

PUSHING TOWARD PUSHBACK:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL MULTI-CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE
TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF COACHING CONVERSATIONS

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to James Thomas Bass (aka tbass) and Debra Stein Leonard in appreciation for their influence on the way I see the world. As my maternal uncle, tbass has influenced my worldview for as long as I can remember. He lives his life as an open book and delights in sharing his experiences and expertise with me in an effort to broaden my perspectives. While his love and support is conditional, he has never shied away from challenging my assumptions and pointing out biases that I never knew I had. Life with tbass has been the best preparation for doctoral studies anyone could receive.

Debra came into my life five years ago when she and I joined the same district literacy specialist team. Her 27 years in the primary classroom, deep roots within the district, and vast life experiences contrasted with my 10 years of teaching gifted learners, outsider status in the district, and relatively sheltered life. Despite our differences and periodic disagreements, Debra agreed to be the subject of my first clumsy attempt at conducting a narrative case study. Through that process, I came to understand the degree to which Debra's passion for leading and learning is wrapped up in the highs and lows of her experiences as a daughter, wife, mother, friend, and colleague. Her openness to the process and trust in me as a researcher instilled an appreciation for qualitative inquiry that I never expected and literally changed the course of my scholarly pursuits.

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Finally, my work stands on the shoulders of two giants in the worlds of coaching and conversations. Jim Knight's relationship-driven coaching model changed the way I approached my own work as an instructional coach, and Judith E. Glaser's trust-based model of conversational intelligence deepened my understanding of the dynamics involved in my own conversations. Their common focus on the power of authenticity framed my own research on coaching conversations.

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ABSTRACT

J. NICHOLAS PHILMON

PUSHING TOWARD PUSHBACK: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL MULTI-CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF COACHING CONVERSATIONS

Under the direction of JANE WEST, Ed.D.

A disturbingly high percentage of those who enter the teaching profession leave before their fifth year in the classroom. Teachers who leave often point to the lack of support as a factor in their decision, and those who stay report a similar dissatisfaction with not receiving support that addresses their individual contexts. Schools increasingly rely on instructional coaches to fill that need. Education research links positive outcomes of teacher effectiveness and student achievement to teacher-centered coaching conversations. However, little research exists on how teachers go about integrating the content of their coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy.

The current phenomenological multi-case study explored the coaching conversations between two instructional coaches and two teachers that each one supported. Based on current research indicating a decline in teacher effectiveness measures after the second year, this study focused on second-stage teachers who had progressed beyond novice status. Data collection included observations of the conversations, post-conversation reflective interviews, observations of subsequent classroom instruction, and post-instruction Clean Language interviews. Iterative coding

of within-case and across-case data led to findings that conceptualized the linked phenomena of coaching conversations and pedagogy integration.

The results showed that a combination of external factors and internal dynamics influenced the transformative potential of coaching conversation in relation to the teacher's pedagogical growth. External factors included school-related contexts along with the participants' previous experiences and personal perspectives. Internal dynamics included the source of the teachers' concerns, their responses to the coaches' input, and the rationale they used in deciding whether and how to integrate the content of the coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy. Implications for current practice include the importance of protecting coaching conversations as nonevaluative safe spaces and the transformative potential of reframing resistance as constructive pushback. Considerations for future research include applying a similar methodology to other forms of professional learning or conducting mixed-method research to quantify and describe student outcomes related to different coaching conversation dynamics.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Professional learning experiences have the power to uplift teachers and maximize their positive impact within and outside of the classroom or to dispirit teachers and degrade the quality of their influence on students and other educators. For example, the National Awards Program for Professional Development highlighted nonevaluative collaborative conversations as integral to promoting teacher engagement and proficiency (WestEd, 2000). Conversely, Ngcoza and Southwood (2015) warned that whole group delivery of standardized training actually had a negative impact on teachers trying skills; instead, teachers in such training environments established a reliance on coaches as transmissive authority figures. Throughout two decades teaching students and coaching teachers, I have seen the good, the bad, and the confusing of professional learning from both sides of the PowerPoint. Whether as examples or nonexamples, all of those experiences reinforce one lesson. True professional learning occurs only when a personally relevant need is addressed through meaningful interaction with a focus on genuine integration into each teacher's personal pedagogy. The following phenomenological multi-case study stemmed from a desire to understand the interconnectedness of those factors.

The desire to understand how teachers make use of coaching conversations in transforming their own pedagogy developed over time, from my early experiences as a paraprofessional and novice classroom teacher to my current experiences as an instructional coach and novice researcher. One component of my phenomenological epoche process, which I explain in more detail in Chapter 3, involved tracing the genesis of my current beliefs about what coaching conversations involve and accomplish, as well as what integration of professional learning looks like to an observer and feels like to an educator. As a teacher and a coach, I have been on the learning side of coaching conversations that cover the entire range of Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon's (2017) developmental interactions, from directive to collaborative to truly transformative. The more directive the conversations, the more likely I have been to either implement the change without much regard to understanding it or to decline to implement it at all. Collaborative conversations have tended to make a more immediate impact on changing my teacher or coaching practices, either by integrating a wholly new component or making a needed adjustment to existing skills and strategies. Transformative conversations, discussed more fully in Chapter 2, have made the most long-lasting and valuable changes to my personal approach to student and adult learning. Rather than guiding me to do something new or different, the leaders in those conversations have asked me to seriously consider my self-concept as an educator and reflect on how my practices align with my beliefs.

In my current role facilitating professional learning, I have engaged educators in each of these same types of conversations. I have also received direct feedback from my staff and observed the results following such conversations, as well as heard secondhand

about other coaching colleagues. By engaging with teachers and coaches as participants in research on the role of coaching conversations in transforming teacher pedagogy, I sought to deepen my own understanding of that process and provide new qualitative data to coaches, administrators, and teacher educators who strive to provide authentic professional learning experiences.

Goals and Realities of Professional Learning

The primary goal of professional learning is to advance a teacher's understanding and abilities in ways that ultimately improve student achievement. In recognition of its potential as a change agent, school and districts prioritize high quality professional learning for their teachers and allocate time, resources, and support personnel accordingly. Nationwide, teachers have reported spending an average of 19 days out of their classroom for professional development (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). That figure accounted for about 10% of typical school district calendars. In addition to the loss of classroom time, professional learning comprises \$2.6 billion a year in federal funding (Calvert, 2016). Unfortunately, the return on that investment in the form of teacher retention and increased teaching effectiveness has been inconsistent at best.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) identified eleven obstacles that prevent professional development from effectively supporting authentic growth in teachers' understanding and proficiency. The obstacles broke down into three main categories:

- Overall approach: deficit mindset among administrators, inattention to teacher ownership, little or no knowledge of adult learning characteristics among planners, and failure to systematically evaluate the programming

- Lack of individualization: top-down choice of content, disregard for different levels of experience and needs, shortage of varied delivery models, and inaccessibility of opportunities related to authentic needs
- Inattention to integration: focus on replication, little or no support for transfer into practice, and universal content that ignores classroom contexts (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, pp. 2-4)

In order to maximize the potential positive power of professional learning, administrators and teacher educators must find ways to deliver contextualized content and differentiated experiences.

Instructional Coaches as Collaborative Support

Instructional coaches occupy a unique space within the field of education that makes them ideally suited to accomplishing the goals of individualization and integration. They perform many of the same duties as a mentor or professional development trainer, who also support professional development by delivering new information, providing resources, and modeling best practices. However, there are clear differences in coaches' roles within the school, the populations they target, and their overall approach to working with teachers.

Mentor teachers typically support only preservice and novice teachers, and do so while simultaneously serving in other instructional or administrative roles. In contrast, instructional coaches work with teachers at every level of experience (Berg & Mensah, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008) and are employed by schools or districts for the sole purpose of improving student achievement through teacher support (Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2002).

Instructional coaches resemble professional development trainers in that they both operate outside of the classroom setting with a focus on adding new skills and strategies to a teacher's pedagogy. However, Knight (2009) explained one key difference between the two regarding the balance of power between them and the teachers with whom they work. Trainers tend to serve as consultants with a focus on sharing their expertise on some area in which a teacher lacks either background or proficiency. Coaches, on the other hand, "see themselves as equal partners or collaborators with teachers [who] have choice and control over how coaching proceeds" (Knight, 2009, p. 19).

Individualized Learning through Coaching Conversations

Coaching conversations offer an opportunity to empower teachers as collaborators to personalize their professional learning experiences. In their research on schools that won the National Awards Program for Professional Development, WestEd (2000) included instructional coaching in four out of their six categories typifying a school-wide culture of learning. In an exemplary vignette, the authors included a distillation of interviews that highlighted how teachers' initially felt anxious about opening themselves up to critique from colleagues and coaches. Eventually though, their anxiety gave way to a comfort in knowing that their coaching conversations would focus on discussing and reflecting on their practice rather than evaluating and judging their performance (WestEd, 2000). This example illustrates the potential of coaching conversations as a source of professional learning that attends to both the personal and pedagogical needs of each teacher.

As an integral part of their collaborative work, instructional coaches engage classroom teachers in conversations formally and informally throughout the normal course of their work. Much of the training coaches receive revolves around how to approach conversations in a way that engages the teacher through cognitive as well as emotional avenues (Aguilar, 2013; Ippolito, 2010; Knight, 2009; Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Carter, 2016). Those conversations run the gamut of levels that Glaser (2014) described as “Level I—transactional (how to exchange data and information); Level II—positional (how to work with power and influence); Level III—transformational (how to co-create the future for mutual success)” (p. xxiv). The deeper level of connection at each level requires that both partners continually establish trust and lower the risk of negative judgment.

A typical transactional coaching conversation may involve a teacher requesting a specific resource and the coach providing that resource along with training on how to use it. Conversations become positional when the teacher and coach each recognize and contribute their individual expertise. Finally, teachers and coaches engage in transformational conversations when they consider how new strategies might complement or augment existing pedagogy, reflect on attempts to integrate them into the teacher’s practice, and incorporate reflections into their on-going partnership. This phenomenological multi-case study focused on the transformative potential of coaching conversations at any of these levels.

Statement of the Problem

Studies of attrition rates among teachers revealed a consistent trend of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of entering the classroom (Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Watt and Richardson's (2008) analysis of factors that affect novice teachers' decision to stay or leave the classroom revealed that the 44 percent who decided to stay reported that factors outside of the school such as a sense of calling and family support contributed most to their decision. Notably, the 30 percent who decided to seek another role or to leave teaching altogether were more likely to mention work-related factors than those who stayed. Specifically, they blamed too many demands with too little support as their motivation to leave the classroom. Similarly, Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014) identified grit, a combination of passion and perseverance, as the sole factor that separated effective and ineffective early career teachers.

With regard to teacher effectiveness, Henry et al. (2011) found that novice teachers exhibited a marked increase in student achievement in their second year of teaching. Even with the intentionality of building a strong foundation for new teachers, however, that early impact is often followed by a steady decline across the third and fourth year. Teachers who stayed in the classroom past that point plateaued in their effectiveness as measured by value-added models of student achievement (Henry et al., 2011; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006). While outside support and intrinsic motivation are vital components in a teacher's life, professional learning should play a major supporting role in promoting teacher retention and instructional effectiveness. However, this does not appear to be the case.

One explanation for this trend of diminishing returns may be an inattention to authentic professional learning beyond the first two formative years. Preservice and novice teachers receive a great deal of support in experimenting with new skills in an environment that fosters personal growth and consistent feedback (Bembenutty, 2016; Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012). Teacher educators and school mentors take a nurturing approach to ensuring that those teachers feel prepared to apply the skills they are acquiring. Once teachers move beyond the support of university faculty and school mentors, though, administrators and facilitators of professional learning tend to focus more on immediate, outcomes-based transfer from training into practice (Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2002; Skaalvik & Skallvik, 2010; Jimerson & Wayman, 2015).

In findings related to obstacles that impede the effectiveness of professional learning efforts, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) noted that:

Transferring new ideas to the classrooms is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks a teacher faces. A lot of effort is put into helping preservice teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice; we may wonder why the same support systems are not available to inservice teachers as well (p. 3).

Researchers often referred to this underserved group as “second-stage teachers” (Conway & Eros, 2016; Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014). Huberman’s (1989) professional life cycle model described these second-stage teachers as having moved from concerns about survival and discovery into a mindset of experimentation and reassessment of their practice. However, assumptions that teachers at this stage are prepared to handle those processes without continued scaffolding did not always match the teachers’ reality.

In studies based on teacher feedback about their needs compared with the support they received, Jimerson and Wayman (2015) found that experienced teachers continued to express discomfort with sharing their understanding about student data. With regard to the strategy of asking relevant questions, the participants also expressed a disparity between the low levels of support the district supplied in response to their stated need for intensive support. Jimerson and Wayman reported that the teachers' lack of proficiency paired with the district's inadequate response led to frustration among the teachers and less transfer of the data-use professional development than the district envisioned. Collins and Liang (2015) reported similar findings in their research examining online professional development. Many experienced teachers struggled to make the connection among content-specific professional learning and other areas of the curriculum. The teachers also noted a discrepancy between the facilitators' focus on research-based instructional best practices and their actual delivery of the professional learning (Collins & Liang, 2015). Studies like these revealed that second-stage teachers who have moved beyond preservice and induction lack the support they need to authentically integrate their new learning into their existing pedagogy.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose this phenomenological multi-case study was to provide teachers and those who support their professional learning with a rich, contextualized example of teachers engaged in coaching conversations and working to integrate skills from those conversations into their own pedagogy. Even though coaching conversations involve coaches and teachers as equally important partners, research and training often focus on the coach's role as a facilitator rather than the teacher's process as a learner. For

instance, Attard (2012) reported “appreciating the individual” as a major contributing factor to successful coaching collaborations (p. 201). However, the remaining helpful conditions all centered on the delivery approaches coaches used rather than the integration process teachers undertook. Similarly, Sammut (2014) pursued a qualitative and interpretive study of personalized, transformative coaching but focused mostly on if and how the coach used transformative learning practices within their work with teachers. The study failed to address whether or to what degree the teachers used transformative learning in their subsequent effort to integrate coaching content into their own practice.

Training for instructional coaches focuses heavily on planning for implementation of new strategies and reflecting on the success of implementation relative to an established goal (Knight, 2009). Coaching conversations within that cycle typically involve reflecting on the teacher’s comfort with implementing a new practice and what changes the teacher might make in the future. There is a missing link in that conversation, though. The focus is on *what* teachers will try and *why* it was or was not successful without attending to *how* they experience the process of attempting to integrate the new practice into their existing pedagogy.

In order to better understand teachers’ experiences, this study focused on coaching conversations and attempts at integration as separate but interconnected sources of data. As one data stream, I observed coaching conversations, debriefed about them with the participants, and synthesized the observations and reflections into a cohesive representation of those interactions. Rather than documenting the skills that the coach employed, this initial data was used to build an understanding of what skills, concepts, and strategies the teachers were likely to integrate into their practice. I also considered

how subsequent attempts at integration on the part of the teacher might influence ongoing coaching conversations. The second data stream involved observing and dialoguing about the teachers' lived experience of working to integrate new professional learning addressed within coaching conversations into their classroom instruction. The teachers and I engaged in follow-up interviews to conceptualize the integration process from their perspective. Administrators, instructional coaches, and teacher educators can refer to the final synthesis as an added resource for planning professional learning that is authentic to each individual teacher.

In addition to the significance of authentic professional learning in promoting teacher proficiency and counteracting attrition trends, there are also financial and accreditation concerns that affect school districts and preparation programs. States and local districts spend a reported \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year per teacher on professional development (Calvert, 2016; Knight, 2012). Thinking more broadly, though, Calvert and Knight found that connected issues such as paying salaries for professional development staff, maintaining facilities primarily used for professional learning, and providing substitutes for absent teachers pushed that figure up to \$8,000 to \$18,000. Within that figure, Knight (2012) found instructional coaching to be 6 to 12 times more expensive than other professional development approaches. Given the level of financial investment instructional coaching requires, it is vital that coaches and administrators understand how to maximize the impact of their work with each teacher.

With regard to teacher preparation programs, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2013) has adopted an outcomes-based approach whereby "the quality of an education preparation provider must be measured by the abilities of its

completers to have a positive impact on P-12 student learning and development” (p. 32). University and alternative preparation programs must submit evidence of graduates’ impact on student achievement as well as the perceived satisfaction of both the graduates and their employers. This layer of accountability demonstrates the importance of providing an effective bridge between the support that teacher candidates receive within the preparation programs and the professional learning that they go on to receive in their schools.

