. Differences between political parties as well as the governor and legislature were reported (Vaughan, 2023). Two of the coaching participants discussed that the negative perception of teacher worth weighed on them. This negativity towards teachers was also experienced on social media. Parents frequented platforms like Facebook to discuss their child's teacher rather than contact the teacher directly. These kinds of experiences impacted participant wellbeing.

Differentiating Instructional Support. Topics related to instructional support were discussed during coaching sessions. Participants discussed items like testing schedules, small group instruction and classroom organization. One participant discussed needing support with differentiating instruction during their students' small group instructional time while a different participant wanted to improve the organization of their classroom and time management. These scenarios gave me the opportunity to share suggestions, set goals and allocate resources to support these teachers. In the middle of the coaching implementation, one of the coaching participants lost their voice and was seeking instructional support in their classroom. I was able to empathize with the participant as I had a similar experience as a teacher. With permission of the participant, I contacted our instructional coaches for additional support. The last area of instructional support relates to professional development. All participants participated in a

statewide literacy training initiative. While they found the training beneficial, they did note that the training was a lot of additional work.

Improved Self-Efficacy and Student Success. Many coaching conversations focused on teacher self-efficacy. Teacher confidence and belief in themselves and students were different for each participant. Overall, teachers reported improvements in subjects that were discussed during coaching sessions. One of the topics that was frequently discussed was how to help students who were struggling academically or behaving poorly. All coaching participants discussed student behavior at least one time during the coaching implementation timeframe. Participants wanted to find ways to help student behavior improve. Similarly, the coaching participants wanted to see all students improve academically. During coaching sessions, participants discussed the disappointment when students do not behave or perform well educationally. Through coaching conversations, we generated plans for supporting students academically. Utilizing open ended questions gave participants the opportunity to brainstorm solutions. During coaching sessions, we would also work together to generate different approaches to student behavior. Often, participants offered appropriate solutions. Through coaching conversations, participants were encouraged to put plans into action.

Participants made connections between student performance and their self-efficacy. One participant stated, “My ability as a teacher is improving. I am seeing improvement in my student CFA [common formative assessment] data.” Another participant felt more positive about teaching because she saw improvement in student behavior as they instituted “written and visual praise” and “adjusted classroom management strategies for certain students.” These experiences would translate into an increase in beginning teacher self-efficacy. However, some beginning teachers had experiences that would negatively impact their self-efficacy. Perception of

beginning teachers negatively impacted one of the coaching participants, “Some people try to treat us like interns.” Another participant discussed that a child had taken ill in the classroom and when they spoke to the parent, the parent believed the reason for the illness was the teacher.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES)

Each participant completed the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), also known as the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES), prior to the beginning of the coaching program and after the end of the coaching program. This survey was piloted during the first inquiry phase. This survey includes 12 questions and is the shortened version of the 24-question long form. The survey considers three different factors that impact teacher efficacy: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Each factor corresponds to four questions on the survey. The participant selected a number between 1-None at all to 9- A great deal. The minimum possible score for the entire survey is 12 while the maximum is 108.

Table 6 includes a review of pre and post survey scores. All four participants completed the survey during the pre and post coaching survey administration. During the pre-survey the minimum score was 69 with a maximum of 83 points. The average score was a 77.5 with a standard deviation of 6.03. The post-survey minimum score was 87 and the maximum score was 89. The average score was 88 with a standard deviation of .82. The data indicates an increase in the minimum, maximum and average scores of post-survey responses when compared to the pre-survey that participants took. The low standard deviation on the post-survey indicates that participants responded similarly to each other as it relates to the mean.

A comparison of each participants pre- and post-survey scores indicates that each participant’s self-efficacy grew from pre to post coaching implementation. Table 7 provides a

Table 6

Overall/ Pre and Post TSES Scores

SES	Participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Pre	4	69	83	77.5	6.03
Post	4	87	89	88	.82
Change		+ 18	+ 6	+ 10.5	

Table 7

Pre and Post TSES Scores by Participant

Participant	Pre-Total	Post-Total	Change Pre/Post
A	78	89	+11
B	69	88	+19
C	80	87	+7
D	83	88	+5

breakdown of each participants score. This data can be used to help measure the impact of the coaching program on each participant. Based on the results of the TSES, Participant B had the lowest pre-coaching score at 69 and increased 19 points from the pre to the post survey to 88.

Participant D had the highest pre-coaching survey score at 83 and increased 5 points from the pre to the post-coaching survey. Participant A had the highest post-coaching survey score of 89 and grew 10 points. Participant C also saw a positive change from the pre-coaching survey to the post-coaching survey, increasing 7 points from 80 to 87. All participants showed a positive increase in self-efficacy over the course of the coaching program according to a comparison of pre-coaching TSES and post-coaching surveys.

The teacher self-efficacy survey (TSES) completed by participants connected participant responses with three different factors that impact teacher self-efficacy. The three factors that the survey scored were instructional strategies, classroom management and student engagement. Pre and post survey averages for each category are located in Figure 11. The average for each efficacy factor increased between the pre-survey and post-survey.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey: Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies had the highest increase in mean scores between pre and post implementation surveys with an increase of .94. This factor had the highest post survey mean score of the three factors measured by the TSES. Table 8 provides a comparison of pre and post coaching implementation scores with regards to instructional strategies. The question that saw the greatest increase in overall mean between pre and post implementation was question 9. The question asked participants to rate: To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies? Pre-implementation the mean score was a 6.00 while post-implementation mean participant response increase to 7.75. Question 10 stated: To what extent can you provide an