Research Questions

The primary research question for this study reflected my focus on coaching conversation as one form of professional learning that teachers and coaches can maximize as a key lever in transforming their pedagogy:

What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

In order to understand the connected phenomena of integration and coaching conversations, I focused on the following supporting questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers and instructional coaches engaged in coaching conversations?
2. How do teachers begin the process of integrating of implementing the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy?
3. How do teachers define success or failure in relation to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

Theoretical Framework

Studies like those of Glaser (2014) and WestEd (2000) reveal the utility and even necessity of conversation as an authentic delivery model for professional learning. In doing so, they illustrate the unification of two learning theories that underlie this study.

This study combined Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism with Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory to arrive at a framework for exploring how teachers approach integrating new skills addressed in coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy.

Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) have much in common. From the beginning, Vygotsky (1962) and Mezirow (1991) eschewed the linear assumptions of behaviorism and made development through social interaction a major component of their theories. Vygotsky and Mezirow also presented their theories as correcting or extending those of their constructivist colleagues such as Piaget (1952) and Habermas (1984). Situating themselves within existing theories gave credence to Vygotsky and Mezirow's ideas and established relevance for their own research. Even though Vygotsky studied concept formation in children and Mezirow researched perspective transformation in adults, both theorists grounded their work in the fact that changes in thinking develop through purposeful, increasingly sophisticated phases rather than inherent, biological stages.

Both theorists recognized that social interaction and learning take place within a larger social context that exerts influence of its own. Vygotsky placed the social use of language at the heart of his theory. "Rational, intentional conveying of experience and thought to others require a mediating system, the prototype of which is human speech born of the need of intercourse during work" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 6). Mezirow placed similar emphasis on the vital role of collaborative reflection in transforming perspectives and actions. One of the major tenets of transformative learning theory is the need to engage in rational discourse "when we have reason to question the comprehensibility,

truth, appropriateness, or authenticity of what is being asserted” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 77). Chapter 2 explores each of these theories more deeply and explains the connections that underlie their unification into the study’s theoretical framework.

Assumptions

I assumed that analyzing observed interactions, reflective interviews, and supporting documents collectively would result in a richer and more authentic understanding than analyzing any one of those in isolation. By situating this study within the lived experience of the participants and basing my analysis on their interactions and reflections, I assumed that the participants would be honest and forthcoming during their conversations and interviews. I assumed that the teachers and the coaches were participating in this study because of an underlying interest in their own practices and that they will benefit from this period of collaborative self-reflection. Finally, even though this qualitative study attended exclusively to teachers and their instructional coaches, I assumed that having teachers intentionally consider new knowledge and practices in relation to their pedagogy would ultimately benefit their current and future students.

Delimitations

This study addressed a narrow intersection of teacher pedagogy, professional learning, and school contexts. Pedagogy is a richly layered and deeply personal construct that is constantly changing throughout a teacher’s career. Using Stake’s (1995) explanation of a well-bounded case, I chose to focus this multi-case study on how four teachers experienced coaching conversations and approached integrating the content of those conversations into their existing pedagogy. This study did not seek to explain how that existing pedagogy came about or to compare it to current best

practices. The genesis of the pedagogy that preexists this study fell outside of the well-bounded case, and comparing it to current best practices would have ventured into the evaluative body of research that I intended to complement rather than increase.

Although students and their success lie at the heart of pedagogy, I intentionally situated them outside of this study's purview. Coaching conversations, teacher reflections, and classroom observations naturally included discussions of students and their needs. However, I did not include student achievement or feedback from students as data sources. Content area and specific curriculum also play a role in a teacher's pedagogy at any given time. Rather than trying to account for them as mitigating factors or set out to analyze their influence on pedagogy and integration, I attended to them as they arose and tried to see them through the teacher's eyes. By accepting each teacher's pedagogy at face value, I sought to provide rich descriptions of a personal experience rather than outline processes that others should avoid or replicate.

Professional learning occurs in a variety of settings involving many different stakeholders engaged in a myriad of interactions. Instructional coaches play an increasingly common role in professional learning. They provide many types of support such as modeling, providing resources, and facilitating staff development. I chose to highlight one-on-one coaching conversations as the only observed professional learning interaction within this study. Even so, the research design did not evaluate the conversations as an intervention or isolate them from their larger contexts. I acknowledged that the coach provided the teachers with support in other ways and that the teachers drew support from other sources as well. As with outside factors involved in pedagogy, I collected and analyzed data on other types of professional learning only

when they arose authentically within the coaching conversations or specific data sources outlined in Chapter 3.

Limitations

All research involves purposeful delimitations that narrow the scope of the study and predictable limitations that may affect how readers interpret or use the results. This phenomenological multi-case study featured four teachers engaged in integrating content from separate coaching conversations with instructional coaches into their own pedagogy. Changing any one of those factors would alter the dynamics of the study and likely lead to different findings and conclusions. The personal identities of the participants and the particulars of their school setting played a major role in their experience and my understanding of it. A similar study conducted with different participants in different school contexts would yield different particular findings. Finally, it is not possible to ensure or enforce that my assumptions about the study held true.

It is important to recognize that the purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of four individual teachers augmenting their pedagogy through one form of professional learning. The results were not meant to be generalized but rather to add to the larger conversations around supporting second-stage teachers in growing their pedagogy through various forms of differentiated professional learning.

Definition of Key Terms

The following section presents context-specific definitions for many of the key terms involved in the study:

Professional learning is addressed within the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) as “the local educational agency’s system of professional growth and

development, such as induction for teachers, principals, or other school leaders and opportunities for building the capacity of teachers and opportunities to develop meaningful teacher leadership” (p. 1925). Even though the federal definition refers to *professional development* rather than professional learning, as part of their revised Standards for Professional Learning, Learning Forward (2011) outlined the association’s advocacy for including professional learning in federal guidelines. Learning Forward also described their intentional use of the term professional learning rather than professional development to emphasize teachers as engaged learners rather than passive objects of development.

Second-stage teachers are teachers who have progressed past the novice stages of preservice candidacy and new teacher induction. Huberman (1989) describes them as having achieved a level of stabilization that allows them to pursue experimentation and reassessment of their pedagogy. Other labels for this stage include *professionals*, *practitioners*, and *mid-career teachers* (Conway & Eros, 2016; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2014; Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012). This study uses the term second-stage teachers to emphasize a group of teachers who have moved past novice status but do not consider themselves content experts and are not approaching retirement.

Instructional coaches feature in ESSA as a source of support for effective instruction and as one of multiple career paths or advanced initiatives. The study focuses on Knight’s (2009) partnership philosophy of relationship-driven coaching which consists of seven principles that unite coach and coachee: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity.

Coaching conversations serve a vital role in instructional coaching but lack a single accepted definition. In his profile of coaching in education, van Nieuwerburgh (2012) described “a one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate” (p. 12). The aspects of striving for enhancement rather than improvement and increasing self-awareness of pedagogy rather than fidelity of implementation make this an ideal working definition for the study.

Pedagogy is defined by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2018) as “knowledge and skills in the areas of student development and learning, instruction and assessment, and professional roles and responsibilities” (p. 3). The commission also explicitly presents pedagogical knowledge as related to but separate from content knowledge and readiness to teach.

Integration is the process of “combining to form a whole” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). Education literature often associates integration with *implementation* and *transfer*, which Oxford Living Dictionaries (2018) defines as “putting into effect” and “moving from one setting to another” respectively. The study uses the term *integration* because it implies a more active process of augmenting what is already in place.

Nominal acknowledgment, *likeminded discussion*, and *constructive pushback* are types of response to input profiled in the study’s findings. *Nominal acknowledgment* involved brief or nonverbal responses that served multiple purposes. *Likeminded*

discussion involved more extended responses that indicated agreement or acceptance. *Constructive pushback* involved extended responses in which teachers expressed disagreement or concern. Chapter 4 includes extensive explanation of each term.

Overview of the Dissertation

Teachers at all stages in their career deserve authentic and individualized support for continuing to develop their pedagogy. Instructional coaches are one source of that support, and the coaching conversations they engage in bring professional learning directly into each teacher's personal classroom context. This study sought to provide a rich description of how second-stage teachers use that interaction to integrate new skills into their existing pedagogy. Chapter 2 provides background information about the components and forces at work in the coaching conversations and integration process. The review of literature situates this study within existing related research. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology for this phenomenological multi-case study and provides rationale for each component of the research design. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study in the form of teacher-generated metaphors and thematized findings within and across coaching dyads. Finally Chapter 5 offers transferable answers to the study's guiding research questions and proposes implications for future research and current best practices.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter outlines the review of literature that led me to undertake a phenomenological multi-case study that addresses the deficit in research that focuses on the link between personalized forms of professional learning and how teachers use them to integrate new learning into their existing practices. Following a review of the systematic search strategy that led to the current research questions, the second section of this chapter highlights coaching conversations as a component of personalized professional learning. The third section of this chapter synthesizes selected literature and research related to coaching conversations as professional learning, the role of instructional coaches, and stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of attempts to support the integration of new skills into practice. The final section establishes a theoretical framework for studying the integration of content from those conversations into practice through the lens of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991).

Identifying Relevant Literature

The process of identifying relevant literature for the study took place in three distinct stages. At each stage, I performed iterative searches within databases including but not limited to Education (ProQuest), Education Full Text, (EBSCO), Professional Development Collection (EBSCO), JSTOR, Teacher Reference Center (EBSCO)

ResearchGate, ERIC (EBSCO), and What Works Clearinghouse: Reviewed. I identified studies using various combinations of Boolean permutations and publication types to identify pertinent research articles, books, conference papers, and dissertations. Within the resulting body of research, I mined the reference section of relevant articles and books and consulted trade publications, topical websites of interest, and knowledgeable colleagues for suggested reading. I also synthesized a select group of books by seminal theorists (Mezirow, 1991; Moustakas, 1994; Stake, 1995; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978) and found connections among relevant chapters in many larger works.

I adhered closely to the following selection criteria when deciding whether to include an article in the review of relevant literature:

- Explicit or strong inferential connection to professional learning through coaching conversations
- Published in peer-reviewed education journals
- Primary source or secondary source with a unique perspective and credible connection to primary research
- Full text available or able to be obtained through interlibrary request
- Research articles published within the last 20 years
- Older works by seminal theorists and foundational researchers

My approach to analyzing the resulting research articles remained consistent throughout the review process as well:

1. Skim the abstract and conclusions to build background on the study
2. Read the findings to decide if they supported, contradicted, or added new perspectives to my current understanding of the topic
3. Consulted the theoretical framework and methodology sections for possible new approaches in my own work

4. Recorded relevant details in an on-going annotated bibliography

The earliest stage of the overall literature consisted of gathering research on differentiated professional development. Search terms included but were not limited to *research, teach(er), individualize(d), differentiate(d), self-directed, professional development, professional learning, meta-analysis, literature review*. A subset of those initial articles led to the second-stage, which narrowed the broad concept of professional learning to instructional coaching and targeted attrition rates as the central argument. New search terms included but were not limited to *teacher, attrition, retention, factors, self-efficacy, coach(ing/es), instructional coach(ing/es), models, emotional intelligence (quotient), novice, preservice, veteran, experienced, dialogue, identity, social cognitive (career) theory, motivation, self-regulation, feedback*. The most recent stage of the literature review involved a further narrowing of instructional coaching to specifically coaching conversations and a shift in advocacy strategy from quantitative evidence to qualitative examples. New search terms included but were not limited to *reflection, responsive, directive, transfer, pedagogy, conversation (analysis), discourse (analysis), integration, transformation, transformative learning (theory), critical, dilemma(s), collaborat(ion/ive), voice, choice, k-12, elementary, primary, qualitative, phenomenolog(y/ical), case study*. Figure 1 shows select search terms and categorized findings that defined each stage along with decisions points that guided the progression from one stage to the next.

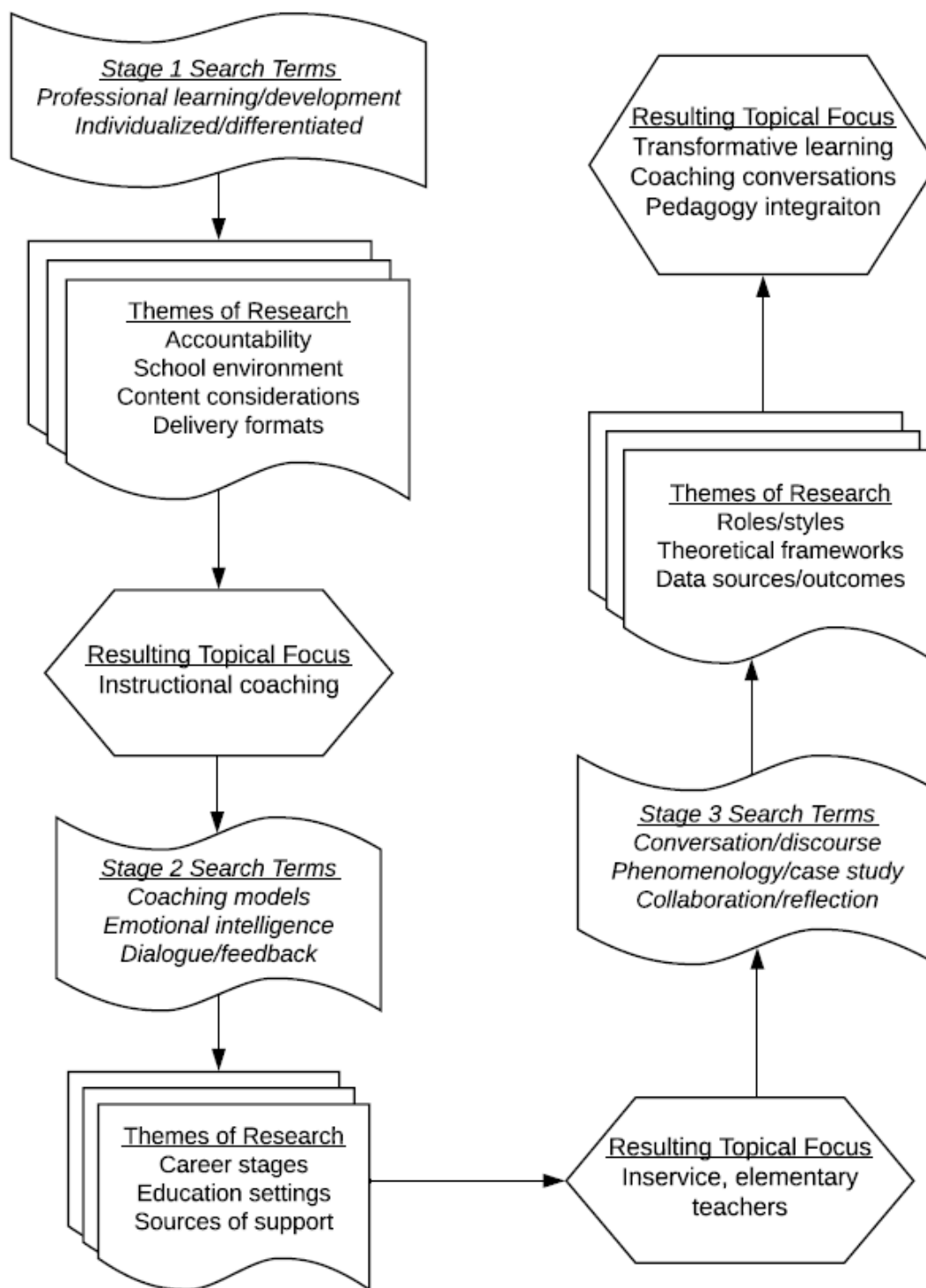


Figure 1. Flowchart of literature review search process.

By reviewing relevant literature within the areas shown in Figure 1, I developed the primary research question for the study and three supporting questions:

What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers and instructional coaches engaged in coaching conversations?
2. How do teachers begin the process of integrating of implementing the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy?
3. How do teachers define success or failure in relation to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

The final stage of the literature review process also led to identifying three next-of-kin studies that align with different elements of the study. Kawinkamolroj, Triwaranyu, and Thongthew (2015) analyzed and outlined transformative aspects of instructional coaching. Their findings identified the strengths of transformative coaching as learning experience within the teacher's own school, time for thorough thinking, explicit use of current best practices, and interaction on a personal as well as professional level. Garcia-Carrion, Gomez, Molina, and Ionescu (2017) included the element of conversation by focusing their study on transformative education among teachers engaged in dialogic learning. Their use of success stories as data and discussion of teachers' affinity for transferrable theory instead of isolated programming influenced the study's focus on integration through conversation. Finally, Sammut (2014) combined the aspects of coaching and conversation to explore if and how coaches applied transformative learning in their practice. Sammut's qualitative interpretive analysis and emphasis on the importance of using responsive dialogue to and language relevant to the coachee guided the study's methodology as described in Chapter 3. The following

section contains a more extensive description of the research identified through the preceding process, including how the researchers approached the studies and what the researchers reported finding.