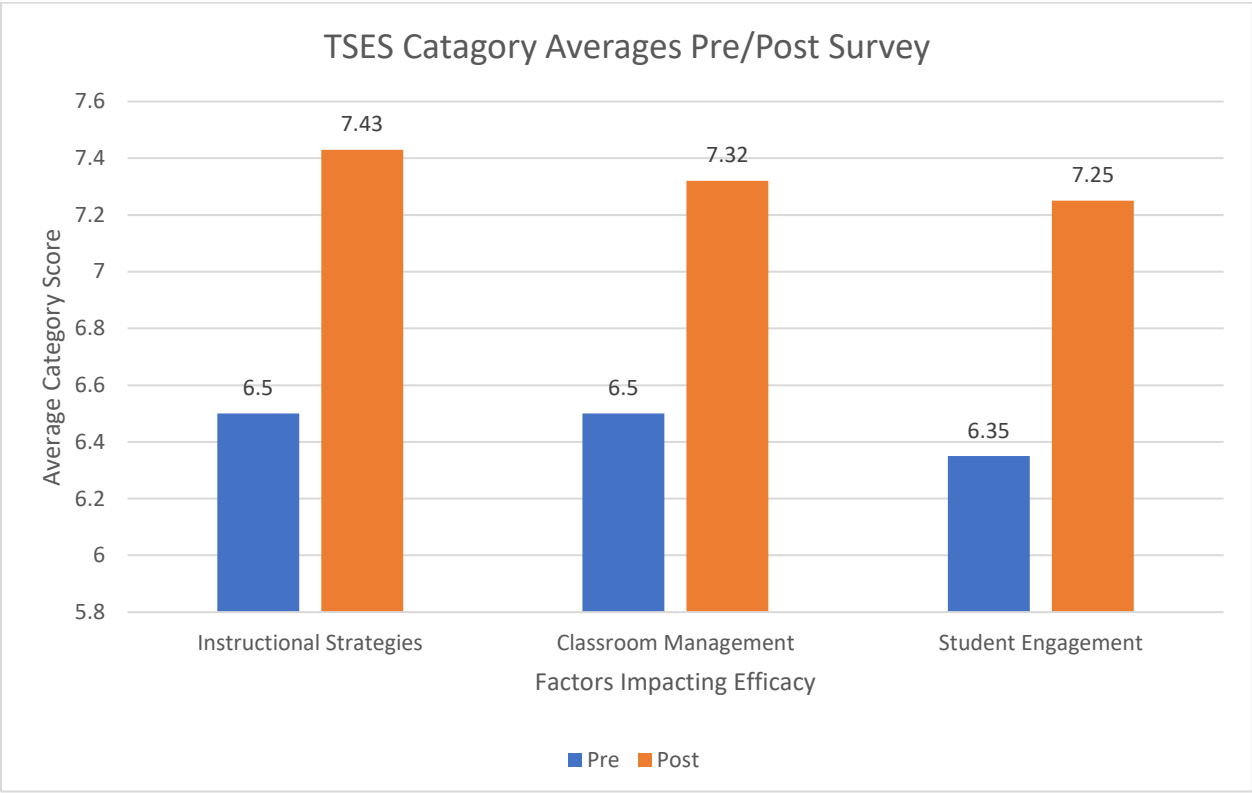


Figure 11. TSES Category Average Pre/Post Comparison.

Table 8

TSES Survey Pre and Post Coaching Implementation: Instructional Strategies

#	Field	Pre-Mean	Pre-Std Deviation	Post-Mean	Post-Std Deviation	Mean Difference
5	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	6.75	.50	7.75	.96	1.00
9	To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	6.00	.82	7.75	.96	1.75
10	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	7.00	.82	7.25	.50	.25
12	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	6.25	.96	7.0	.82	.75

alternative explanation or example when students are confused? This question had the highest pre-implementation mean score with 7.00 and increased to 7.25 in the post-implementation survey. This question saw the smallest increase in mean from pre-implementation to post-implementation at .25.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey: Student Engagement

Student engagement had the lowest pre-survey average at 6.35 and rose to 7.25 resulting in a .90 mean increase. This increase was the second largest mean increase after instructional strategies. Table 9 provides a comparison of pre and post implementation student engagement scores. Question 7: How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with their schoolwork? generated the largest mean post-implementation survey increase of 1.25 compared to other student engagement questions. There were three more questions that addressed student engagement. These questions saw the same mean increase between pre- and post-implementation at .75. Question 4: How much can you do to help your students value learning? The pre-implementation mean was the highest of the four student engagement questions at 6.75. The post-implementation mean for this question increased .75 to 7.5.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey: Classroom Management

Classroom management had the smallest mean increase between pre-implementation and post-implementation surveys with a .82 mean increase. Table 10 provides a comparison of pre and post coaching implementation survey results. Question 3: How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? had a pre-implementation mean of 5.75 and a post implementation mean of 7.25 representing an overall increase of 1.5. Participant responses to Question 1: How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? had the

Table 9

TSES Survey Pre and Post Coaching Implementation: Student Engagement

#	Field	Pre-Mean	Pre-Std Deviation	Post-Mean	Post-Std Deviation	Mean Difference
2	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?	6.00	.82	6.75	.50	.75
4	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	6.75	1.26	7.5	.58	.75
7	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with their schoolwork?	6.50	.58	7.75	.96	1.25
11	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	6.25	1.71	7.0	0.0	0.75

Table 10

TSES Survey Pre and Post Coaching Implementation: Classroom Management

#	Field	Pre-Mean	Pre-Std Deviation	Post-Mean	Post-Std Deviation	Mean Difference
1	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	6.75	0.50	6.75	0.50	0.00
3	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	5.75	.50	7.25	.50	1.50
6	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	7.00	.82	8.00	.82	1.00
8	How well can you establish a classroom management system with your students?	6.50	1.29	7.25	1.26	.75

highest pre-implementation mean score at 6.75. The post-survey mean for Question 1 indicated no increase between pre-implementation and post-implementation survey scores.

Focus Group

The focus group was conducted after all of the coaching sessions had concluded. The focus group facilitator met with coaching participants at River Park ES. Participants provided responses to focus group questions outlined in Appendix D. The purpose of the focus group was to collect beginning teacher participant feedback on outcomes associated with participating in coaching with their principal. The focus group was recorded and transcribed. The transcription was coded using inductive coding process to identify themes and trends (Saldana, 2013).

In response to the focus group questions, four themes developed: (1) Increased Self-Efficacy and Building Confidence, (2) Improved Principal – BT Relationship, (3) Coaching Focus and Cadence: Participant Suggestions, and (4) Improvements and Considerations for Future Implementation. Table 11 contains the four themes and the frequency at which each theme occurred in the focus group interviews. Some of these themes have the potential to overlap with each other. For example, if the coaching conversation positively impacted a teacher's self-efficacy there was a likelihood that the teacher's relationship with the me as their principal was also enhanced. Table 11 also contains how each theme relates to the focus group question that was asked. Due to the conversational nature of the focus group participant responses, it was likely that any one response could address a variety of focus group questions.

The most frequent focus group theme was related to teacher self-efficacy and building teacher confidence. Dialogue that was captured under this theme centered on topics or conversations that were indicative of a participants increased self-efficacy. This theme captured commentary where participants shared that they felt more confident as a teacher. The theme of

Table 11

Frequency of Theme in Focus Group Interview

Theme	Frequency	Focus Group Question
Increased Self-Efficacy and Confidence	22	1, 2, 3, 4
Improved Principal – BT Relationship	14	1, 3, 4, 6
Coaching Focus and Cadence: Participant Suggestions	14	1, 4
Improvements and Considerations for Future Implementation	13	5, 6

Principal – BT relationship highlights the participants’ focus group reflections regarding improvement of the relationship between the beginning teacher and the principal. Participants discussed that the coaching program helped to humanize me as their leader. They felt that trust was built, and each participant felt comfortable having dialogue with their principal. The third theme was coaching focus and cadence. This theme captures participant feedback on the structure and frequency of the coaching program. Improvements and considerations was the final theme from that was coded from the focus group transcription. As part of the focus group, participants’ shared ideas for improving the coaching program and enhancements should the program continue in the future.

Coaching Focus and Cadence: Participant Suggestions

Participants discussed several topics throughout the course of their coaching sessions. During the focus group interview, participants acknowledged the following topics were addressed through coaching conversations: Classroom management, wedding planning, mental health, sleep, work/life balance, personal finance, teacher leadership and parent communication. The focus of each session varied greatly depending on the needs of the coaching participant. Each participant focused on different coaching topics. As one participant pointed out, “[Two] of them are BT ones, she’s a BT two and I’m a BT three. We all need different things.”

Participants provided feedback on the coaching frequency and duration of coaching sessions. While 30 minutes was the goal, sometimes participants felt like they needed more or less time. One participant who met with me before school had a strict time limit due to the school day starting. This participant stated that she felt like the coaching conversations were cut short by having a hard stop time. A different participant suggested that for the coaching to be valuable, the participant needs to have the mental-emotional capacity to participate that day. If the teacher

has had a particularly challenging school day, they may not want to participate in a coaching session in the afternoon.

Increased Self-Efficacy and Confidence

As part of the focus group question protocol, participants were specifically asked about the impact of the coaching on their self-efficacy or beliefs about their abilities as a beginning teacher. Through coaching, participants were able to address topics where they desired support. One participant discussed that the coaching improved her ability and beliefs about classroom management. This participant shared that they had previously struggled with classroom management. Heading into last school year, they were concerned that behavior issues would plague them again. Through coaching, the teacher was able to improve their self-efficacy around classroom management. “He has been so supportive with literally every little behavior issue behavior question that I’ve had. I felt like I’ve been able to get a lot more tips and tricks and ideas under my belt. ...I’ve got this. I feel like I’ve been able to manage my classroom and manage behaviors, making sure that we’re having a more harmonious classroom.”

In a similar reaction, another participant felt that their classroom management was not adequate. “I feel like my teaching is great. Classroom management, maybe not. I was just really worried...like, he thinks my classroom management was terrible.” The teacher felt they were able to share this concern with me. We discussed classroom management during coaching sessions. I utilized open-ended questions and the TRCS Coaching Leader Framework. The teacher reported that they grew in this area and became more confident in their abilities to manage students. One participant shared that they felt supported to lead their classroom, “he’s just really understanding about how our classrooms are going to be different. It’s okay for them to be different.”

One of the areas that participants stated that was positively impacted by coaching was the perception of the principal during walkthroughs and observations. Two of the participants stated that having an administrator in their room makes them a little anxious. One participant commented that, "...I want to improve. But I don't want you to see me mess up." Another participant stated, "You're [the principal] going to tell me if I messed up or if I did a great job." As the coaching sessions progressed, participants felt better about having the principal provide feedback citing that the coaching "does help. There was less pressure during walkthroughs." Another participant shared that observations, "[are] scary for me because, I want to be perfect. I want him to see me at my absolute best and I want to look just like the teacher that's been teaching for 16 years. He doesn't expect that. So that's fine, because I think some people do."

In an effort to address teacher efficacy, some coaching conversations centered on work/life balance and wellbeing. Teachers who feel good about their wellbeing feel better about their workplace performance (McCallum, 2021). One participant shared, "He asked me how I am taking care of myself outside of school. That was really nice because a lot of people don't ask that." Another participant stated, "If I can't 100% be here then I can't 100 percent be there for my kids." Through these types of conversations, I was able to address issues that were pertinent to the beginning teacher participants. One participant discussed their financial well-being and concerns about having enough money for groceries, "...finances [are] a big thing. And I'm sure you all know, if you have financial struggles, it gets a huge burden. And it's hard to function because you're constantly thinking, 'Okay, well do I have grocery money, and is my rent going to be paid and all this stuff'." Participants shared that these conversations allowed me to work with the beginning teacher participants on a human level. Each participant shared that it was

important to address topics other than school as it allowed me insight into them as humans, not just teachers. These coaching conversations supported the growth of teacher self-efficacy.

Improved Principal – Beginning Teacher Relationship

The relationship between beginning teacher and principal improved throughout the coaching treatment. Coaching participants all agreed that one of the biggest benefits of participating in coaching with their principal is that they were able to build a better relationship with me. One teacher stated, “I think that it's helped me get to know him better and see that he truly does care.” Another participant added that the coaching made “it easier to talk to him. It wasn't awkward, as a beginning teacher.”

One participant noted that one of the benefits of coaching was that it allowed them to see me outside of the principal role, as a human, too. As one participant shared, “How are you going to help your teachers be successful if you don't have a relationship with them? “Providing an opportunity for teachers to connect with me as their principal and as a person was important to participants. “[It] also was helpful seeing him outside of the principal role, because he was still our principal, but we're having that one-on-one conversation. And so, I got to know him more as a person as well.” This also helped another participant who was hired during the COVID-19 pandemic under a previous principal. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this participant shared that they were unable to tour the school and never saw her principal's face without a mask on. The participant did not have a positive relationship with their principal. “I didn't really know my principal before. I did not feel comfortable talking to her about anything. She terrified me on so many levels..... So I spent the first almost whole year of school here thinking that she didn't like me, versus if we had something like this.” As this participant suggests, a coaching program could have helped to improve the relationship with a previous principal.

The coaching sessions increased the comfortability of participants to talk about issues or topics that they were uneasy or unsure about. Participants discussed that due to the relationship built through the coaching sessions, their fears of being negatively judged or facing consequences were unfounded. In return, participants appreciated my own vulnerability in sharing items that I was learning about or areas that I was working to grow in. Participants also noted that confidentiality was an important component of the principal-BT coaching relationship. One participant shared that they felt comfortable discussing items because I would not discuss the coaching with anyone else in the school. “If I said something, he is going to keep it in mind, but he is not going to go spread it” stated one participant.

Improvements and Considerations for Future Implementation

As part of the focus group, participants made suggestions regarding potential changes to the coaching program. Participants felt that participating in the coaching program was beneficial. However, it was not clear how valuable the coaching was throughout the coaching treatment. “I don't think that I realized how helpful it was until we sat down [focus group] and talking and I was like, oh, it's actually been a lot more helpful than I realized.” Participants discussed including a reflection protocol, framework or document for participants to take notes or track progress. One participant suggested a closing protocol for each session that could include a review of what has or has not been helpful or beneficial.

Two participants discussed that coaching should be required or at a minimum offered to every beginning teacher. One participant stated that beginning teachers can feel a lot of stress and anxiety as the workload continues to build throughout the year. The coaching sessions were seen as an avenue of support. There was also some discussion that it may be more beneficial for

beginning teachers in their first year of teaching to have a longer coaching session than teachers who are considered BT3s, or teachers in the 3rd year as a beginning teacher.