Transforming Pedagogy through Coaching Conversations

Much of the current body of research around transforming teacher practice through coaching conversations either details how the instructional coach engages the teacher (e.g. Tschannen-Moran & Carter, 2016), measures the impact of coaching on performance (e.g. Reddy, Dudek, & Lekwa, 2017), or describes the outcomes of the coaching collaboration (e.g. Netolicky, 2016). This section highlights themes within the findings of that research and features 75 selected studies that exemplify those themes. The identified themes fell within the broad categories of methodologies used to study various stakeholders within the coaching process; findings related to the form, function, and impact of coaching conversations; and findings related to the teacher's process of pedagogical integration.

Approaches to Studying Instructional Coaching

Table 1 displays a purposeful sampling of the selected studies that represent the distribution of methodologies within the research. The majority of the researchers involved in this review of literature pursued purely quantitative research designs to analyze the correlations and significant effects that different factors had on another. Within the quantitative subgroup, though, researchers applied a variety of approaches to analyzing the data.

Table 1

Methodology of Selected Influential Studies

Study	Research design	Relevant Findings
Briones et al. (2010)	Quantitative Path analysis	+ correlation job satisfaction & perceived support
Iorga et al. (2016)	Quantitative Statistical analysis	- correlation interest in feedback & emotional labor
Mavroveli and Sánchez-Ruiz (2011)	Quantitative Statistical analysis	+ correlation emotional intelligence & prosocial behaviors, achievement
Netolicky (2016)	Narrative inquiry Hermeneutic analysis	importance of trust-based, nonjudgmental, nonevaluative relationships
Reddy et al. (2017)	Quantitative Statistical analysis	+ correlation formative assessment practices & classroom strategies coaching model
Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010)	Quantitative Structural equation modeling	+ correlation self-efficacy & motivation, - correlation self-efficacy & depersonalization
Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016)	Mixed method Statistical analysis Iterative coding	+ correlation emotional intelligence & voluntary training, - correlation self-regulation & mandatory training
Akman (2016)	Descriptive scanning Factor analysis	+ correlation future mastery expectation & tech usage
Bembenuddy (2016)	Quantitative Correlation analysis	+ correlation delayed gratification & performance, - correlation self-handicapping & performance
Johnson (2017)	Quantitative Cross-classified model	+ correlation academic success & self-regulation, - correlation academic success & enlisting social resources
Michel et al. (2015)	Qualitative Content analysis	4 experiences of male counseling grad students: leader, stigmatized, invisible, nurtured
Nohl (2015)	Narrative inquiry Comparative analysis	5 phases of transformation: nondetermining start; experimental, undirected inquiry; social testing/mirroring; shifting of relevance; social consolidation and reinterpretation of biography

Quantitative outcomes. Many of the quantitative researchers employed traditional statistical analysis functions to report correlations and effect sizes. For example, Mason et al. (2017) analyzed videotaped sessions to measure the frequency with which paraprofessionals used specific practices that teacher supervisors suggested through coaching feedback. The researchers identified a clear functional relationship between the teacher-as-coach model and fidelity of instruction. Kose and Lim (2011) also analyzed correlated frequencies but focused on transformative learning practices between two professional learning models rather than between participants. Rather than comparing factors across participants or programs, several studies evaluated the correlation between different attributes and influential factors related to each participant independently (e.g., Akman, 2016; Yahyazadeh-Jeloudar & Lotfi-Goodarzi, 2012). Akman (2016) found that future expectation of mastery had the most impact on teacher implementation after technology professional development. Yahyazadeh-Jeloudar and Lotfi-Goodarzi (2012) studied emotional intelligence and found it to be more highly correlated to factors of job satisfaction than either salary or benefits. While the topic of interest varied among these studies, published work that focused on correlations tended to be very concise and clearly dedicated to establishing importance, reporting results, and suggesting implications.

Researchers who used more novel quantitative approaches such as structural equation modeling (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), path analysis (Briones, Tabernero & Arenas, 2010), or two-level cross-classified model (Johnson, 2017) devoted more space to explaining and displaying visuals of their chosen process. Johnson and Fargo's (2014) binomial longitudinal multilevel statistical model of impact on proficiency and Atteberry and Bryk's (2011) 4-year study of the predictive power of variance observations on

teacher participation in coaching activities were the only two longitudinal quantitative studies within the selected literature. Johnson and Fargo (2014) reported significant growth in proficiency with a coaching intervention but also revealed that fidelity relies heavily on extended duration and distribution of coaching throughout the year. Atteberry and Bryk (2011) found that coaching exposure grew 80% throughout the study and that teacher engagement with coaches correlated most highly with perception of the coaching role and the school's commitment to continued support.

Qualitative descriptions. Fewer studies utilized a purely qualitative research design. Michel et al. (2015) collected participant responses to two open-ended questions and performed content analysis to arrive at themes and categories that captured the faculty's views and beliefs. The researchers included a large collection of extracted quotes to illustrate specific qualities within each theme or category. In some cases, the researchers themselves stated having purposefully eschewed potentially quantitative approaches. For example, Mirzaee and Yaquibi (2016) discussed their decision to employ conversation analysis rather than discourse analysis because of the former being qualitative and emic. Likewise, Sammut (2014) could have quantitatively measure the amount and observable impact of transformative learning moves used by coaches. Instead, the researcher adhered to qualitative interpretive philosophical foundation and based the analysis on *if* and *how* coaches employed them.

Case studies represented a large percentage of the qualitative studies. Some were single case studies, such as Ngcoza and Southwood's (2015) evaluation of a specific delivery model using teacher feedback on effectiveness, while others came about as a smaller piece of larger multi-case studies (Wilder & Herro, 2016). Netolicky (2016) and

Nohl (2015) pursued a more interactive form of narrative inquiry and took a more hermeneutic approach to analyzing the ongoing data by analyzing and interpreting the participants' recounting of their experiences rather than evaluating or describing them. As a result, elements of the methods and findings blend as the researcher describes new understandings along with the collaborative process that led to them. Kumi-Yeboah and James's (2012) approach to layering interviews, field notes from observations, and reflective journals was greatly influential on the methodology of this study as outlined in Chapter 3.

Mixed method studies occupied a noticeable minority within the literature. Tschannen-Moran and Carter's (2016) methods and findings sections followed a very structured framework where a purely quantitative first phase informed selection of participants for the qualitative second phase of their research. Kintz, Lane, Gotwals, and Cisterna (2015) conducted a mixed method qualitative comparative analysis, and de Haan & Nieß (2012) investigated the quantitative frequency of qualitative critical moment codes within coaching conversations. King's (2004) mixed method study of bi-directional feedback on transformative practices in graduate programs for educators gave equal weight to results from the Learning Activities Survey and anecdotal feedback from professors and students. Likewise, Irvine and Price (2014) paired evaluation forms that included Likert scale responses with open ended prompts and a final reflective conversation. Watt and Richardson (2008) pursued an interesting mix of qualitative descriptions of quantitative trends using hierarchical cluster analysis.

Impact of Coaching Conversations

Current research on instructional coaches focuses largely on the form and function of their interaction with teachers. Transformative learning served as a common functional thread among the selected studies. Teacher evaluations and student achievement often serve as outcome measures, with a smaller subset of studies targeting teacher and coach voice with regard to the coaching process.

Affective skills and outcomes. One strand of research in the field of instructional coaching is the need for coaches to utilize and develop their own emotional intelligence. Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016) focused exclusively on emotional intelligence in their research on the outcomes of a training program meant to develop stronger emotional intelligence in instructional coaches. Like much of the research in this field, their study relied on Salovey and Mayer's (1989) definition of emotional intelligence as comprising intrapersonal traits of self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation as well as interpersonal traits of empathy and social skills. Tschannen-Moran and Carter further emphasized the personalized nature of their research by comparing the participants' growth on self-assessed emotional intelligence measures with their self-perception of how emotional intelligence affects their success as coaches. While Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016) saw emotional intelligence as an intrinsic ability, others saw that interpretation as unacceptably commingled with cognition. Mavroveli and Sánchez-Ruiz (2011) devoted a large portion of the study's introduction to explaining how trait emotional intelligence is more of a pure emotional intelligence measure because it relates to a participant's personality more so than an innate ability. Part of their argument

centered on the fact that emotional intelligence results based on ability tend to mirror cognitive intelligence, thereby not adding any new substance to the conversation.

Lawley and Linder-Pelz, (2016) focused on cognitive and emotional intelligence as separate entities in their research on coaching competencies. The model used by their participants included skills such as supporting, listening, and questioning which are inherently affective. However, the expectations of the model and design of the data collection instruments specifically focused on whether the coaches were competent enough to implement the strategies rather than if they possessed the underlying tendencies as intrinsic strengths. The research used a Clean Language interview protocol designed to ensure that “all descriptions and evaluations are sourced exclusively from the interviewee’s personal vocabulary and experience” (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016, p. 120). The Clean Language interviews involved combining the participant’s own words with 12 reflective question stems to conceptualize the experience from their unique point of view. This process is further described in Chapter 3 as part of the study’s approach to data collection and collaborative analysis.

Rather than consider emotion and cognition separately, Netolicky (2016) and Cotê and Miners (2006) conducted research that included overlap between the two. Even though Netolicky’s research focused on a cognitive coaching model to foster teacher competency, the researcher found that the coaches also developed an increased level of self-awareness and empowerment. Cotê and Miners looked specifically at the interplay between the two and found that coaches draw on emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship more when their cognitive intelligence relative to a task or situation is lower. The researchers did not conjecture whether this relationship is

purposeful or intuitive but did conclude that instructional coaching requires both skillsets in order to be effective.

Research on behavioral factors like self-efficacy concentrated on tangible outcomes such as job satisfaction or teacher burnout more often than similar research on personal factors. Netolicky's (2016) intention in studying cognitive coaching concentrated on how coaches fostered self-efficacy in their coachees rather than how much the trait increased in the coachees. Likewise, Tschannen-Moran and Carter (2016) asked participants to consider how their own increased emotional intelligence might better support their coachees' self-efficacy but did not actually attempt to measure that impact. Mayer, Woulfin, and Warhol (2015) avoided evaluation of proficiency altogether and instead reported on how teachers experienced coaching within a community of practice. Their conclusion included three approaches by the coaches that contributed to a positive experience for the teachers: (1) supported committee work but refused to direct it externally, (2) privileged staff readiness over program timelines, and (3) maintained a stronger focus on collaboration itself than on the outcomes of the collaboration.

Transformative elements. Some researchers centered their data collection and analysis entirely on transformative learning theory, a practice that Tosey, Lawley, and Meese (2014) warned may lead to missing out on important ancillary findings. Sammut (2014) used questions explicitly addressing components of transformative learning, while Kawinkamolroj et al. (2015) studied the effectiveness of coaching cycles based on the phases of transformative learning. Kose and Lim (2011) situated transformative learning as an outcome rather than an approach in their study of various delivery models in relation to whether they promoted or hindered its development among teachers. Their

research found that the Professional Learning Processes model was better at transforming beliefs, while the Transformative Professional Learning model was better at transforming expertise and practices. Researchers sometimes included aspects of transformative learning within their studies without explicitly stating the connection. For instance, the critical moments that served as de Haan and Nieß's (2012) unit of analysis represented disorienting dilemmas, recognition of dissatisfaction, and exploration of new roles that are key phases in transformative learning. Similarly, Teemant, Land, and Berghoff (2014) found a statistically significant positive difference between teachers who worked with an instructional coach and those who did not. As referenced earlier, Garcia-Carrion et al. (2017) also referred to the transformative and emancipatory power of dialogical learning without referring to Mezirow's (1991) theory by name. Table 2 displays a sampling of studies chosen to represent the role of transformative learning within the research by focusing on studies that aligned closely with the theoretical framework.

Table 2

Influential Studies Related to Transformative Learning and Coaching Conversations

Study	Focus	Relevant Findings
Collins and Liang (2015)	Descriptive analysis of teacher voice as feedback on PL	+ content relevance, TL features honoring andragogy - disconnect between PL best practices and delivery
de Haan & Nieß (2012)	In-depth analysis of critical moments in conversations	½ critical moments mutually identified, Cs tended - to self-doubt, clients tended + to new learning
Dozier & Rutten (2005)	Ways teacher educators mediate transfer of learning into practice	+ intentionality, enactment, articulation

Table 2- Continued

Garcia-Carrion, Gomez, Molina, & Ionsecu (2017)	Schools as dialogical learning communities	+ explicit use of dialogical learning, transferrable theory, multiple stakeholders - skepticism of impact, feasibility in context
Kaiser (2013)	School-based support for implementing writer's workshop	+ administration support, time for critical dialogue, changes in pedagogy
Kawinkamolroj, Triwaranyu, & Thongthew (2015)	Coaching process based on TL Behavior as evidence of change in mindset	+ job-embedded, thorough discussions, personal connection
Kim & Silver (2016)	Reflective thinking in post observation conversations	+T initiated led to less C repair orientation, C initiated in response to T nonverbal led to more embracing stance
King (2004)	Bi-directional perception on TL practices	+ combination of support and challenge, discussions, journals, personal reflections -confidence, risk-taking
Kintz, Lane, Gotwals, & Cisterna (2015)	Conditions necessary for critical collegueship	+ clear purpose, C questioning, connection of theory to practice - one way or parallel sharing
Mason et al. (2017)	Impact of a teacher-as-coach model as job-embedded PL	+ higher relationship between targeted program and fidelity than with independent online modules
Ngcoza & Southwood (2015)	Effectiveness of Transformative Continuous Professional Development Model	-PL often strengthens reliance on transmissive pedagogy, tension and lack of support between policy and implementation
Park & So (2014)	Elements of PL that help and hinder growth	+ collaboration, self-reflection, inquiry stance - time constraints, psychological barriers, lack of discussion culture
Rettinger (2011)	Conversational analysis of roles	Questioner/answerer, listener/storyteller, suggester/problem teller, evaluator/defender
Sammut (2014)	If and how TL is applied in coaching	Emotional/physical space and context, power lies with coachee, responsive dialogue using coachees lexicon
Wilder & Herro (2016)	Situated learning case study on coaching heavy	+ collaborative transparency, responsive teaching - variance in disciplinary knowledge, C deferring to textbook over T expertise

Note. C=coach, T=teacher, PL=professional learning, PLC=professional learning community, TL=transformative learning theory, + =strength, - =weakness

Role of Conversations

Conversations also occupied a central role in almost all of the selected studies, whether as a primary component of their research design or a significant reported outcome. Garcia-Carrion et al. (2017) chose dialogical learning as their theoretical framework, while Wilder and Herro (2016) used speech events as the unit of analysis in their situated learning case study on coaching practices. Irvine and Price (2014) researched professional conversations as a new element in Australian nationwide learning reform network. Their analysis revealed that even though 75 percent of teachers reported increased understanding of the content, their open-ended comments indicated different personal definitions of foundational concepts like active engagement. Ippolito (2010) looked specifically at how instructional coaches balance responsive and directive roles within their conversations with teachers. The findings indicated that coaches tend to be more directive in in-group settings and more responsive in individual coaching conversations. However, experienced coaches shifted between those two roles in a single setting depending upon the goals of the conversation (Ippolito, 2010). Lofthouse and Hall (2014) also noted a difference between how new and experienced coaches approach conversations, with newer coaches being more hesitant to engage in deep feedback with teachers. That study found that specific coaches benefitted most from professional dialogue with other coaches and teacher leaders to build their confidence for growth-oriented coaching conversations.

Some of the studies dove deeper into coaching conversations to develop a better understanding of specific aspects. Rettinger (2011) reported a number of different roles taken on by coaches and coachees and emphasized that the roles changed based on the

content and competence level of the participants. Kim and Silver (2016) tracked each participant's initiation of different parts of the conversation and the effect their moves had on the overall tone of the interaction. Teacher-initiated responses tended to decrease coaching responses based on repairing a perceived problem, and coach-initiated responses to nonverbal cues from the teacher led to a higher likelihood that the coachee would embrace new ideas. Marsh, Bertrand, and Huguet (2015) found that dialogue was a key mediating practice in coaching. Furthermore, data analysis revealed that the most effective combination for developing teacher praxis was conversation that paired instructional techniques with student data. Hershfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas, and Bradshaw (2012) specifically identified the power of storytelling and reflective questioning within their lessons learned.

Rather than focusing on conversation from the outset, some studies included it among their significant findings. Time for critical dialogue (Kaiser, 2013) and the coach's approach to questioning (Kintz et al., 2015) stood out as particularly important to teachers in those studies. Teachers in Summat's (2014) study reported responsive dialogue using their own words as a key factor in transformative coaching. Research on the important role of conversation was not isolated to work with teachers. In an analysis of the Fast Track Programme for leadership, Jones (2010) found that personalized tutoring available through conversing with current leaders contributed greatly to the participants' motivation and rapid career progress. Research also reveals the impact when authentic conversation is missing from the professional learning dynamic. Park and So (2014) reported that a school culture that fails to promote discussion is one of the major obstacles to promoting growth in teachers through professional learning.

Integrating New Learning into Existing Pedagogy

This study will contribute to filling a gap in the literature around teacher pedagogy and coaching conversations by exploring how teachers undertake and experience the process of integrating new learning into existing pedagogy. There is a body of research reporting the interaction between professional learning and changes in teacher pedagogy. However, the focus is generally on actions taken by the facilitator guiding that process or the degree to which teachers successfully implement new training. Dozier and Rutten (2005) reported three elements as key to mediating transfer that constituted a cycle related to new learning around responsive teaching: intentionality, enactment, and articulation. Intentionality involved explicitly stating a goal that was connected to instructional practice and an authentic need among the students. Enactment of the practice led to articulation of exactly what the teacher attempted and how the students responded. Burke (2017) conducted similar research and found that coaching conversations provide a space for inquiry about the complexities of teaching, reflection to explicitly name aspects of pedagogy that may otherwise go unnoticed, and development of a growth mindset about one's own progress. However, Dozier and Rutten (2005) focused on teacher educators working with graduate students, and Burke (2017) focused on coaching conversations between university faculty and bachelors level preservice candidates. Neither featured instructional coaches working with second-stage teachers, and both studies reported university coursework as instrumental to the coaching process.

Much of the research on pedagogy integration features findings that report observable outcomes related to teacher and student performance. For instance, Reddy, Dudek, and Lekwa (2017) used a randomized control trial to gauge teacher use of

formative assessments following coaching focused on that tool and reported increased use. Likewise, Houen, Danby, Farrell, and Thorpe (2016) measured the frequency of teachers using “I wonder...” statements as an outcome of instructional coaching. The researchers noted an increase in usage by the teachers and three typical scenarios involving the students. The teacher’s requests for hypothetical dialogue gained immediate acceptance, gained acceptance with provisions, or were not taken up at all. In research on contextualized support for writing workshop implementation, Kaiser (2013) found that instructional coaching made the most impact on teacher’s pedagogy in the area of logistical planning. While Kaiser noted a rise in the quality and quantity of student writing, there was no indication of which if any instructional shifts in the teacher’s practice were responsible for those changes.

There is less research on the process coaches and teachers use to move learning from coaching interactions into teacher practice. Waring (2007), for instance, studied the approach of coaches using decontextualized examples and broad principles rather than specific advice. Teachers reported feeling less threatened during the conversations, but the authors did not include data on whether or not the practices underlying the conversations transferred into the classroom. Tan and Ang (2015) found that instructional coaches were more effective at eliciting reasoning within their conversations with teachers than guiding them toward posing hypothetical problems relevant to their authentic needs. Mirzaee and Yaqubi (2016) represented a smaller subset of studies that focused on how teachers integrated new learning into their existing pedagogy. The researchers studied teachers integrating the use of silent wait time into their writing instruction. Silent wait time refers to the practice of a teacher intentionally withholding

any verbal feedback for a period after asking a question or offering a point for consideration. The researchers found that teachers used silence to rethink discoveries of student need while students used silence to consider revisions to their work. The study focused on traditional whole group staff development rather than coaching conversations.

Not all the research is positive, though. Ngcoza and Southwood (2015) found that professional development often inhibits transformation and can actually strengthen a teacher's reliance on transmissive pedagogy. The following section establishes the theoretical framework that I will use as a lens for exploring instructional coaches and teachers engaged in conversations to transform teacher pedagogy.

Transformative Potential of Collaborative Conversations

Whether or not Mezirow (1991) specifically stated a connection between his transformative learning theory and Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism, the two share many traits and the former is ultimately contingent upon the latter. In their research on dialogical learning, Garcia-Carrion, Gomez, Molina, and Ionescu (2017) emphasized the connection between the two theories by framing their interdependence within Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy:

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is crucial to understanding that the development of higher mental functions is eminently social and language-mediated, and it depends on instruction in cooperation with adults or more capable others. In addition, this dialogic approach to education is intrinsically transformative and emancipatory when educator and learner take an egalitarian stance to promote deeper and critical thinking (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2017, p. 47)

Retroactive reflection is not possible without the ability to think logically about how earlier experiences influence current perspectives. Likewise, inner speech is necessary for ensuring that previous transformative learning outcomes become a consistent part of future praxis.

Social Nature of Learning

Vygotsky (1962) entered the field of developmental psychology at a time “when the battle for consciousness consisted of freeing oneself, on the one hand, from vulgar behaviorism, and, on the other hand, from the subjective approach to mental phenomena as exclusively inner subjective conditions” (Vygotsky, 1962, pp. v-vi). Vygotsky contrasted his own approaches and understanding of teaching and learning with flaws in the work of behaviorists such as Thorndike (1906), whose work Vygotsky used as an example of flaws in both concept and methodology. One behaviorist concept that Vygotsky found most objectionable was the necessity of using stimulus-response training “to guide the aimless, random thinking of children into useful and rational forms” (Thorndike, 1906, p. 26). Thorndike conceived of mental activity, physical manipulation, and sociability as independent instincts that required teacher intervention to either reinforce or weaken.

In contrast, Vygotsky studied the interconnectedness of mental and physical exploration and emphasized social interaction as an integral part of all learning. Vygotsky did not discount the role of the teacher altogether, though. His concept of a zone of proximal development situated the teacher as a more knowledgeable other available to provide support to deepen or extend students’ understanding incrementally (Vygotsky, 1978). Thorndike’s theory of individual intellects also divided children into *thing thinkers* and *idea thinkers*, with abstract thinkers comprising a special class of the latter (1906, p. 87). Vygotsky disagreed with that division and theorized that all children progress through phases of connecting ideas to concrete objects, identifying concrete

bonds between concepts, and transcending the concrete into generalization and abstraction.

Vygotsky (1962) also departed from other constructivist research on the topic of concept formation that used words and their associated concepts as tools for experimentation but took their association for granted. Vygotsky instead saw word meaning as a union and “unit of both generalizing thought and social interchange [that] is of incalculable value for the study of thought and language” (1962, p. 7). Vygotsky collaborated with Sakharov (1990) in implementing a new method of double stimulation to provide objects for activity and organizational signs and observe successive rounds of categorization and definition with increasing sophistication. They found that a synthesis of processes, authentic tasks, and use of words crystallized into concept formation.

Vygotsky’s (1962) primacy of socialization in learning supports the study’s focus on instructional coaching conversations as a valuable form of professional learning. Models such as Knight’s (2009) relationship-driven coaching and Aguilar’s (2013) cognitive coaching explicitly position coaches and teachers as co-constructors of new knowledge and understanding. Knight (2009) based his coaching model on the seven principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity. Equality of power between the coach and teacher, nonjudgmental dialogue throughout the process, and reciprocity of both people’s opportunity to learn from their conversations all emphasize the collaborative nature of this model. The fact that teachers choose the areas they want to address and voice both their enthusiasm and their concerns throughout the process keep the coaching work grounded in developing the potential of each individual teacher. Finally, consistent focus on praxis by applying the contents of the coaching

conversations to actual instruction and continuous reflection on the learning process and the collaboration itself ensure that the partnership is both impactful and mutually beneficial. These principles separate coaching from approaches that situate teachers as independent learners, such as self-reflecting on videos of themselves teaching (Christ, Arya, & Chiu, 2017) or completing online modules (Dede, Ketelhut, Whitehouse, Breit, & McCloskey, 2009). In addition to Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of learning, the phases of concept formation illustrate how mastery of abstract thinking is a long-term process that involves negating some perceptions while advancing others. That same dynamic underlies the processes within Mezirow's (1991) stages of transformative learning.

Transformative Power of Reflection

Mezirow (1991) began publishing his ideas in a period marked more by transition than upheaval, but he noted a similar divide between the bureaucratic control inherent in behaviorism and the fuzzy assumptions of humanism (pp. xi-xii). While he did explain gaps and perceived misinterpretations among humanist theories, Mezirow struck at the very heart of behaviorism by observing that the learner must interpret even the purest stimuli in some way before responding. Mezirow (1991) considered Popper's (1968) horizons of expectation a forerunner to his own theory, especially the opposition to closure theory of gestalt learning theorists and concept of negation rather than incorporation of earlier flawed schema (p. 38).

Mezirow (1991) developed his initial theory of transformative learning while studying the cognitive and behavioral habits of women enrolled in college reentry programs (p. 86). Instead of basing the study on an a priori theory as Vygotsky did with

social constructivism, he employed a grounded theory approach to uncover the process and degree to which the participants' perspectives changed throughout the experience. Mezirow's use of historical-hermeneutics rather than empirical-analytics allowed the process through which the women's perspectives underwent transformation to surface organically throughout their interviews. Mezirow supported each stage of his work with a correlated theory or body of knowledge.

Vygotsky (1962) and Mezirow (1991) focused their research on different age demographics, but both reported that the process central to their theories occurred at an advanced stage. Vygotsky disagreed with earlier child psychologists about the potential for infantile intentionality and explained, "Everything we know of the mentality of the child of one and a half or two clashes with the idea that he might be capable of such complex intellectual operations" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 27). Mezirow delineated his theory even more clearly within a learner's life span and cited psychologists who found that "perspective transformation occurs between thirty-five and fifty-five years, and its duration may extend from five to twenty years" (1991, p. 156). Despite the differences in demographics, both theorists espoused the belief that the outcome of their theoretical process constituted an irreversible shift in the person's thinking. Vygotsky agreed with the concept of a grandiose signalization at which point speech is differentiated from all other signaling stimuli and after which speech and language are inextricably interwoven. He envisioned the path toward that point to be molecular and longitudinal rather than defined by an exact moment. Mezirow (1991) differed slightly in his belief that transformative thinking could either develop similarly through a series of subtle changes or crystallize around a single epochal event. Whether it took place gradually or suddenly,

Mezirow also contended that the capability and tendency to reflect critically on one's own premise and consider multiple perspectives constituted a lasting change in thinking and learning.

Implications for Current Study

The conception of transformative conversations shown in Figure 2 adds elements of Vygotsky's (1962) and Mezirow's (1991) theories to Glaser's (2014) discussion of transformative conversation's place within the continuum of social exchanges. Vygotsky theorized learning as a function of social interaction and co-construction of meaning through speech. Mezirow paired situated reflective action within that same collaborative paradigm. Glaser added the element of trust as vital to maximizing the co-creation of new understanding within conversations. Transformational conversations are necessary for coaches to accomplish their goal of helping teachers "take what they've learned so far and make it work in the classroom...to reexamine what they have been taught, figure out how to integrate it into their current instructional and curricular unit, and gauge its effectiveness" (WestEd, 2000, p. 23). The study will focus on the "figuring out how to integrate it" component of second-stage teachers engaged in the process of integrating new skills, approaches, and mindsets developed during the coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy.

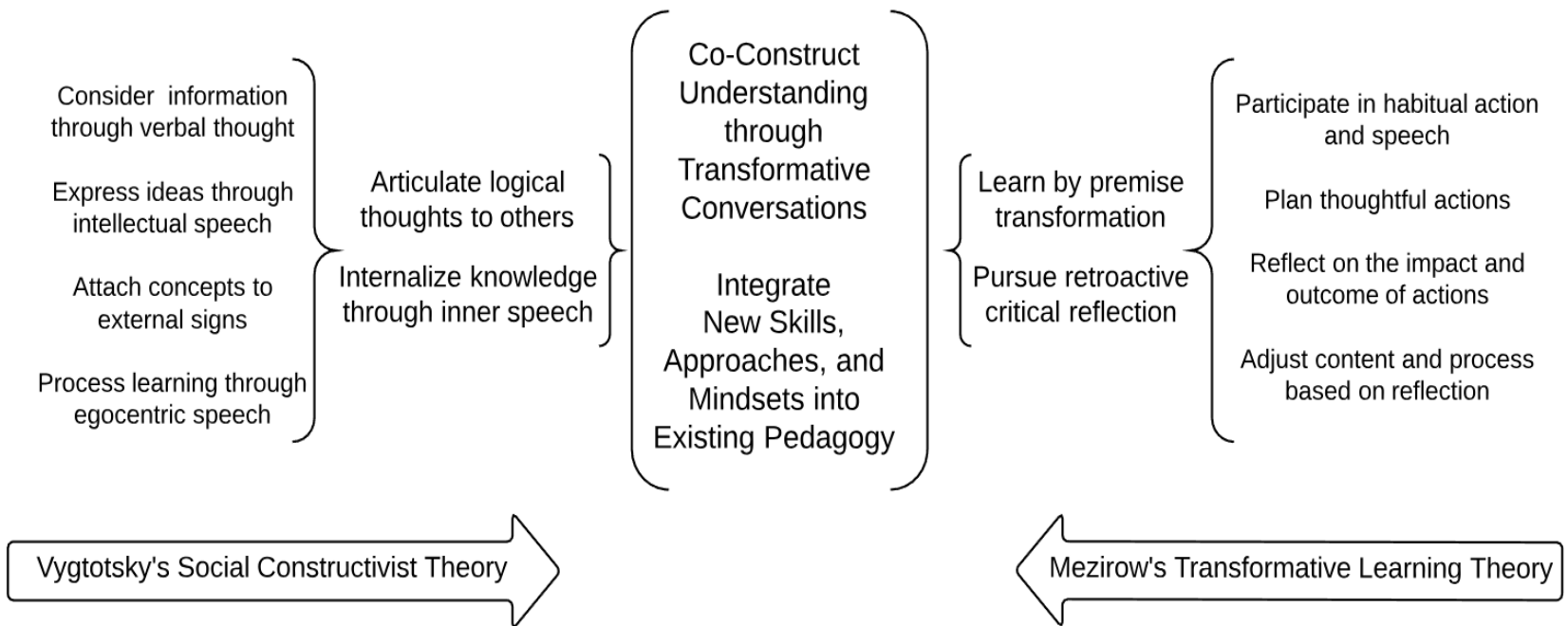


Figure 2. Transformative conversations and pedagogy integration as a synthesis of Vygotsky's (1962) ontogeny of language development and Mezirow's (1991) progression toward transformative reflection.

Summary

Synthesizing literature related to coaching conversations and transformative learning revealed three trends that became foundational to this study. The first trend had to do with the context in which the studies took place. Qualitative research exploring one-on-one coaching within elementary school settings represented a small subset of research on professional learning and the impact of coaching. The second trend involved the underlying theory in much of the research and the role it played. Transformative learning theory lies at the heart of the collaboration between coaches and teachers. Although much of the research evaluated or described practices related to transformative learning, researchers paid less attention to the personal process of transformation as a lived experience on the part of the teacher. Finally, time for critical dialogue and support for integrating theory into practice arose as the two most consistent needs across studies involving teacher feedback. The following chapter describes the study's qualitative research design which used social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) as a lens to focus on the lived experience of teachers using coaching conversations as a component of integrating new understanding developed through coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter lays out the rationale and methodology for the phenomenological multi-case study that I used to explore the lived experience of teachers integrating new skills into their existing pedagogy. The beginning of this chapter describes the purpose of the study in addressing a problem and research questions related to integrating professional learning into classroom instruction. The following portion outlines the specifics of the phenomenological multi-case study design including the choice in research site and participants. The third major section provides detail about how I collected and analyzed data within the well-bounded case study. Finally, the chapter ends with an initial exploration of how I addressed my role and biases as a researcher.

Review of Problem and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to address the lack of support second-stage teachers receive to authentically integrate new professional learning into their existing pedagogy. In order to deepen understanding of this process among teachers and those who support their professional learning, I pursued a thick, contextual synthesis of their lived experience rather than a sequential explanation of the process. I chose to focus this phenomenological multi-case study on coaching conversations as one form of professional learning to answer the following primary and supporting research questions:

What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers and instructional coaches engaged in coaching conversations?
2. How do teachers begin the process of integrating or implementing the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy?
3. How do teachers define success or failure in relation to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

The questions evolved throughout the life of the study and progressively represented a deeper understanding of the dynamics within and surrounding the coaching conversations. Earlier versions were more functional, while subsequent iterations became increasingly relational in nature. The results of this research added to the body of literature that teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and teacher educators can use to maximize the potential of their partnerships.

Research Design and Rationale

Quantitative studies related to instructional coaching conversations have documented the frequency of specific components, gauged the impact on teacher performance, and measured student achievement as an outcome (Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2002; Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010; Reddy, Dudek, & Lekwa, 2017). A qualitative approach was most useful for exploring the dynamics of how the participants experience the interconnected phenomena of conversation and integration from their own points of view. Qualitative researchers have employed conversational analysis to identify roles and stances within coaching conversations or to synthesize teacher perception on effective coaching conversations (Kim & Silver, 2016; Kintz et al., 2015; Rettinger, 2011). Rather than quantifying elements and outcomes or describing roles and

perceptions of the participants, the purpose of this study was to probe deeper into the process that teachers and coaching go through when integrating elements of their collaborations into the teacher's classroom practice. Pursuing a phenomenological multi-case study allowed me to delve deeply into the particulars of the collaborative coaching dyad in order to synthesize the multiple layers of their experience. Table 3 shows how the elements of qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998) aligned with the lens of phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) that applied throughout this study.