Summary

The results of the inquiry show that beginning teachers were positively impacted by their participation in the coaching program with their building administrator. Beginning teacher self-efficacy improved in all three domains measured on the TSES survey. Additionally, data from the focus group and field notes indicate that teacher self-efficacy was positively impacted by the coaching conversations held with their building administrator. Participants benefited from being able to discuss challenges and situations that they were facing in the classroom and in their lives. Furthermore, participants valued the improved relationship with their building administrator.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

School systems and building leaders are having difficulty finding qualified applicants as fewer teachers are enrolling and graduating from teacher preparation programs (Abitabile, 2020). Every school year, principals work to recruit and retain teachers. Furthermore, the cost of onboarding a new teacher can quickly exceed \$10,000 (Learning Policy Institute, 2021). The State of North Carolina requires school systems to offer several supports to beginning teachers. These supports are important because beginning teachers that have entered the profession have reported that the demands of teaching are stressful (Loewus, 2021; McCarthy et al., 2020; Plaza & Jamito, 2021; Prilleltensky et al., 2016). In response to the stresses and demands of the profession, the State requires all beginning teachers to be assigned a mentor teacher and complete a three-year beginning teacher induction process (NC GS 115C-300.1; NCDPI, 2020b). School leadership plays an important role with regards to supporting and retaining teachers. So much so that teachers cite that lack of supportive school leadership is a contributing factor to them leaving the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Sutchter et al., 2016). The focus of this inquiry was to investigate the benefits associated with implementing an administrator led coaching model with beginning teachers to address these concerns.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this inquiry was to determine the benefits associated with implementing a beginning teacher – principal coaching model. The qualitative results were comprised of focus group and field notes. Participants noted a positive experience with their participation in the coaching program. They stated that they felt more supported due to the coaching. Participant self-efficacy was a common coaching topic based on an analysis of the field notes. Participant

confidence and capabilities increased due to the coaching program, which positively influenced their teacher self-efficacy.

Teacher participants shared that they felt more confident addressing classroom management issues and handling parent communication. Additionally, the topic of well-being was addressed in numerous coaching sessions. Analysis of the four key questioning areas in the TRCS Coaching Leader Framework indicated that well-being was the most frequently used coaching strand. The prevalence of well-being support is also evident in the field note analysis where work/life balance and mental health was the most common coaching topic. Participants shared that they felt more seen and heard as both a teacher and individual due to the coaching sessions.

Quantitative data indicates that teacher self-efficacy and confidence grew as evidenced by the TSES survey. Table 12 includes important findings related to the inquiry questions. Additionally, while teacher retention was not the primary goal of this inquiry it is relevant to note that all teachers who participated in the coaching program were retained at River Park ES for the following school year.

The following inquiry questions were used to frame this action research-based inquiry:

1. How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?

Table 12

Inquiry Questions and Key Findings

Inquiry Questions	Key Findings
1. How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?	- TSES measured improved self-efficacy in 3 domains: student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management - Support provided by principal during coaching sessions positively impacted participant beliefs and confidence through coaching participants in the areas of instructional support, self-efficacy & student success, parent communication and work/life balance & mental health - Participants indicated that they felt an increase in support from their principal and noted an improved relationship with their administrator.
2. What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?	- Coaching program helped to improve the relationship between principal and beginning teachers - Humanization of both participant and administrator lead allowed me to better understand and empathize with the participants - Improved my questioning techniques and coaching skills - Align support and resources for beginning teachers within the school

Inquiry Question 1

The first guiding question was “How is beginning teacher self-efficacy impacted through the participation of beginning teachers in an administrator-beginning teacher coaching program?” When analyzing the quantitative data and qualitative data jointly, the prevailing conclusion was that participant self-efficacy increased as a result of their participation in the coaching program with their principal. This is supported by the overall mean improvement in the TSES, self-efficacy as the most frequent theme of the focus group and self-efficacy as a prevalent theme in the coaching sessions according to the field notes.

Quantitative data was collected from participants by comparing the results of the pre and post administration of the TSES. Qualitative data was collected from a focus group interview and field notes. These data sources were used to answer inquiry question 1. The quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed following implementation indicates that teacher self-efficacy was positively impacted by their participation in the coaching program. The quantitative results indicate that teacher self-efficacy improved as measured through surveying participants before and after their participation in the coaching program. Qualitative data was captured via focus group interviews that were subsequently transcribed and coded to identify themes. Additionally, field notes were during coaching sessions and coded as well to capture coaching themes. Teacher self-efficacy was the most common theme of the focus group interview. Participants shared that the coaching program improved their relationship with their principal, too. Coaching conversations regarding teacher self-efficacy were only second to dialogue surrounding work/life balance and mental health in the field notes. The prevalence of these different themes are further supported by the four coaching conversations addressed in the TRCS Coaching leader framework. Participants were frequently coached in the areas of execution,

well-being and vision. It is important to note the interconnected nature of the different themes and questioning strands. As one participant noted in the focus group, issues that impact one's wellness can influence how they feel about their students and their ability to perform for their students. Out of the four coaching areas in the TRCS Coaching Leader Framework, well-being questions were used approximately 33% of the time compared to the other coaching strands. In the focus group, beginning teacher participants discussed that the coaching program helped them feel supported, more confident and enhanced the relationship between beginning teacher and principal. Based on qualitative data, the coaching program increased beginning teacher self-efficacy.

The qualitative and quantitative data confirms the numerous benefits that coaching had on the beginning teacher participants. The support that I was able to provide as the participants principal and coach positively impacted the beginning teachers' self-efficacy. Coaching provided an opportunity to differentiate support and coach the participants in areas where they needed help. This inquiry did not intend to coach exclusively in the three domains measured by the TSES. However, the domains of classroom management and instructional strategies were commonly coached and supported based on the commonalities seen in the coaching themes and participant feedback during the focus group. Increasing the support between administrator and beginning teacher helped to build and improve relationships between participants and myself. Addressing both the professional side of teaching and the humanistic side of the profession, such as work/life balance and wellbeing provided participants multi-faceted wrap-around support when compared to traditional instructional coaching. The coaching program increased the self-efficacy of participants and built their confidence through meaningful dialogue with their administrator.

Inquiry Question 2

The second inquiry question was “What influence does conducting this action research inquiry have on the leadership skills and development of the scholarly practitioner?” The impact of the coaching program was beneficial to me as a leader and principal at River Park ES. My participation in the coaching program improved my relationship with beginning teachers. As trust and comfortability was built between myself and the beginning teacher participant, deeper conversations were able to be had to support the participants more holistically. Not only was I getting to know the participants better, but also the participants were also able to get to know me as a human and leader. Due to the improved relationship on both sides, we were better able to understand each other. This was an important area of growth for me as a leader who is charged with building a shared vision throughout a school building.