Table 3

Elements of Phenomenological Case Study Delineated by Source Approach

	Design	Process	Outcomes
Case study	well-bounded case, multiple data sources	intensive, holistic analysis of bounded phenomenon	extrapolation rather than generalization
Phenomenology	reflective analysis of experience	open-ended questions, dialogue	synthesized meaning from participant's experience

Merriam (1998) emphasized that qualitative case studies are by nature particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. This study focused on four unique coaching dyads composed of one teacher receiving support from one instructional coach. While each dyad operated independently of one another, they were each involved with the same central phenomenon of integrating the content of coaching conversations into existing instructional practice. Rather than examining the fidelity of a specific coaching approach or enumerating the elements contained within the conversations, I was interested in

describing the overall experience of the conversations and the process of integrating new learning into instructional practices as related by the participants themselves.

The heuristic component was common to both Merriam's discussion of case study and Moustakas's (1994) profile of various lenses related to phenomenology. While Merriam focused on how the synthesized case study illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon, Moustakas included the researcher's own experiences and desires to understand the phenomenon. Both heuristic goals applied in this particular multi-case study. First, this study fit within the larger context of authentic professional development. By synthesizing the experience and sharing the results, I intended to add new ideas to the toolbox of professional development stakeholders or strengthen practices they currently have in place. In addition, experiencing coaching conversations through someone else's eyes and analyzing the experience from both of their perspectives served to elevate my own coaching practices and to deepen my understanding of the underlying forces at work.

Merriam's (1998) five steps of qualitative case study design serve as a guide for this study. For the first step, I conducted a literature review analyzing pertinent research in the areas of instructional coaching and conversational analysis. Through that process, I undertook the second step of constructing a theoretical framework. Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism lies at the heart of the coaching conversations as collaborative meaning making through language, and Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory served as the lens through which I viewed the data collection and analysis. Rather than checking for how the conversations move the pair through specific stages of transformative learning, I listened for how the participants' experiences contributed to

meaning making and reflective action. During our time together, only one teacher showed evidence of what Mezirow described as a single epochal event that spurred critical reflection. The remaining three experienced what Vygotsky and Mezirow both noted as gradual and subtle changes leading toward a new way of thinking and learning. With the narrowed focus of transformative learning theory in mind, I pursued the third and fourth steps of identifying a problem and constructing a research question.

One issue I noted while conducting the literature review was that conversation analysis was far less reported on within K-12 settings than it has been within corporate and higher education contexts. A desire to add to that underrepresented body of knowledge and deepen my own understanding of the phenomenon led to the primary research question. The following section outlines Merriam's final step to qualitative case study in which I used purposive sampling to identify appropriate sites and participant dyads.

Site and Participant Sampling

Stake (1995) defined a case as a "specific, complex, functioning thing" (p. 2) and delineated case studies as either intrinsically focused on the case itself or instrumentally designed to use the case as a window into a larger issue. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that case studies involve a two-tier sampling process to first select the well-bounded case and unit of analysis and then identify specific sites, participants, and documents that will serve as data sources for the research. This phenomenological multi-case study focused on four second-stage teachers each working separately with an instructional coach to integrate the contents of their coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy. The interrelated processes of coaching conversations and pedagogy

integration within each coaching dyad served as the four well-bounded cases within this study.

This study typified an instrumental case study in that learning more about the central phenomena of the interconnectedness of coaching conversations and pedagogy integration was paramount to understanding the individual cases themselves. Clarifying that focus allowed me to hone in on the coaching conversation as the unit of analysis, rather than the teachers, the coaches, or classroom instruction. As explained in Chapter 2, there was already a large body of research that provided data on how coaches provide support for teachers and the effects that their support have on teacher effectiveness and instructional outcomes. For this study, I intentionally shifted the focus to the coaching conversation itself and considered other elements only in their relation to understanding its role more fully.

Having defined the theoretical cases and unit of analysis, I identified two coaching dyads each at two different secondary schools in order to explore potential common and unique findings using the multi-case study design. In his discussion on breadth versus depth, Patton (2002) explained that although a larger sample size lends itself to exploring diversity and variation, studies that feature even a single information rich participant or case offer the time and flexibility to explore more experiences in detail. Creswell (2013) also cautioned, “because of the need to report details about each individual or site, the larger number of cases can become unwieldy and result in superficial perspectives” (p. 209). Focusing on how four teachers integrated information from separate coaching conversations at two different sites allowed me to explore each

teacher's experience deeply and identify themes that their experiences had in common as well as themes that were unique to each teacher.

Identifying a Research Site

DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) emphasized the importance of identifying a research site where the social action of interest occurs naturally and can be observed authentically. As detailed in the next section, data collection for this study consisted primarily of observing two phenomena: the participants engaged in collaborative conversations and the teachers engaged in the process of integration during classroom instruction. Therefore, I took several steps to identify schools where those two processes were already established as interrelated routines.

Initial criteria and considerations. Schools within the school district in which I work were ideal for several reasons. First, each school had access to multiple district and school-based instructional coaches who worked directly with teachers in different content areas. The district had recently transitioned from employing a small team of district-level instructional coaches who served multiple schools to providing each school with a school-based coach. Several of the district's principals used instructional funds to hire an additional coach, as well. The fact that coaching was an existing process within those schools provided for a large pool of potential participants and an established routine for times and spaces in which the coaching conversations took place. Since I was not proposing coaching conversations as a new intervention, I prescreened the schools to identify sites where those routines were already in place. Second, geographic proximity and shared work calendars typified a site of convenience based on time, location, and availability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All of the schools in the district were within four

miles of one another, making travel between my school and each research site more feasible. Staying within the district also maximized our collaboration by ensuring that I was available during the participant's instructional calendar and allowing the option to use district-wide professional learning days for observations and interviews.

Situating the multi-case study within my small charter district had advantages and complications. On one hand, personal collegial relationships with many of the teachers and coaches across the district offered a foundation for the process of building rapport with participants that Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlighted as vital to qualitative research. Even if I had not worked directly with the participants, I had worked in the district for four years and developed a reputation for being teacher-focused and advocacy-minded. That reputation likely played a factor in my request to do research in the district being approved more quickly than usual. It also assisted in the coaches and teachers feeling comfortable to share their thoughts and feelings openly. On the other hand, my relationships within the district increased the possibility that background information about the sites and participants may have colored my observations. My current role as a school-based instructional coach and district-wide endorsement instructor could also have caused the participants to purposely or inadvertently relay more positive data to protect their self-image and reflect positively on their school and colleagues. I had to remain diligent in monitoring and accounting for biases and preconceptions on both of our parts.

Additionally, in order to come as close as possible to Patton's (2002) goal of empathic neutrality, my prescreening of school sites intentionally avoided my current worksite and the three other schools where I have served as an instructional coach. I also

decided against situating the study at any school whose coach was a member of my previous district literacy coaching team. These stipulations eliminated the majority of the district's elementary schools. Ultimately, I decided to find participants at the district's three secondary schools. The following section explains the process for identifying the study's participants and provides background information on each of them.

Responsive changes to design. Along with the criterion sampling related to the research site, I followed the co-researcher discovery process Moustakas (1994) described as ideal for initiating phenomenological research. After receiving the university's Internal Review Board approval (see Appendix A) and the district's Application to Conduct Research approval (see Appendix B), I began the prescreening process by discussing the coaching dynamic at the secondary schools with the district content coordinators. Since I had spent less time in those schools, I valued the coordinators' input on which schools had an environment amenable to the study and which coaches engaged their teachers in authentic coaching conversations. We defined authentic coaching conversations as establishing relationships to engage teachers in one-on-one conversations with a focus on teacher-centered growth. Based on feedback from the coordinators, I met with three potential instructional coaches with the original intention of identifying a single site. Each introductory conversation consisted of sharing the purpose, design, and demands of the study. Following Moustakas's (1994) advice to seek out co-researchers who are not only willing to participate and experienced with the phenomenon but "intensely interested in understanding its nature and meaning" (p. 107), I also shared my personal interest in the central phenomenon and led the coaches to reflect on their own motivation for taking part in the study. Following our face to face

conversation, I emailed each coach the Instructional Coach Recruiting Script (see Appendix C).

After sharing and gathering information from each potential coach participant, I met with a peer-checking group of doctoral cohort members to analyze my field notes and prioritize a site for the study. That discussion led me to select the middle school as the intended site for the study and reach out to their coach. I also notified the other two coaches of my decision not to situate the study at their respective schools. A series of emails about intense interest at one of the other sites followed and prompted further conversations with my chair and methodologist, resulting in the inclusion of a second site. I therefore expanded the original single-case design set at one school to a multi-case study with four teachers and two instructional coaches at two different schools. Although this study was not designed to be content-specific, both instructional coaches served content-specific roles in their buildings. The following site descriptions include background specific to those content areas.

Middle school site with EngageNY curriculum. At the time of this study, the middle school site served 1,337 seventh- and eighth-grade students with a 16:1 student-teacher ratio. The student body was comprised of 81 percent minority enrollment, 25 percent economically disadvantaged, 13 percent students with disability, and 12 percent English language learners. The staff included 90 teachers, 8 support personnel, and 4 administrators. In relation to this study's target population, 34 percent of the teacher had 1-10 years' experience along with 9 percent first-year teachers and 57 percent more ten years. Among the teachers, 41 percent had bachelor's degrees, 53 percent had advanced degrees, and 6 percent held terminal degrees in their field.

This study focused on the middle school's literacy coach and her work with two English language arts (ELA) teachers. The faculty was in its first year of implementing EngageNY ELA Curriculum (Expeditionary Learning [EL], 2013). The scripted curriculum consisted of online modules for each grade level that based all reading and writing instruction around authentic texts including trade books and relevant articles. A report from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute found that EngageNY curriculum is well-aligned to Common Core standards, based on high quality texts, and allows more flexibility than other scripted programs but also noted that the quantity of content can be overwhelming (Haydel, Carmichael, & Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2015). As the common ELA curriculum, EngageNY featured in some way within each of the middle school coaching dyad's data.

High school site with 3D science instruction. At the time of this study, the high school site served 2,489 ninth- through twelfth-grade students with a 18:1 student-teacher ratio. The student body was comprised of 83 percent minority enrollment, 21 percent economically disadvantaged, 10 percent students with disability, and 10 percent English language learners. The staff included 137 teachers, 16 support personnel, and 11 administrators. In relation to this study's target population, 31 percent of the teacher had 1-10 years' experience along with 6 percent first-year teachers and 67 percent with more than ten years. Among the teachers, 26 percent had bachelor's degrees, 71 percent had advanced degrees, and 3 percent held terminal degrees in their field.

This study focused on the high school's science coach and her work with two teachers in the science department. While the various science disciplines did not share a single curriculum program, the teachers in the science department were in early stages of

adopting three-dimensional (3D) science instruction as defined by Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013). The shift towards 3D instruction required teachers to engage in inquiry practices, link to crosscutting concepts, and focus on disciplinary core ideas. A recent study into 3D instruction at the secondary level found that after two years of professional development 80 percent of teachers were engaging students in inquiry-based lessons, but fewer maintained fidelity with using new materials aligned with the inquiry focus. Based on differences in the teachers' needs, 3D instruction featured prominently in only one of the high school coaching dyads.

Identifying Coaching Dyad Participants

Patton (2002) suggested homogeneous sampling as well suited to providing focus and simplifying analysis and chain sampling as an effective strategy to identifying which cases are information rich. Having identified the instructional coach participants as part of the site identification process, I moved on to identifying teacher participants whom they supported. My desire to study a typical rather than an extreme or deviant case required that certain criteria be met (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). First, I relied on Kirkpatrick and Johnson's (2014) operationalized definition of second-stage teachers as typically having three to seven years of classroom experience. Specifying that range as a factor for inclusion directly addressed this study's underlying problem that teachers did not receive appropriate support in their post-novice, pre-veteran years. Huberman (1989) explained that teachers in this second stage display an openness to experimentation that sets them apart from pre-service candidates and novice teachers who are still in the process of developing a personal pedagogy as well as late-stage teachers who exhibit a combination of conservatism and disengagement. That unique position also aligned with

the study's goal of exploring the interconnection between coaching conversations and pedagogy integration. Since this study focused on the participants' collaborations as lived phenomena rather than their effectiveness as an intervention, I also excluded outliers with regard to exemplary or problematic partnerships. Using those factors of inclusion and exclusion, the coaches and I engaged in homogeneous chain sampling to identify teachers they saw as typical sample cases among the teachers they supported. We identified six potential teachers, and I emailed each one the Teacher Recruiting Script (see Appendix C). Based on their responses, I selected two teachers at each site to participate in the study. Although we did not use gender as a factor, the fact that all six participants were female was not surprising given that recent research reported that women made up over 75 percent of the teacher workforce (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014).

Prior to formal data collection, I met with each participant to review the Informed Consent form (see Appendix D). Once they had agreed to participate, each participant chose a pseudonym and provided relevant biographical information. In order to situate the current study within the participants' own experience, I asked each one to provide a brief written statement of their beliefs relative to classroom instruction and coaching conversations. The statements served as touchstones for the dyad's interactions and the teacher's evolving pedagogy.

Middle school participants. The middle school participants included literacy coach Rose and classroom English Language Arts (ELA) teachers Mahogany and Lorelei. While all of the ELA teachers received support from the same coach and work within professional learning communities, their coaching conversations took place on an

individual basis. The school's professional learning communities were subdivided into content areas within each grade level. Mahogany and Lorelei worked with different grades, so their common professional learning or instructional support was limited to school-wide sessions and occasional crossover between the three grade-level ELA teams.

Rose, schoolwide literacy coach. Rose was 36 years old, African American, and married. She completed her BA in English at a local historically black university, went on to MEd in Post-Secondary Education and MAT in English Education, and finally earned her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. Rose spent seven years teaching high school English before moving out of the classroom into leadership and coaching roles for the past five years. Although she did not have direct experience teaching middle school, she was certified for ELA in those grade levels. Prior to her current role as the middle school's sole literacy coach, she served as an instructional coach for high school teachers in ELA, social studies, math, and science.

Rose's beliefs about classroom instruction:

Education should be a participatory experience. There should be a common interest and active involvement in order to promote growth. Ultimately, knowledge should be constructed through social interaction. Teachers should be facilitators of knowledge, leaders of discovery, and directors of interpretation. In the modern classroom, the role of teachers is to ensure that students are engaged in the active construction of knowledge.

Rose's beliefs about coaching conversations:

Coaching should also be a participatory experience. There should be open and active involvement in order to promote growth for the teacher. There should be a sense of openness and flexibility as the tide continues to change in education. Growth and development should be the common goal in a coaching relationship. The coach should be a facilitator and a supporter. I believe that educational leadership is an act of service. Genuine support of the pedagogical practices in the classroom is required. Coaching expertise is not limited to a specified content area. It's all about building a sense of community and camaraderie between educational professionals.

Rose strived to lead by listening and tried to serve as a buffer or filter for teachers among the plethora of mandates and messages they received.

Mahogany, eighth-grade ELA teacher. Mahogany was 43 years old, African American, and married with children. She completed her BS in Education and entered the teaching field after more than 20 years as an office manager and entrepreneur. Mahogany had been teaching eighth-grade ELA for two years, and this was her first year working with Rose.

Mahogany's beliefs about classroom instruction: "I believe that you have to know your students in order to deliver specialized instruction."

Mahogany's beliefs about coaching conversations: "I believe that the coaching conversations are geared to specific things that I and my coach have identified as strengths and weaknesses. I also see these conversations as ways to be a better teacher." Mahogany considered herself highly skilled in providing a supportive learning environment and professed a need to develop her proficiency with providing specialized instruction.

Lorelei, seventh-grade ELA inclusion teacher. Lorelei was 25 years old, Causasian, and recently married. She completed her BS in Middle Grades Education and had been teaching for three years. Lorelei taught eighth-grade ELA before moving into her current seventh-grade role the year prior to this study. All of her courses were inclusion classes that she shared with a special education co-teacher, and this was her first year working with Rose.

Lorelei's beliefs about classroom instruction:

I believe that the classroom is a place that all students should feel like they are free to learn and to make mistakes. I believe that the most valuable tool we have

in teaching our students are the relationships we build with them. I also believe that scores do not define the teacher in the classroom, growth does. Not just the growth of each student, but also the growth of the teacher too in their willingness to make changes to better their students from year to year.