This inquiry directly influenced my coaching skills. I was able to improve my competencies as a coach by improving my active listening skills, dialoguing abilities and questioning techniques. Improvement was made in these areas by regularly reflecting on my coaching experiences and reviewing the framework used in this inquiry. Additionally, I discussed and reflected on my implementation with my dissertation chair and district level inquiry partner in order to improve my skills as a coach.

As the coaching program progressed, I was able to take note of the different supports or needs that the beginning teacher participants had. This improved my skills as an instructional leader as I was able to align support for participants. Depending on the nature of support or resource that the beginning teacher needed, I could ensure that a particular participant had the support to work through any type of classroom or instructional challenge. With permission from the participant, we would discuss utilizing our instructional coaches for support, too. As a leader,

I was able to support the beginning teachers by aligning supports and resources to help them grow.

Throughout the inquiry, I made reflections and kept notes in a practitioner journal. Additionally, as I reviewed the focus group interview questions as they related to the participant responses, I noticed that these questions would also be relevant to myself as both a leader and as the administrator participant.

Practitioner Journal

Throughout the duration of the coaching program, I kept a journal where I made notes about implementation and participant feedback. The journal also contained some short reflections on how I believed the coaching sessions were progressing. Through implementing a coaching program with beginning teachers, I learned that it is important for principals and beginning teachers to develop a supportive, professional relationship. One participant shared that meeting with your principal can have a negative or scary connotation. Through coaching, the participant felt more at ease with their principal and supported by the coaching conversations.

Another reflection that I had was that I believed the participants were beginning to see me as a human, too. As a principal, I felt better positioned to provide professional feedback on their instruction when I completed classroom walkthroughs. Due to the connections made through coaching, participants also understood who I was as a person and as a principal. I was able to share some of the extrinsic expectations placed on me as principal of the school and my internal motivations for seeing our school succeed. I felt more confident that the participants would take instructional feedback more positively since they had an opportunity to learn more about me as a person and leader through coaching.

As the coach, I was able to connect with each beginning teacher on their level to discuss topics or issues that were important to each participant. As a principal, the coaching program opened the door to support and have dialogue with beginning teachers outside of standard communication.

Through the use of the TRCS Coaching Leader Framework and the coaching program, I was able to grow my coaching skills. As the coaching progressed, I worked to improve my questioning techniques and active listening skills. I noticed that I relied less on the suggested questions in the four key coaching areas as I became more comfortable with coaching throughout the duration of the program's implementation. This allowed me to transition into a role where I was able to help participants generate solutions to questions or problems through the use of open-ended questioning. The coaching framework helped to guide the dialogue and was often used to start a coaching conversation. I grew in my ability to ask questions that initiated reflections from the participant. This reflective dialogue was informative for both the participant and me. The coaching conversations helped me suggest or align support to beginning teachers. I became a better coach, leader and supporter throughout the implementation of the coaching program.

Focus Group Reflection Through Administrator Lens

In this section I have provided responses to focus group questions 1-4 from the administrator viewpoint. Question 1 asks "Tell me about your experience with the coaching provided- How has coaching impacted your experience as a beginning teacher?" The coaching program allowed me to improve my relationships with the beginning teachers that were part of the program. As a first-year principal who was new to the school, I did not hire any of the teachers on staff. While some of the more veteran teachers may have been connected to previous

administrators, the coaching program gave me and the participants an opportunity to improve our alignment with each other. The coaching program improved my experience as a principal as I was able to support beginning teachers more wholistically rather than solely instructional support.

Question 2 asks “How did the coaching impact your self-efficacy or beliefs about your abilities as a BT?” As the principal, it was important to me that my beginning teachers new that I believed in them and wanted them to do well. Additionally, I wanted them to feel supported and connected to the school. The coaching program gave me the opportunity to provide this experience for the beginning teacher participants. In terms of my own growth, the coaching program improved my coaching skills and grew my self-efficacy as an administrator. While being a principal was always an ambition of mine, it is often very isolating. As my coaching skills improved throughout the inquiry, I was able to gather insight into what was working in my school and where teachers, particularly beginning teachers, needed more support. While the goal of the inquiry was not to directly measure teacher retention, all of the beginning teachers in the inquiry and in my school returned the next school year. The coaching program made me a stronger leader.

The third focus group question asks, “In what ways did coaching make you feel supported or unsupported as a BT?” After reflecting on the coaching program and listening to and coding the focus group, it materialized that the coaching program improved the feeling of support that participants received. As a principal, the coaching program made me more in tune and equipped to help the beginning teacher participants. The rich conversations about classroom management and parent communication caused me to reflect on my initial years as an educator, too. Through storytelling, I was able to share some of my own experiences with parent

communication and challenging classrooms. I wanted the participants to know that they were not alone as they grew their skills in these areas. As an administrator, I have had a lot of practice and experience related to talking with parents. One reflection point for me was thinking about how this inquiry could inform our school-level beginning teacher support to improve the efficacy of beginning teachers with classroom management and parent communication.

The coaching program made me feel supported as the principal of the participants. During the focus group, one of the participants shared that the coaching program gave them a better understanding of me as their administrator. This participant was able to advocate for a decision I had made because they had a deeper understanding of who I was as a leader and the spirit in which the decision was made. The coaching program gave the beginning teacher insight into me as a human and leader.

Throughout the coaching program the relationship between administrator and beginning teacher was improved. Question 4 asks “In what ways did the coaching impact the relationship between administrator and teacher?” The relationships improved in a manner where I was able to better empathize with the beginning teachers. This was very beneficial for me as I worked with two of the participants who were in their first year of teaching. In my experience, first year teachers are provided a variety of school and district-based support from instructional coaches, mentors and district coaches. I previously did not allocate a lot of 1:1 time with beginning teachers in their first year due to the support they were already receiving. However, a reflection that I have had from the coaching program is that beginning teachers need more than instructional support. Beginning teachers need wrap around support to work through the highs and lows of the first years in the classroom. The coaching program reminded me what it was like

to enter the profession and the importance of having someone to listen to you throughout your initial years.

Interpretation of the Findings

This section will discuss the connection between the results of this mixed methods action research inquiry and the reviewed literature. The findings of this inquiry support the use of an executive coaching model between beginning teachers and their building administrator. Additionally, the results of the inquiry indicate a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy.

Bandura (1997) posits that teacher self-efficacy is most easily influenced in the first years of one's teaching career. His research established that beliefs and behaviors of an individual directly influences their ability to achieve desired results. Furthermore, knowledge alone does not equate to positive workplace outcomes (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). In the educational setting, teacher confidence and beliefs about student learning contribute to their teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The Tar River Schools Coaching Leader framework was adopted from the Building Champions coaching model. The coaching framework utilized an open-ended question approach that allowed for ample listening and reflection for the participant and me. The coaching was largely a collaborative experience with both sides exhibiting a level of vulnerability that led to an exploration of mindsets and beliefs for the participant. This experience correlates with what Aguilar (2013) refers to as transformational coaching.

This inquiry utilized the short format of Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to capture teacher responses in the areas of engagement, instruction and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The TSES was administered before participants began the coaching program and after the conclusion of the coaching program. Participant responses indicate an increase in teacher self-efficacy in all three domains. The quantitative data indicates

that the coaching program positively influenced teacher self-efficacy. One of the domains that was directly impacted through coaching was classroom management. Managing a classroom can be a large stressor for beginning teachers (Saeki et al., 2018). Stress is physiological attribute that impacts self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Wessels, 1994). Per field notes, classroom management was a topic addressed in coaching conversations with numerous participants. Additionally, during the focus group, participants reflected on coaching conversations that focused on classroom management. The domain with the second highest average post-survey score was classroom management. This indicates a positive correlation between the coaching program and teacher self-efficacy.

All of the participants in the inquiry cited a positive impact on their relationship with their principal. The Wallace Foundation found that principals are integral in creating a positive working climate where teachers feel supported (Grissom et al., 2021). In addition, teachers who had lower levels of administrator support were more likely to leave the profession (Sutcher et al., 2016). Beginning teacher participants noted in the focus group that they felt supported through their coaching conversations. One of the areas that Bandura (1997) believes that self-efficacy comes from is through social persuasion or social communication. Coaching conversations allowed me to ask questions and have discussions that focused on areas where participants needed support or were unsure of what actions to take. At the same time, we often discussed each participant's personal beliefs and mindsets and explored the participant's role as a teacher within the larger school environment. The TRCS Coaching Leader framework helps unpack participant beliefs by utilizing vision conversations. These types of coaching conversations echoed the work of Aguilar (2013, 2018) who suggests that transformational coaching considers the participants beliefs, mindsets and ways of being as they are situated within school systems.

When coaching, I often focused on participant capabilities rather than deficits. Providing feedback is part of the Building Champions (2021) coaching framework that Tar River County Schools adopted.

The purpose of this inquiry was to provide teachers with an executive style coaching experience. Instructional coaching was addressed in the literature review as a type of coaching that helps teachers to implement research based best practices in their classroom (Knight 2007, 2016, 2019). Instructional support received a sufficient amount of attention during coaching conversations as noted in Table 5. Additionally, the TSES measured participant responses in efficacy for instructional strategies. The instructional strategies factor captured the largest pre-implementation to post-implementation increase in mean at .93. Inevitably, coaching teachers and thus improving their self-efficacy will require dialogue about instruction.

The literature review also discussed the costs and the negative impact of teacher attrition. While veteran teachers have proven to increase student learning outcomes, a high level of teacher turn over can also tax veteran teachers who often mentor and support beginning teachers (Jacob et al., 2012; Ozder, 2011). While it is unclear to what extent this coaching model could impact teacher retention across a school system, the participants in this inquiry all remained at River Park ES for the following school year.

Limitations of the Inquiry

The main limiting factor that could have influenced the outcome of the inquiry is my position as the participants' principal. I was concerned that participants may respond favorably to survey questions and focus group responses in an effort to support inquiry outcomes. I ensured that the assistant principal at my school participated in the evaluation of the beginning teacher participants. However, Tar River County Schools (TRCS) requires the building principal to

complete the first observation and summative end of year evaluation for all beginning teachers. I made sure that participation in the inquiry was not included in any form of professional feedback or evaluation. Additionally, I reiterated numerous times verbally and in writing that their participation would have no bearing on their position as a teacher at River Park ES. While I believe that I took the necessary steps to negate the impact of my positionality with all participants, for the purposes of validity, I have included it in this discussion.

Another limitation of the inquiry was that the coaching framework is frequently used with a personal/professional goal setting protocol called a “focus plan” (Building Champions, 2021). I did not follow any goal setting process with the beginning teaching participant volunteers prior to beginning the coaching program. This was due to the duration of the inquiry and the various experiences of the teachers. This inquiry coached directly on the situations that participants brought to their coaching sessions.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

Instructional coaching has been a long-established practice in TRCS. The purpose of instructional coaching is to help teachers improve their instruction by incorporating best practices (Knight, 2007, 2016, 2019). Executive coaching is used more to draw out the employee’s potential while addressing and reflecting on behaviors and skills or attributes (Passamore, 2020; Whitmore, 2002). There is currently a void in the literature that marries both executive coaching and instructional coaching. While it is clear from the field notes and focus group that addressing instructional issues were a part of the coaching program, coaching conversations in the areas of wellbeing/mental health and work/life balance align with the executive coaching model that was used in this inquiry. It would be difficult to separate instruction from an executive coaching model due to the interconnected aspects of the

profession. The TRCS Coaching Champions framework allows the conversation to focus on both the individual as a practitioner and the individual as a human. The impact of the coaching program on beginning teacher self-efficacy was a combination of different factors including the four coaching conversations. Per the focus group feedback, the beginning teachers that participated in this inquiry benefited from well-being conversations.

The qualitative data and quantitative data both indicate a positive impact on participant self-efficacy. This is important because teacher self-efficacy influences student learning outcomes (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). I learned that utilizing open-ended questioning encouraged participants to reflect on their practice. Often through dialogue, I could support the participant and the personal or professional scenarios that they were working through.

The relationship between myself and the participants evolved throughout the coaching program. Through coaching, I was able to support the challenges that beginning teachers face with regards to work-life balance and their mental health. I learned that it was important for me to support each participant as a beginning teacher but also as a person. When there are issues impacting teachers outside of school, there is a possibility that what they are working through can manifest itself in the classroom, to the detriment of both teacher and student. Coaching allowed me to work through these situations with the participants and support them in their effort to be the best teacher for their students on a daily basis.

From my perspective as the building leader and coach, I was able to improve my relationship with my beginning teachers while also improving my skills as a coach. Providing suggestions, delivering feedback and asking probing questions are a regular part of my role as a principal. As the coaching program proceeded, my skills as a coaching facilitator improved. I also became comfortable crafting dialogue with each participant.

Implications of the Findings for Equity

The equity implications for this inquiry are centered around the desire for every student to have access to a teacher who feels supported and holds the belief that they have the skills and confidence to be an effective teacher. Teacher turnover negatively impacts student learning outcomes (Rondfeldt et al., 2013). Additionally, a variety of supports and resources are deployed to support beginning teachers. This can be very costly for schools and districts (Learning Policy Institute, 2021). While reducing teacher turnover was not a primary goal of this inquiry, all participants returned to River Park ES for the following school year. Another ancillary goal was to improve classroom practices for beginning teachers. The TSES reported improved teacher self-efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management. The inquiry did not capture classroom observations. However, it is possible that improved teacher self-efficacy also correlates with improved classroom practices and student learning outcomes.