Lorelei's beliefs about coaching conversations:

I believe that coaching conversations are SO [emphasis in original] necessary and should be a way to gain strategies and assistance where it is needed. I also believe that when a coach enters our rooms, that it should be not to just make sure they are following protocols, but to truly help the teachers be better. I believe that teachers have a hard time with this, since we are often being "graded" on everything we do. Coaching conversations are sacred. They are the place where even the most practiced teacher can discuss classroom insecurities. We are so inundated with classroom protocols and initiatives, that we often put up a front for what we are doing or what we have accomplished, and because of this, I think it is hard for any coach or administrator to really support us. Vulnerability (or lack of), while necessary, is the most challenging part of these conversations, for fear of reprimand, exposure, even shame.

Lorelei sought to focus on each student as an individual and expressed a discomfort with opening her practice up to others based on previous experiences.

High school participants. The high school participants included science coach KP, physics teacher Susanna, and special education science support teacher Hannah. While KP supported the entire science department, the teachers also worked within a professional learning community (PLC) based on their subjects. Susanna and Hannah worked with different subjects, so their common professional learning or instructional support was limited to quarterly science department meetings and occasional school-wide sessions. All coaching conversations took place on an individual basis.

KP, science department coach. KP was 40 years old, African American, and married with children. She completed her BS in Biology with a minor in chemistry, went on to a MEd in Educational Leadership, and finally earned her EdD in School Leadership. KP spent sixteen years teaching high school science before moving out of

the classroom. Her teaching experience included chemistry, biology, oceanography, biochemistry, physical science, and environmental science. She taught for two years at the current high school before becoming the science coach two years prior to this study. KP considered herself highly qualified in those areas and at least proficient in the remaining specializations in which she coached.

KP's beliefs about classroom instruction:

Every student has prior experiences and strengths that can be used to bring relevance and increase student engagement. Meeting students where they are to build their capacity regarding content knowledge is important as every student wants to earn an A; they just need the tools and support to practice until mastery is obtained.

KP's beliefs about coaching conversations:

Every teacher wants to be a great teacher and leave a lasting impact on their students. Reflective practices are key to helping teachers go from good to great. When teachers feel valued and supported, they will work hard to improve their practices.

KP believed that relationships are the foundational element to teaching and coaching, and she sought to constantly build others up using her intrinsically positive outlook on life.

Susanna, CP and Honors Physics teacher. Susanna was 27 years old, Caucasian, and married with a newborn. She completed her BS in Biology and Ecology and began her teaching at the high school two years prior to this study. She also served as a professional college tutor in the areas of biology, physics, anatomy, and earth science. Susanna taught honors and college preparatory (CP) courses in biology and physics. This was her second year working with KP as an instructional coach.

Susanna's beliefs about classroom instruction:

Classroom instruction should be dependent on the students' needs. Using data to drive instruction is one of the most practical ways to achieve this. Also balancing the practical application of strategies. Not every strategy works for every group,

but it takes practice and trying strategies to make them practical. My goal is to apply strategies that increase student engagement and student lead instruction.

Susanna's beliefs about coaching conversations:

My coaching conversations help me see challenges in my classroom that I may not be able to discover on my own. They also provide me with many different strategies that a seasoned teacher would use to help improve these challenges. Essentially it provides me with the experience that a seasoned teacher has and helps develop my experience with structure instead of me having to learn everything through trial and error.

Susanna pursued a data-based approach to facilitating student learning and acknowledged a need to increase student engagement in her CP classes.

Hannah, ESOL and SPED co-teacher. Hannah was 29 years old, multiracial, and single. She completed her BS in Biology Education, added Special Education certification, and had an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement. Hannah performed her student teaching at the current high school and joined the staff five years prior to this study. She had taught general education biology and environmental science in the past, and currently served as a special education co-teacher, small group teacher, and ESOL support in those same specializations. Hannah worked in the science department with KP prior to KP's transition into a coaching role last year.

Hannah's beliefs about classroom instruction: "Classroom instruction should be student led, where students are making the scientific inquires."

Hannah's beliefs about coaching conversations: "The coaching conversations have been positive and effective regarding implementing 3D instruction."

Hannah was currently seeking her broad field certification to facilitate a move out of a support role into her own classroom.

The coaches and I discussed their backgrounds and beliefs prior to identifying the specific teacher participants. This separation ensured that the coaches reflected on their beliefs in general rather than in relation to the teacher participants. In order to explore the teachers' attempts to integrate new knowledge and skills into their existing pedagogy, I gathered their biographical and philosophical information during informal visits to each teacher's classroom. Those visits allowed me to become familiar with the teachers' classroom environments and pedagogy prior to exploring them through the lens of the coaching conversations observed during this study. The following section details the data collection process I undertook to answer this study's research questions.

Data Collection

Creswell (2013) defined case studies as requiring “detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information*” (p. 97, emphasis in original). As stated in the previous section, the unit of analysis within this multi-case study was the coaching conversation. The primary sources of information for studying their role in pedagogical integration were observation of the coach and teachers engaged in coaching conversations, observation of the teachers delivering instruction that they felt integrated content from those conversations, and reflective interviews following each of those observations. DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) acknowledged that participant observation is rarely the sole source of data in a research design but highlighted the method as particularly beneficial “to improve the degree to which the products of the research provide a valid view of the context and phenomena under investigation as possible” (p. 110). The individual reflective interviews provide an opportunity to delve more deeply into understanding the lived experience of those conversations from their unique

perspective. Figure 3 lays out how these data collection interactions took place within two cycles per dyad and notes the type of data and focus of each step. The following section explains each data source in more depth.

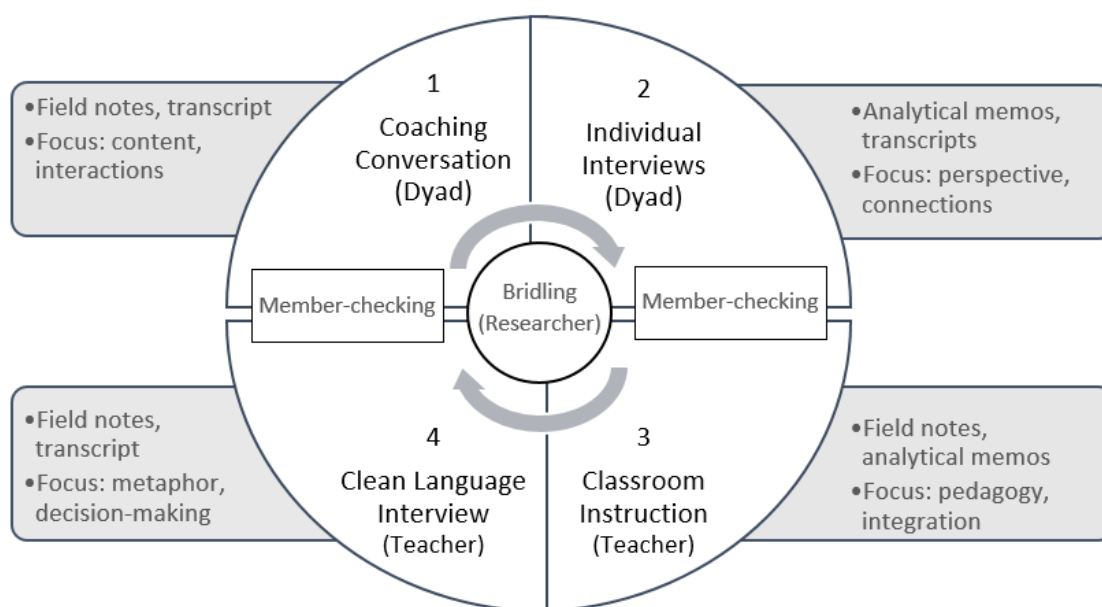


Figure 3. Descriptive diagram of data collection cycles.

Participant Observation

This multi-case study aligned with professional learning as one of the district's eight research priorities that the board policy suggests as having a higher likelihood of being approved. Parent permission was unnecessary since the bounded case involved direct interaction with only the teachers and an instructional coach. Any contact with students was incidental and was not directly reflected in data collection, data analysis, or reported findings.

Coaching conversations. Once all approvals had been granted and participants

had been identified, I worked with the coach and teachers to determine a schedule of observations that took place within their authentic work. The majority of coaching conversations took place within the context of a teacher's workday situated within their particular school site. I observed two scheduled coaching conversations between the instructional coach and each teacher. While the timing of each observation was flexible depending on the vision of support crafted by the participants, the first coaching conversation observation took place in October 2018 and the final post-instruction Clean Language interview took place in April 2019. I recorded each conversation using the Voice Recorder app on my cell phone and the Zoom videoconferencing software provided by Mercer University. The Voice Recorder produced an audio recording that I uploaded to the transcription add-on feature of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo Plus 12. Although Zoom's audio file and auto-generated transcript were not as helpful, the software produced a clear video recording that I uploaded into NVivo to analyze alongside the audio transcript and my field notes.

I used an adapted version of the Cornell note-taking protocol shown in Appendix E to support the on-going interpretive process through analytical memos (Saldaña, 2013). The template has three sections with purposeful space provided in each. Half of the page was dedicated to capturing telegraphic statements of what I directly observe. Those statements involved big ideas and pivotal terms rather than a fine grained outline of every action and interaction. Since the conversations were audio and video recorded for later review, these statements focused more on visibly observable elements of the conversations such as situational context and positioning that were evidence of engagement and disengagement between participants. Vocal tone and body language

indicated shifts between emotional states like tension, comfort, and humor. One-fourth of the template served for jotting my own reactions, initial interpretations, and questions about what I directly observed. These observational notes were similar to open coding in that they applied to portions of the observation but differed in that they are not written later with a category or theme in mind. Instead, they were recorded concurrently with the observational statement and actually became a part of the data themselves and were coded alongside the other data (Merriam, 2009). The remaining one-fourth of the template was reserved for overall impressions, wonderings, or suppositions that I recorded as soon as the observation itself is over. This space was also helpful for sketching visual devices such as doodles showing relationships that Bogdan and Biklen (2007) advised using as anchors for the analytical process. I began using this notetaking approach during my undergraduate coursework and that familiarity benefitted my ability to focus on the participants and authentically capture my observations and initial interpretations.

The transcript of the participants' conversation also served as artifacts for content analysis. Mayring (2000) suggested that researchers pursuing qualitative content analysis identify salient components of a document by considering the text alongside the theoretical or conceptual framework and the research question. However, Moustakas (1994) highlighted horizontalization—treating all data with equal weight—as one of the key components to phenomenology, and Tosey, Lawley, and Meese (2014) emphasized that adhering too closely to a single theory might overly influence the findings and blind the researcher to the participant's personal understanding. Mayring's ideas of a guiding framework may seem at odds with those of Moustakas and Tosey et al. In the case of this

phenomenological case study, though, I balanced those two aspects by following Altheide's advice as cited by Merriam (2009) that "the aim is to be systematic and analytic, but not rigid" (p. 153). Therefore, I applied a lens of constructivism and transformative learning to my reading and coding while remaining open to aspects of the conversation that seem meaningful but unrelated to those frameworks.

Beginning with these initial steps and continuing forward, I heeded Merriam's (2009) warning to maintain a separate hard copy of each artifact. First, this element of data management ensured redundancy if electronic files are lost. More importantly, however, having a clean copy allowed me to return to the raw data whenever early interpretations became untenable through future analysis or future interpretations strayed too far from the original context.

Teacher-selected classroom instruction. In addition to the coaching conversations themselves, the integration component of this study required firsthand observation of the teachers within their classrooms. Prior to initiating formal observations, I joined each teacher for informal visits that Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described as useful for familiarizing the qualitative researcher with an unfamiliar environment in which data collection will take place. These days also acclimated the students to my presence in the classroom and provided some background knowledge of the teachers' existing instructional practices. Data from these initial visits consisted of impression memos and logistical sketches rather than audio-video recordings or formal field notes.

Following the first observed coaching conversation, I focused my formal observations on how each teacher engages in the active experimentation that Cranton (2006) described as the natural outcome of transformative collaboration. No audio or

video recording occurred within the classroom for two reasons. First, the focus of this data source was to understand how the teachers conceived of the integration process, not to collect an objective record of their attempts. Based on that focus, IRB approval for this study did not include student data or classroom recording. Rather than quantifying the amount of skills that transfer from conversation to practice or the degree of success related to that transfer, I used the data gathered from my field notes and analytical memos to guide my interview questions and add to the depth of data obtained from interviews and documents related to each participant's reported experience.

Participant Interviews

Parlett, Hamilton, and Edinburgh University (1972) outlined progressive focusing and its larger context of illuminative evaluation as going beyond just observation to include interviews, questionnaires, and document sources as important data. All participants reflected separately on their experience and perception of the coaching conversations by answering semi-structured interview questions. Teachers also engaged in a collaborative discussion with the researcher after each instructional segment using Clean Language protocols to develop a personal, conceptual understanding of their integration attempts.

Post-conversation reflection with teacher and coach. After each observed coaching conversation, I engaged the teachers and instructional coach separately in an audio-recorded semi-structured interview. These individual interviews explored the coaching conversation as a lived experience from each participant's perspective. As the study progressed and deeper understanding of the phenomenon and context took shape, the interviews became more structured but also included more conceptual and

interpretive prompts. Table 4 contains a list of baseline interview questions that I asked each participant separately after the observed coaching conversations. As the study proceeded, interview questions became more closely tied to the contents of each conversation as well as more inclusive of categories and themes uncovered through data analysis that took place iteratively between interviews. The number of interviews correlated to the number of observations and each one lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Table 4

Post-Conversation Interview Guiding Questions

Teacher Questions	Coach Questions
1. How did you prepare for this coaching conversation?	1. How did you prepare for this coaching conversation?
2. What was the focus of the coaching conversation?	2. What was the focus of the coaching conversation?
3. How did the content of the coaching conversation relate to your current practices?	3. How did the content of the coaching conversation relate to your overall support for the teacher?
4. What are your thoughts on integrating ideas from this conversation into your instruction?	4. What are your thoughts on supporting integration of ideas from this conversation into the teacher's instruction?

Post-instruction Clean Language interview with teacher. Following each classroom observation, the teacher and I engaged in an audio-recorded interview using Clean Language interview protocols. Owen (1996) highlighted the following seven traits of Clean Language interviewing as particularly well suited for phenomenological studies:

1. Bracketing and purification to minimize presupposition, biases, and prejudices

2. Intentional move from direct non-reflective recall to perception and representation of lived experience
3. Acceptance of verbal representations as pure descriptions of psychological phenomena
4. Consistent focus on rich description of what participant attends to as significant
5. Standardized repeatable method to elicit eidetic responses that can be analyzed later with or without participant
6. Extension of described phenomena from one person's experience to transcendental nature of others
7. Assumption of interconnectedness of language and experience (pp. 273-274).

Practitioners of Clean Language interviewing have also researched its application in coaching and professional development scenarios and developed training protocols based on their findings (Cairns-Lee, 2015; Lawley & Tompkins, 2004; Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2015; Tosey, Lawley, & Meese, 2014). Lawley and Tompkins (2004), in particular, have moved Grove's original work forward to the most recent molecular model shown in Figure 4. Their twelve question stems served as the foundation for the interviews that followed each classroom observation. In order to keep the interviews grounded in the participant's own experience, the teacher's own words and ideas completed each stem (Lawley & Tompkins, 2004). The updated model emphasizes the interconnectedness of questions and the decision-making process that the researcher goes through as separate from or outside of the concept formation in which the participant engages.

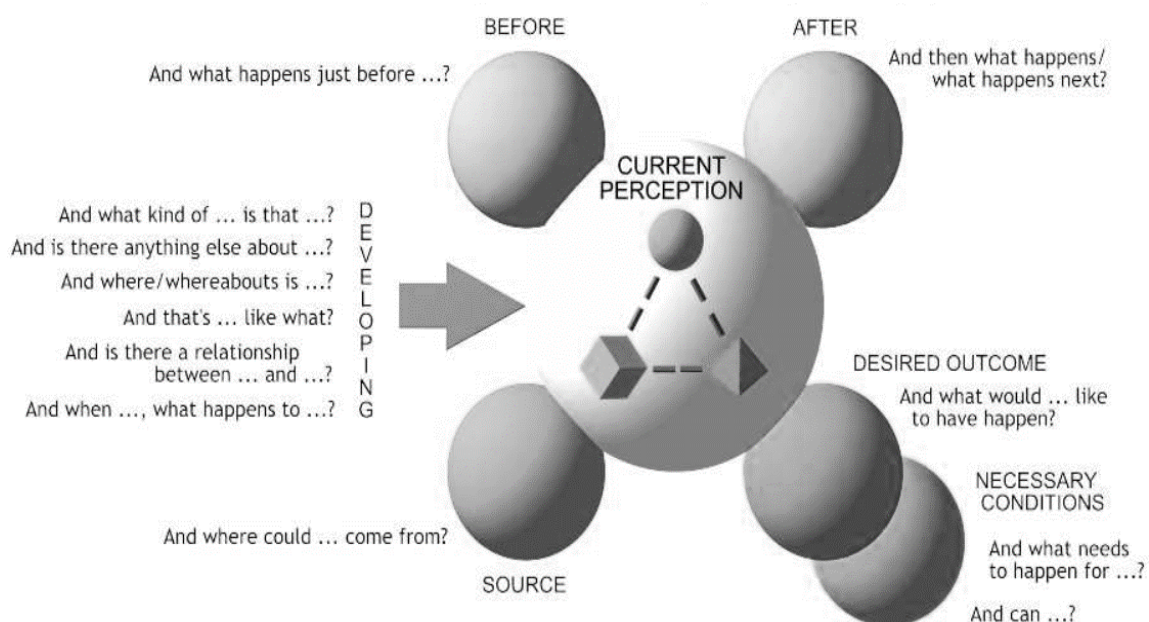


Figure 4. Molecular perception of using Clean Language (Lawley & Tompkins, 2004).