Recommendations for Practice

The focus of this inquiry was to examine the benefits associated with implementing a coaching program between a school leader and beginning teachers. Based on my experience with this coaching program, I would recommend that school leadership should consider embedding some sort of coaching with their beginning teachers. Bandura's (1997) social-cognitive theory states that teacher self-efficacy is the most impressionable and malleable during the early stages of their career. The impact on teacher self-efficacy and ancillary factors like student outcomes and teacher retention positively impacted my school and myself as a leader. Two of the participants shared during the focus group that it would be beneficial for other members of the leadership team, such as assistant principals and instructional coaches, to coach teachers, too.

Administrative support is one of the largest factors that a teacher considers when determining whether to leave or stay in their school (Sutcher et al., 2016). One participant stated that the lack of a relationship with other members of the leadership team impacted how they viewed these leaders. Another participant shared that it was beneficial to have a more personalized relationship with their principal. The participant stated that it was “helpful seeing him outside of the principal role, because he was still our principal, but we were having a one-on-one conversation.” This participant desired to have the same relationship with our instructional coaches and assistant principal.

Another recommendation for practice is to limit the number of employees you coach to approximately four individuals. Coaching is time consuming and also requires uninterrupted attention. While I found coaching to be extremely valuable, there is a capacity that each leader has to coach a given number of individuals. For me, that number is four. Participants gave feedback on the coaching cadence or frequency and duration of coaching sessions. While Building Champions (2021) recommends 30-minute coaching sessions every two weeks, the participants and I found that this varied depending on the individual. Overall, the participants shared that a 30-minute coaching every two to three weeks was all that they could handle, too. However, one participant shared that a check-in prior to coaching could help to establish if the participant had the mental capacity for coaching that day and if they were going to potentially need more time depending on the nature of the topics that they wished to discuss.

The impact on myself as a leader has been extensive. This inquiry was my first experience coaching four people at one time. I learned a lot about myself as a leader and as a coach. I was able to build meaningful relationships with the beginning teacher participants. As the coaching experience evolved and trust evolved, the dialogue become very collaborative and

reflective. I was able to demonstrate empathy and vulnerability with the beginning teacher participants, which gave them an opportunity to view me in a more humanistic light.

I would recommend expanding the coaching program to a full academic year for coaching participants. This would allow for more time for goal setting, progress monitoring of goals and adjusting goals throughout the duration of the coaching sessions. This may be particularly useful for beginning teachers in their third year who may have more focused goals than a first-year teacher.

This inquiry may influence the professional development offerings at TRCS. This research helps to substantiate the need for school leaders to receive professional development on coaching staff within their building. Utilizing coaching to improve teacher self-efficacy throughout the school system should be beneficial for both the school system and its teachers. I would like to see the Becoming a Coaching Leader Framework that has been adopted by TRCS expanded to include all members of building level leadership teams.

Recommendations for Future Study

This inquiry investigated the effects of coaching between four beginning teacher participants and their principal. The number of participants was limited to four beginning teachers due to the bandwidth of the coach and the time that it takes to provide coaching with fidelity. One recommendation would be to increase the number of principals who are providing coaching to beginning teachers across the district. This would increase the number of coaches and beginning teachers. As discussed in the previous section, participants noted that coaching could help create positive relationships with other members of the school leadership team. Increasing the number of available coaches in a school, beyond the building principal, could extend the impact of this inquiry. The results of the TSES were valid for the four beginning

teacher coaching participants, however increasing the number of survey participants with a larger district-wide coaching pool would most likely increase the reliability of the data.

The implementation of this inquiry occurred during the portion of one school year. While the goal of this inquiry was not to measure teacher retention over a period of time, I would recommend tracking the retention of teachers who participate in a coaching program over three to five school years. If a researcher wants to focus only on beginning teachers, I recommend tracking beginning teacher retention over the three-year induction cycle. The New Teacher Project suggests that building leaders should focus on retaining the most effective teachers (Jacob et al., 2012). Future iterations of this inquiry could shift the focus from coaching beginning teachers to coaching highly effective teachers.

The Coaching Leader Framework that TRCS adopted from Building Champions focuses on four conversations centered on: well-being, vision, execution, and productivity (Building Champions, 2021). Future researchers may want to investigate the four conversation areas to determine what powerful open-ended questions are most frequently asked that could impact teacher self-efficacy. Additionally, future research could investigate impact of coaching teachers on setting and achieving goals could impact their teacher self-efficacy.

Conclusions

Through the implementation of a coaching program between four beginning teachers and their school principal, it was determined that outcomes associated with coaching positively impacted both the participants and me, as the scholarly practitioner leading this inquiry. In education, literature surrounding coaching is usually associated with instructional coaching, while executive coaching is more closely associated with corporate business structures. This inquiry was the first to investigate the application of an executive style-coaching model with

beginning teachers in TRCS. The quantitative results indicated that beginning teacher self-efficacy grew through their participation in the coaching program. Additionally, qualitative results captured that the coaching program fostered improved relationships between participants and me, their school leader. It is recommended that researchers expand the number of coaching participants and coaches in future studies. Additionally, to improve the significance of implementing a coaching program, future researchers may want to investigate the correlation between coaching teachers and teacher retention, especially in high poverty schools.

Inquiry Impact on the Scholarly Practitioner

When I entered the field of education as a teacher, my primary goal was to help people grow, namely students. As a school leader, that primary goal is still the same; however, teachers are the main conduit to influence student outcomes. While this inquiry involved beginning teacher participants, it is important to invest in all of our teachers in an era when enrollment in traditional collegiate education programs is diminishing. My doctoral journey at East Carolina University (ECU) reminded me that it is important to continue to invest in myself in order to have the capacity to pour into others. The coursework at ECU coupled with the professional development from TRCS in the Building Champions coaching framework gave me the opportunity to invest in the beginning teacher participants in my school. My experiences with my colleagues at ECU have inspired me to be a better leader, educator and person. If I expect others to be lifelong learners, then I must be a lifelong learner, too.

Our life experiences shape who we are as professionals and as people. These experiences ultimately impact the individuals who we serve every day. My first experience with executive coaching started during the 2017-2018 school year. Through my Masters in School Administration program at North Carolina State University, I was afforded the opportunity to

meet regularly with my assigned coach, Dr. Henry Johnson. Coincident or not, I also met dissertation chair, Dr. Larry Hodgkins through my coursework at NCSU. Through the coaching experience with Dr. Johnson, I learned how important it is to have people in your corner to ask powerful questions, provide different perspectives, deliver feedback and help improve my approach to self and school leadership. I have had a similar experience at TRCS, where I have worked with district leadership coaches and Building Champions coaches. Again, these individuals have challenged my thinking and supported my development as a leader. When it came time to pick a topic for my dissertation, I was drawn to coaching since my own experiences with coaching have improved my leadership skills and have made me a better person. My desire to coach others has evolved and grown based upon the coaching I have received throughout my leadership career.