In addition to reviewing articles and books related to Clean Language, I completed an online training session to prepare for implementing this approach with my data collection plan. A certified trainer provided feedback on the practice of living authentically within the participant's own words in order to explore their thoughts and feelings without unintentionally guiding their thinking by paraphrasing. The categorized if-then nature of the Clean Language questioning document shown in Appendix F provided additional structure and guidance to support the responsive decision making involved with this approach. Clean Language protocols first appeared in the field of psychotherapy as a way to reduce the therapist's own influence on the patient's conception of experiences while extending the patient's reflection on the experience through guided construction of revelatory metaphors (Grove & Panzer, 1989).

Qualitative researchers soon recognized the usefulness of Grove's approach as a way to minimize threats to trustworthiness that can arise in qualitative interviews.

Case-Specific Documents

Coaching conversations referenced a variety of documents, including lesson plans, curriculum resources, content standards, emails, and coaching cycle templates. The participants and I identified which documents warranted further analysis through theoretical sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to adhere to the coaching conversations between the teacher and coach as the unit of analysis, preliminary criteria for selecting documents included relevance to the observed conversations and expressed importance to at least one of the participants. Considering the study's focus on connecting coaching conversations to classroom pedagogy, lesson plans arose as the most relevant documents for analysis.

Lesson planning is an essential part of teacher pedagogy. The Georgia Department of Education (2014) includes instructional planning as one of the ten evaluative tenets of its Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Within educational research, lesson plans are often used quantitatively to gauge the extent to which a teacher addresses specific expectations (Sias, Nadelson, Juth, & Seifert, 2017) or implement the content of professional development (Tuttle et al., 2016). Qualitative researchers have noted that the act of lesson planning can improve a teacher's awareness, perceived ability, value, and commitment related to professional learning and mediate their thinking about how to connect new skills and strategies to the needs of their students (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2018; Kim & Bolger, 2017).

I gathered lesson plans related to the coaching conversations in whatever format made the sharing process easiest for the teachers. For the middle school site, the teachers typically guided me to the online module for EngageNY (EL, 2013). The high school teachers tended to provide printed copies of their student materials and talked through their planning process. Analyzing the lesson plans alongside the observations and interviews provided me with insight into instances where integration was purposeful and explicit as well as situations in which the teachers integrated aspects of new professional learning without explicitly planning to do so.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2009), data collection and analysis are simultaneous processes in qualitative research. Researchers engage in both tasks as soon as they ask the first interview question, begin the first observation, or read the first document. Once engaged, the researcher is constantly seeking to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Patton, 2002). Each step of data analysis informs future data collection situations in an inductive feedback loop aimed at organizing and refining earlier ideas. Table 5 displays those interconnected process from the initiation of data collection to the point when formal data collection ended and data analysis continued.

Table 5

Data Collection and Analysis Timeline

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
Informal visits	■								
Writing memos	→								
Interviews		■							
Observations			■						
Transcription			■						
Coding data			→						
Analyzing documents				→					
Synthesizing data				→					

Note. Bars indicate window within data collection. Arrows indicate that the process continued after formal data collection ended.

Bridling to Establish a Phenomenological Foundation

In addition to the general tenets of qualitative data analysis such as coding and managing the data, this study drew specifically from methods related to its case study design and phenomenological approach. Phenomenological researchers begin analyzing relevant data prior to any formal interaction with their participants. Through the process of epoche, they undertake a reflective process of examining their own experiences with the phenomenon to uncover personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas emphasized that:

Phenomenological epoche does not eliminate everything, deny the reality of everything, does not doubt everything- only the natural attitude, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality. What is doubted[is] the

knowing of things in advance, from an external base rather than internal reflection and meaning (1994, p. 85).

Bracketing these elements involves acknowledging the researcher's previous experiences and knowledge related the phenomenon and attempt to set them aside as much as possible. This allows researchers to engage authentically with the participants and to see the data from the participants' perspective rather than make assumptions and judgments based on their own background.

Due to my long-term and on-going experience with coaching conversations and pedagogy integration as well as familiarity with the participants and sites, I was not certain that truly bracketing my background knowledge, preconceptions, and personal responses was feasible or even desirable. That concern led me to explore variations of the epoche process among phenomenological research methodologies. In developing a post-structural approach to phenomenology, Vagle (2014) incorporated the concept of bridling that Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) proposed as an alternative to bracketing. The bridling process begins just like traditional bracketing. The researcher spends time immersing himself in the central phenomenon of the study to acknowledge assumptions, uncover biases, and anticipate preconceptions that may color his collection and analysis of the data. Husserl (2012) conceived of this body of knowledge as one's thesis related to the phenomenon and suggested that during phenomenological research "the thesis undergoes a modification—whilst remaining in itself what it is, we set it aside as if it were 'out of action', we 'disconnect it', 'bracket it'...but make 'no use' of it" (p. 57). In other words, bracketing supposes to take all that a researcher thinks, feels, and knows about a phenomenon and set it aside for the majority of the study.

Dahlberg and Dahlberg saw that goal as both unattainable and less than desirable.

Instead, they called on phenomenologists to:

find a way to slacken the firm threads of intentionality that tie us to the world. We do not want to cut them off: we cannot cut them off as long as we live, but we must slacken in order to give us that elbow room that is needed if we want to make clear what is going on in the encounter between ourselves and the world (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 272).

They termed this process *bridling*, likening it to the gentle and constant process that riders use to interact with a horse. Riders do not approach each horse and riding session as if they have never ridden before. Neither do they take everything they have experienced before for granted when dealing with an unfamiliar horse or terrain. As opposed to bracketing, bridling treats the researcher's acquired body of consciousness around the phenomenon as a touchstone that should be examined throughout the study, rather than baggage that should be kept out of reach.

Drawing on Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2004) work, Vagle (2014) suggested that phenomenologists craft a bridling statement at the outset of a study and maintain a bridling journal to capture ways and times in which the data within the study comingles with their personal. My initial bridling statement came about while synthesizing Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Vagle's work and reading exemplary dissertations based on their methodology (e.g., Abbott, 2016; Buck, 1998; Fine, 2015). I began a handwritten journal in which I captured my knowledge, thoughts, and feelings around coaching conversations and attempts to integrate new professional learning into existing practices. Many elements from that initial bridling statement became part of this chapter's section on the role of the researcher and researcher bias.

I also heeded Vagle's advice to consult and add to my bridling throughout the study in two ways. First, I captured notes about my own thoughts and reactions whenever I was collecting or analyzing data. Second, I took a purposeful pause between each completed stage of the study to spend time journaling about my interactions with and reactions to the overall process and phenomenon before proceeding to the next stage. Intentionally attending to those bridling routines allowed me to approach data collection and analysis through the lens of a conscientious researcher but not disregard my position as an invested practitioner.

First Cycle Coding to Explore Data

In his extensive profile on coding methods, Saldaña (2013) noted that qualitative researchers hold differing theories on whether analysis should begin with a preselected coding method tied to the research focus, develop one or more methods responsively throughout the initial stages, or avoid mechanistic coding methods altogether. As a new researcher, I could not grasp trying to interpret the participants' experiences without some guiding strategy. On the other hand, my extensive background with the topic made me hesitant to establish an a priori coding method based on my own biases that might unduly influence my analysis. With that in mind, I chose to pursue pragmatic eclecticism which Saldaña defined as well-suited for researchers who "believe in the necessity and payoff of coding for selected qualitative studies, yet wish to keep themselves open during initial data collection and review before determining which coding method(s) -if any - will be most appropriate and most likely to yield a substantive analysis" (2013, p. 47). I ultimately found several of Saldaña's first cycle methods to be particularly well-suited to preserving salient data, understanding the participants' experiences, and exploring the

interconnectedness between the components of the study. Those methods included attribute coding, initial coding, in vivo coding, and an eclectic coding strategy that intentionally combined descriptive and process coding.

Attribute coding of data. Attribute coding was the most concrete level of coding in which I labeled each data source with relevant demographic information and a preview of explicitly evident content. Throughout the data collection process, I applied attribute coding to each participant interaction in order to situate the interviews and instructional observations relative to the dyad's coaching conversations. Attribute coding took two forms: handwritten and electronic. First, I coded the field notes for each participant interaction with codes for the participants involved, the type of data captured, and the coaching conversation to which it pertained. I distilled those codes into four permutations of the preceding factors. For example, the attribute codes for Mahogany and Rose included:

Mahogany Rose Conversation 11-16 for the coaching conversation that began each data collection cycle

Mahogany Interview re 11-16 and *Rose Interview re 11-16* for the post-conversation semi-structured interviews with the teacher and coach

Mahogany Instruction re 11-16 for the instructional segment that the teacher planned integrating elements of the coaching conversation

Mahogany CLI re 11-16 for the post-instruction Clean Language interview with the teacher

The order and relation of these codes related to their situation within the process shown earlier in Figure 3.

In addition to the handwritten codes on my field notes, I maintained a running record of those codes as an NVivo 12 Plus memo. Although iterative analysis of the data revealed that the contents of these interaction were interconnected more organically than

linearly, the attribute coding memo helped me track my progress throughout the data collection and analysis process and served as an index for me to refer to when employing other coding methods. Figure 5 displays a snapshot of the NVivo memo illustrating how files were progressively tracked throughout the study. The dates show when each interaction occurred and I used the letters beside each date to track my progress with uploading the audio-video recording or field notes to NVivo, transcribing the file, and conducting first cycle coding of that data. With some exceptions, I uploaded each recording or scanned document within four hours of its creation and transcribed its contents within three days. The absence of data for Susanna's Clean Language interview indicated that we were not able to connect for that component before her next coaching conversation cycle began.

	Conversation 1	Coach Interview	Teacher Interview	Instruction	CLI Reflection
Susanna KP	10-25-18 Ntc	10-25-18 Ntc	10-29-18 Ntc	10-31-18 Ntc	--
Mahogany Rose	11-16-18 Ntc	11-16-18 Ntc	11-20-18 Ntc	11-30-18 Ntc	12-3-18 Ntc
Hannah KP	11-30-18 Ntc	11-30-18 Ntc	12-7-18 Ntc	1-14-19 Ntc	1-15-19 Ntc
Lorelei Rose	12-12-18 Ntc	12-13-18 Ntc	12-14-18 Ntc	1-11-19 Ntc	1-15-19 Ntc

	Conversation 2	Coach Interview	Teacher Interview	Instruction	CLI Reflection
Susanna KP	11-26-18 Ntc	11-30-18 Ntc	12-5-18 Ntc	1-15-19 Ntc	1-15-19 Ntc
Mahogany Rose	1-14-19 Ntc	1-14-19 Ntc	1-15-19 Ntc	2-13-19 Ntc	2-18-19 Ntc
Hannah KP	2-15-19 Ntc	3-4-19 Ntc	3-4-19 Ntc	3-6-19 Ntc	3-8-19 Ntc
Lorelei Rose	3-12-19 Ntc	3-18-19 Ntc	3-18-19 Ntc	4-9/10-19 Ntc	4-10-19 Ntc

Figure 5. NVivo memo tracking data collection and analysis. N=uploaded to NVivo, t=transcribed, c=coded.

Using NVivo also allowed me to assign file and case classifications to each uploaded file with attribute codes that supported subsequent analysis. I classified each

file by its source using NVivo's item types and possible values to capture the following attribute codes.

Participant: Coach, Teacher, Both

Component: Conversation, Interview, Instruction, CLI

Coaching cycle: Beginning, Early, Middle, Late

Format: Field notes, Transcript, Video, Audio, Email, Document

Once a new file was coded using its source attributes, I assigned it to one of four cases based on the dyad involved. I further classified each dyad by the following attribute codes related to potentially influential factors within their partnership:

Previous relationship: First year, Team member, Coach-teacher

Teaching focus: Middle ELA, HS Science

Teacher experience: 2-3 years, 4-5 years, 6-7 years

The specific attributes I coded evolved through the study as aspects of the participants and their interactions arose as more or less important to the overall analysis. However, this early form of coding was foundational to providing context for deeper data analysis using other coding methods.

Initial and in vivo coding within data. Saldaña (2013) included initial and in vivo coding as elemental methods “of attuning yourself to participant language, perspectives, and worldviews” (p. 64). Initial codes capture the researcher's first impressions of the data, and in vivo codes as keep the data grounded in the participant's own language. As first cycle methods, I engaged in these opposing but complementary coding processes in two distinct stages. First, the Cornell notetaking format that I used during observations and semi-structured interviews includes a dedicated space for recording the researcher's

thoughts and questions that arise during participant interactions. These analytical memos serve as initial coding that relates to but is separate from the data being generated by the participants. The Clean Language questioning guide I used during the post-instruction interviews requires using only the participant's own words in order to stay within the participant's own lived experience. Therefore, any notes that I took while making the if-then connections that guided my questioning constituted in vivo coding. The Clean Language protocol also centers around the discovery or construction of a central metaphor that encapsulates and guides the participant's reflection on their experience. The metaphors became vital in vivo codes for exploring on each participant's individual experience and comparing experiences across the dyads. As elaborated more fully in Chapter 4, the metaphors ranged from "finding a recipe" to "going into battle".

The second stage of initial and in vivo coding within this study occurred during the process of transcribing the audio recordings of the observations and interviews. After uploading each file into NVivo, I used the software's online service to produce an initial transcript. Although that assistance was helpful as a time-saving measure, a virtual program cannot accurately capture components of a conversation such as changes in speaker or overlapping discussions. I spent substantial time updating each initial transcript to reflect those components and correct simple misheard words and phrases. That process also gave me the opportunity to engage in additional initial and in vivo coding. I inserted initial codes at various points in the transcript where they arose, being sure to format them as a different color and in all caps to note as separate from the formal data. Whenever the participants' own words stood out as particularly salient within or across transcripts, I highlighted it within the software as an in vivo code. Each of the

initial and in vivo codes compiled during this first cycle analysis of the data became nodes in NVivo that I used to create a running electronic codebook.

Descriptive and process coding across data. After coding my own first impressions and the participants' verbatim interactions, I transitioned into coding the topics and actions that arose within the data. Descriptive coding involves labeling segments of the data with a noun that describes the topic at hand, and process coding indicates actions within the data using an -ing label (Saldaña, 2013). I pursued both coding methods simultaneously using a strategy that Saldaña called eclectic coding. Eclectically coding each data source through both lenses allowed me to authentically address this study's primary research question: What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy? The question itself addresses the interconnectedness between knowledge and practices as topics and attempts to integrate as actions. Furthermore, coaching conversations and pedagogy are both concepts that necessarily blend content and action.

In some cases, the codes from this stage of first cycle coding aligned with or elaborated on existing initial and in vivo coding. The more line-by-line approach to this stage also added new codes that I had not captured at the earlier holistic stages. Due to the iterative nature of qualitative data analysis in general and the cyclical design of data collection within this study, some of the new descriptive and process codes eliminated previous codes by disconfirming my first impressions of the participants or misinterpretations of their interactions. Altogether, the combined first cycle methods resulted in the 122 subcodes featured in Appendix H which fit into six broad categories:

1. Coach roles and traits
2. Teacher roles and traits
3. Focus of conversations
4. Alignment or misalignment of perspectives
5. Implementing or foregoing suggestions
6. Source of success or failure

That list of codes and preliminary categories were more descriptive than interpretive at that point. Those first impressions, the participants' own words, and the topics and actions that arose during data collection guided deeper analysis. I pursued that deeper analysis using a more focused version of pragmatic eclecticism as I moved into Saldaña's (2013) second cycle coding methods.

Second Cycle Coding to Understand Data

The inductive categories suggested through the early stages of analysis served multiple purposes within the continuing joint data collection and analysis. Merriam (2009) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggested various ways that the results from data analysis cycle back into data collection. Merriam recommended that researchers continuously note aspects to ask participants about directly or attend to during observations. The codes and categories I uncovered informed the open-ended questions and guiding topics for the semi-structured interview that follow each observation. While gathering field notes during observations, I also attended to the emerging categories and themes with an eye toward determining in what ways they bore out across multiple conversations. Bogdan and Biklen advised researchers to try out ideas and themes on their participants as a way of ensuring common understanding and checking for

trustworthiness. As the study progressed, discussing my inferences and findings with the teacher and coach separately also helped me ensure that there was a plausible link between earlier inductive reflections and later deductive avenues.

Saldaña (2013) differentiated second cycle coding methods as advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data to develop a coherent synthesis. Pattern coding related most to the purpose of this multi-case study by developing major themes related to patterns of human relationships. Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Coleman (2000) explained constant comparative method using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope moving from disorganized raw data bits through iterative levels of refinement into emerging clusters toward an array of categories that are unique but form a constellation that makes sense as a whole. Each observation, interview, and document acted as the raw data that used when inductively developing categories or themes that were at once exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Merriam, 2009).

The categories and themes became nodes and classifications within the NVivo12 Plus project that I used to delve progressively deeper into the data. NVivo allowed me to query content and codes across the multiple observations, interviews, and documents to identify patterns and outlier efficiently. I also took advantage of the graphic features such as framework matrices and concept maps to discover new links and layers among the data. As the kaleidoscope of data analysis moved toward its most cohesive assemblage, I considered the categories and themes through the study's constructivist and transformative framework to arrive at the thematic analysis present in Chapter 4.

Role of the Researcher

In their profile on the benefits and drawbacks of insider and outsider status,

Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) questioned the dichotomy between the two:

Perhaps, as researchers we can only ever occupy the space between. We may be closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher (which includes having read much literature on the research topic), we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions (p. 61).

With regard to insider status, I worked as a teacher for 12 years and engaged in coaching conversations with a variety of instructional coaches. I had spent the past 4 years serving as an instructional coach engaging in similar conversations from the other perspective. My experiences in both roles contributed to my desire to understand the dynamics of the conversations as lived experiences. I also currently worked at a school in the same district as the participants and have served as an elementary literacy coach in multiple schools. My work with district-wide initiatives put me in contact with teachers and coaches across all schools and grade levels.

In their profile on bridling within phenomenology, Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) emphasized that, “the other keeps her/his ‘otherness’...If we want to understand what the other’s smile means, not only to us but also for him, an understanding of the other’s otherness is necessary.” As a novice researcher I had intentionally placed a certain amount of distance between myself and the participants by not situating the study at any of the elementary schools. My relationships with the elementary teachers and my deep background in elementary literacy posed too many complications to studying teachers in those environments. The high school science teachers and their coach operated far

outside my realm of pedagogical comfort, and even the middle school language arts teachers were working within a scripted curriculum that I had never used.

By studying a phenomenon that is part of my own lived experience and selecting participants with whom I am familiar but do not interact with on a consistent basis, my goal was to position myself within the space between. The dynamic would have been much different and closer to a complete insider if I studied my own coaching conversations either with a teacher I support or with the content coordinators who coach me.

Researcher Bias

As discussed earlier, Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) and later Vagle (2014) suggested that one of the earliest steps to approaching a phenomenological study is for the researcher to begin the process of bridling current knowledge, thoughts, and feelings relative to the phenomenon. All qualitative research, though, includes some attempt to acknowledge and reduce the undue influence of the researcher's positions and opinions about the topic of the study. Vagle was simply the most current update to the idea that traces back through Husserl's (2012) bracketing and Descartes (2015) universal doubt. Unlike previous attempts to set aside that body of knowledge and consciousness, though, bridling involves researchers becoming aware of all that they bring into the study, then consciously and constantly monitoring their own thinking and responses to account for and explore their motivations and influence on the phenomenon being studied.

The following section synthesizes the process I undertook to craft a bridling statement related to this study. My bridling process began the moment I became aware of Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2004) concept while reading other dissertations that pursued

phenomenological multi-case studies and included descriptions of their epoche process. I had been struggling with Moustakas (1994) and Husserl's (2012) requirements for bracketing within epoche and wanted to understand how I might accomplish that level of transcendence as a new researcher studying a phenomenon I have experienced on so many levels. As soon as I discovered the concept of bridling, I began keeping a handwritten journal in which I recorded my knowledge, thoughts, and feelings around coaching conversations and pedagogy integrations after each new reading of a study or theoretical work that added to my understanding. The remainder of this section reflects a synthesis of my ruminations during that process.

One of the most valuable exercises of the initial bridling process involved tracing the genesis of my current beliefs about what coaching conversations can or should involve or accomplish and what pedagogy integration can or should look or feel like. Table 6 displays those two phenomena along a timeline of my teaching experiences.

Table 6

Genesis of Researcher Understanding and Beliefs Throughout Career

Experience	Coaching Conversations	Pedagogy Integration
Novice teacher at PreK-2 fine arts school	Personal conversations with mentor; Monitoring by scripted program trainers	Expectation of fidelity; personal need to overachieve
Second-stage teacher at K-5 magnet academy	Literacy coach discussions and reflections; Teacher Support Specialist endorsement	Transfer within existing pedagogy; Personalize within requirements
Gifted specialist at K-3 charter school	Hard conversations with principal (also former coach); Unofficial coaching through gifted collaborations; Feedback on making teachers feel stupid	Curriculum framework more philosophical than practical; Talk the talk to justify choices
District literacy coach at affluent K-2 school	Resource provision; Modeling but little actual change	Teachers resistant or unconfident
District literacy coach at K-2 Title I school	Personal conversations (venting, reassuring); Advocating to “find your way within their way”	Teachers either struggled consistently or integrated with high fidelity and personalization
District literacy coach at K-2 IB PYP school	One teacher at a time; Restricted access to teams; Felt personal but actually systemic	Allowed to completely reject initiatives/resources; Some enjoyed modeling or co-teaching but little continued transfer
In-house curriculum specialist at same K-2 IB PYP school	Source of ideas rather than resources; Meetings more conversational than formal; Coaching up for administrators	Reached out to understand and incorporate into practice; Focused on how initiatives live within IB; More focused on how than what

Tracing my understandings and beliefs revealed the importance of context to both teaching and coaching. For example, I sought to overachieve when administrators and trainers expected fidelity and became more relaxed and informal when coaching in a more relationship-oriented environment. I also experienced firsthand that teachers tended

to accept input and reach out for help more often and more authentically from in-house coaches than they did with district coaches or program consultants. My experience with teaching and coaching both included moments of conflict or failure that led me to ultimately become better within that and future roles.

In addition to needing to bridle my personal experiences in order to live within those of the participants, I predicted biases related to my academic background, coaching philosophy, and personal attributes. First, I had engaged and continue to engage in coaching conversations as both the coacher and the coached. As a coach, I had preconceptions about which strategies are more and less appropriate or effective. The majority of my training had involved the work of theorists and practitioners such as Knight (2009) who espouse responsive rather than directive coaching. However, this multi-case study focused on understanding the participants' experience, not on efficacy. I also ran the risk of assigning my own motivations to things I observe or identifying with either participant more so than the other at different points. I had experienced firsthand the frustration of unrealistic expectations, futility of unheeded advice, thrill of independent discovery, and pride in beneficial collaboration. Similar words and actions, though, may have come from completely different values and experiences on the part of the participants. Finally, I tended to value expertise more than emotion within professional interactions. That viewpoint could have lead me toward appreciative or dismissive reactions to the tone and content of the conversations.

One piece of constructive feedback from my failed first attempt to apply for a coaching position kept me grounded in my current work and served the same purpose within my role throughout this study. A teacher remarked that, unlike me, the other

applicant showed more patience and never made her feel stupid. I was caught off guard because I did not always register when I came across as condescending or dismissive. Some of my colleagues had an expert level adeptness at reading situations and providing each person with exactly the tone and input they need in that moment. Envy of that trait in others was partially responsible for my interest in researching coaching conversations. Part of exploring how the teachers approach the process of integrating content of the coaching conversations into their pedagogy naturally involved analyzing what made some content more likely to transfer than others. I aimed to dedicate myself to living within the teachers' experiences as fully as possible. I sought to draw on my bridled knowledge, thoughts, and feelings only to reflect more deeply on the phenomenon rather than to move too hastily toward conclusions that seemed obvious to me but may not have captured the contextualized nature of the phenomena.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined a series of techniques that qualitative researchers can use to meet the criteria necessary for establishing the trustworthiness of their findings. The first set of techniques involved ensuring the credibility or underlying truth of the findings. Responsively scheduling the observations and interviews around the participants' availability and perception of value allowed me to live within their experience. It also resulted in the staggered and diverse time dynamic shown in Figure 5. Within the scope of each case, I engaged in persistent observation by using particularly salient emerging themes to focus my observations and their interviews. Clean Language interview questions and protocols provided an additional measure of credibility by systematically and consistently situating the teachers' own conceptualization of their

experience at the center of all post-instruction interviews (Owen, 1996). Those observations and interviews along with the lesson plans and related documents also served as triangulation across data sources to ensure a comprehensive and well-developed synthesis.

Finally, the participants and I collaboratively ensured trustworthiness through member checking, which Lincoln and Guba suggested as particularly beneficial to establishing credibility. I shared the transcript of each so that the participants could reflect and provide feedback on the content and intention of their conversations. I initially planned to share the transcript of each observed coaching conversation prior to its accompanying post-conversation interview, but I noticed during the first round of interviews that the participants relied heavily on that transcript when recalling their conversation. I worried that my transcript would influence their recall and integration process in ways that would normally occur outside of the study, so I decided to withhold the transcripts until later in the process.

The participants and I also discussed emerging categories and themes during each participants' reflective interviews. The teacher and coach either expounded upon those inferential findings or critiqued them as needed. For example, Chapter 4 details an episode of misalignment between the teacher and coach in relation to their work together. The coach decided she was comfortable with the depiction but also asked that I include the fact that she was in her first year coaching that teacher and how that dynamic influenced her response. Negotiating the transcripts in that way allowed me to ensure that my interpretation of the data grew out of the participants' lived experiences.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted confirmability and transferability as additional criteria for trustworthiness. My bridling journal and audit trail both assisted confirmability. Throughout the multi-case study, I maintained a reflexive bridling journal to document my assumptions, biases, and involvement that may influence content of the interviews and analysis of the data. Rather than serving as an artifact for data analysis, I used the journal to monitor to what extent descriptions and interpretations arose from the data and the participants versus my own background and learning process. Beginning with the epoche process captured in that journal, I maintained a database of the primary data sources, progressive versions of coding toward categories and themes, and materials consulted throughout the study. All of the preceding techniques contributed to my ability to develop a thick description and maximize the study's potential for transferability. The final report represented not only a timeline of the participants' interactions and reflections but also a contextualized synthesis of how these particular teachers and coaches experienced professional and personal dynamics within the types of conversations that take place in schools every day.

Summary

This chapter provided a justification for how the study addresses an authentic problem, an outline for how the research process unfolded, and an understanding of how the researcher was situated within both contexts. The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to develop a rich description of how teachers go about translating that investment into actual changes in their practices. I combined the narrow, context-specific focus of case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) with the interactive, lived experience lens of phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). While following traditional

qualitative data collection methodologies outlined by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) I employed measures such as reflexive journaling and Clean Language interviewing (Lawley & Tompkins, 2004) to reduce and account for my bias as the researcher and maintain the teachers and their coach as the ultimate source of understanding. The combination of study's purpose, design, and methodology produced the findings and thick description of the integration process laid out in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The data collection and data analysis processes outlined in the previous chapter revealed some consistent findings across all the participants' experiences as well as some unique facets within each coaching dyad. The first section of this chapter reviews the central research questions and design of the study. The second section sets the stage for the study's findings by using a self-identified metaphor to understand each teacher's experience. The final section presents findings that arose within and across the coaching dyads. The findings are supported by either direct quotes from the participants or descriptions of what I observed during data collection.

Review of Research Questions and Study Design

The purpose of this phenomenological multi-case study was to address the need to provide additional support to second-stage teachers integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy. My focus on coaching conversations as one source of professional learning led to the primary research question:

What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

Three supporting research questions evolved throughout the study as particularly important to discovering possible answers:

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers and instructional coaches engaged in coaching conversations?
2. How do teachers begin the process of integrating the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy?
3. How do teachers define success or failure in relation to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy?

Data collection focused on the four coaching dyads shown in Figure 6 who engaged in one-on-one, teacher-centered conversations as part of their existing coaching collaboration. This case study delineated each dyad's attempt to modify the teacher's pedagogy through coaching conversations as a well-bounded case. The coaching conversations served as the unit of analysis within each case. I collected and analyzed all other data only as they related to the observed conversations.

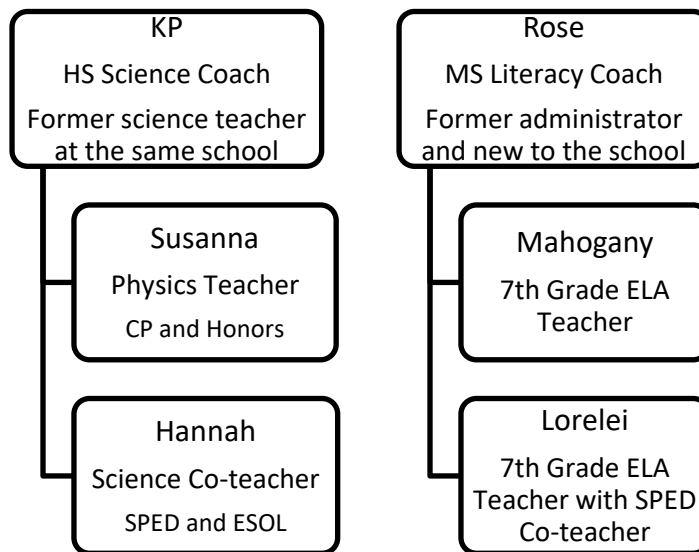


Figure 6. Review of coaching dyads.

Comparing data within and across cases led to a nuanced understanding of the inner workings and transformative potential of the coaching conversations in relation to

the teachers' pedagogy. The following sections illustrate the metaphorical role of each dyad's conversations, then provide detailed findings that led to themes related to the role of the conversations in integrating new knowledge and practice into the teacher's pedagogy.

Teacher Metaphors for the Role of Coaching Conversations

Each cycle of data collection culminated in a Clean Language interview during which the teachers reflected on how their personal pedagogy, coaching conversations, and subsequent instruction. The teachers and I pursued a metaphor that could serve as the foundation for understanding their experience of conversation and integration. Rather than asking them directly to provide a metaphor, I listened for common phrases that suggested metaphorical thinking and compared the transcripts and field notes within each case to arrive at potential metaphors. Figure 7 situates the resulting metaphors along a continuum of transformation potential. The following profiles illustrate the teachers' overall conception of their coaching conversations and explain their placement along that continuum.

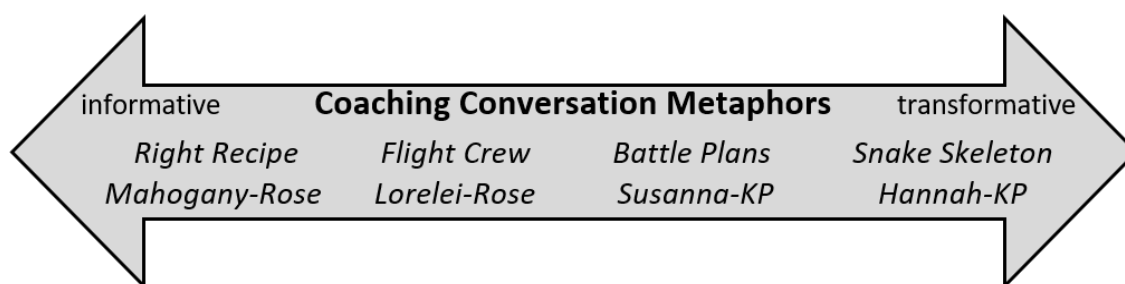


Figure 7. Teacher-generated metaphors for coaching conversations.

Mahogany's Recipe

Mahogany mentioned the recipe concept during her first post-conversation interview in relation to her existing pedagogy.

NIK: So, before we get into that specific conversation that I observed, what are your thoughts on your overall either pedagogy or approach to teaching?

MAHOGANY: Building relationships. I'm really good at that. Building the relationships with the kids. As far as the content, I am going having to review because I'm— Like, even with my practicum for ELA, my instructor was on bedrest. She, like, couldn't help [with what] I needed to know. Like, how to teach writing. How do I, you know, [teach] grammar in a classroom. And I didn't get that. So, right now I'm looking at what the kids don't know and you know trying to figure out how to teach it to them. Like with writing, I'm looking for a recipe that I can use every time to teach my kids. We don't really have a recipe where I know my kids can go from my class in eighth grade to a ninth grade classroom and still do the same thing. That's what I'm trying to find for them. So, as far as the pedagogy