Through the implementation of this inquiry, I have been able to give back or “pay it forward” with respect to all of the individuals who invested time and resources into me. The positive impact that this inquiry had on the beginning teacher participants in my school has encouraged me to continue to coach teachers in my building. Whether through this coaching framework or other methods, I plan to continue to support and invest in educators that I serve. While the quantitative results of this inquiry demonstrate an increase in teacher self-efficacy, the qualitative data is what inspires me to continue a coaching program like this in the future.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Michael Casey](#)
CC: [Lawrence Hodgkins](#)
Date: 11/29/2022
Re: [UMCIRB 22-002249](#)
EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 11/28/2022. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 1 & 2ab.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
Casey Dissertation(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Casey Focus Group Protocol(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Casey Informed Consent IRB Submission(0.01)	Consent Forms
Casey Self-Efficacy Survey(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Coaching Field Notes(0.01)	Data Collection Sheet
Email Script(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONCENT

BUILDING BRIDGES: EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND BEGINNING TEACHERS



Principal Investigator: Michael A. Casey

You are being asked to participate in a research study titled “BUILDING BIRDGES: EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND BEGINNING TEACHERS.” This research study is being conducted by Michael A. Casey, a student at East Carolina University in the College of Education Department. The intended purpose of this study is to understand the benefits of an administrator-led coaching program with beginning teachers. As a beginning teacher at Ayden Elementary School, you are invited to participate in the study.

There are three components of this study that will involve your participation. First, all participants will take a 12 question self-efficacy survey at the beginning and the end of the coaching implementation. This will take approximately 15 minutes each time. Survey questions will be made available for review prior to taking the survey. Second, participants will participate in a semi-structured focus group that will last approximately 60-90 minutes after coaching has concluded. Focus group questions will be provided prior to data collection for participants to review. Lastly, participants will receive 30-minute coaching sessions every other week with the researcher.

Your participation in the survey, focus group and coaching will help the researcher collect data that will be used in examining the benefits of beginning teachers receiving on-going coaching from their administrator. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time. All data will be kept in strict confidence and stored under password. During coaching, written field notes will be taken and stored securely with the researcher. An outside facilitator and recorder will conduct the focus group. An audio recording will be made of the focus group and will be transcribed at a later date. This recording will be kept in a password protected encrypted drive. No data will be released with your identifying information.

Your participation will not have any impact on your evaluations at Ayden Elementary School. The researcher will share evaluation responsibilities with the assistant principal to mitigate any bias. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you will not be penalized or lose benefits if you refuse to participate or decide to stop. Please call Michael Casey at 315-430-7461 for any research related questions. You may contact the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board at (252) 744-2914 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject.

Signing this document means that the research study, including the above information, has been described to you orally, and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant_____

Date_____

APPENDIX C: SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY QUESTIONS

Teacher Beliefs <i>Directions:</i> Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum. Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.		This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.								
		None at all		Very Little		Some Degree		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal
1.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Date & Time:

Location: River Park ES Conference Room

Facilitator: Dr. Larry Hodgkins

Recorder/Note Taker:

As a participant in ongoing coaching between yourself and Michael Casey at River Park Elementary School, you are invited asked to participate in a focus group lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. This focus group is part of research a research study “BUILDING BRIDGES: EXAMINING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND BEGINNING TEACHERS.”

Introductory Text

Good morning, my name is Dr. Larry Hodgkins, and I will be the facilitator for today’s focus group on BUILDING BRIDGES: EXAMING THE OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING A COACHING SYSTEM BETWEEN SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND BEGINNING TEACHERS. We would like to learn about your experiences with the coaching framework and how coaching impacted your self-efficacy as a teacher. Additionally, we are interested in learning about the effect of coaching on beginning teacher support. We believe that your experiences and opinions will help provide valuable feedback regarding the outcomes associated with the coaching framework.

Once the focus group is concluded, the information you share will be anonymized so that your responses cannot be traced to you. An alias or pseudonym will be assigned so your name will not be associated with any of your answers. The transcript from the focus group will be analyzed and coded to identify themes and trends. You will be given a copy of the results to review. The results may be shared with building level, district and state leaders, as well as research publications and conferences. Your participation and feedback will help determine the benefits of implementing a coaching framework with beginning teachers and its future use within your school and beyond.

As described during the informed consent process, you are agreeing to participate in this focus group. If you feel uncomfortable, you are free to leave at any time.

Before we begin, I would like to introduce you to the note taker, _____, who will be co-facilitating and helping to ensure we are capturing your responses. We will be recording today’s focus group in order to transcribe your responses to the focus group questions. This recording as well as any data collected today will only be accessible to the research team. All identifying information will be protected and redacted. The audio recording will be securely stored.

I’d like to establish a few ground rules for our focus group. The purpose of these ground rules is to ensure that each of you feels comfortable sharing your experiences and opinions.

Ground Rules:

1. *Confidentiality* – Please respect the confidentiality of your peers. As facilitator, I will only be sharing the information from this focus group anonymously.
2. *One Speaker at a Time* – Only one person should speak at a time in order to make sure that we can all hear what everyone is saying.
3. *Use Respectful Language* – In order to facilitate an open discussion, please avoid any statements or words that may be offensive to other members of the group.
4. *Open Discussion* – This is a time for everyone to feel free to express their opinions and viewpoints. You will not be asked to reach consensus on the topics discussed. There will be no right or wrong answers.
5. *Participation is Important* – It is important that everyone's voice is shared and heard in order to make this the most productive focus group possible. Please speak up if you have something to add to the conversation!

Are there any questions before we begin?

Thank you, now let's start the focus group session:

Focus group interview questions:

- 1) Tell me about your experience with the coaching provided- How has coaching impacted your experience as a beginning teacher?
- 2) How did the coaching impact your self-efficacy or beliefs about your abilities as a BT?
- 3) In what ways did coaching make you feel supported or unsupported as a BT?
- 4) In what ways did coaching impact the relationship between administrator and teacher?
- 5) What types of changes would you suggest be made, if any, to the coaching program?
- 6) Was there anything about the coaching experience that was meaningful to you that wasn't captured in a previous question?

Concluding Statement

Thank you for participating in today's focus group. As a reminder, we will be sharing the information learned during this session anonymously as part of our research in order to help examine the outcomes of participating in ongoing coaching with your building administrator. If you think of any additional thoughts or comments that you would like to share, please contact us at the email address from your invitation. We appreciate your help with this invaluable research so very much.

APPENDIX E: FIELD NOTE TEMPLATE

Coaching Field Notes:

Date:

Time:

Beginning Teacher Participant Name:

Date of Next Meeting:

Notes on coaching conversation:

Most Important Points:

Follow-up for next meeting:
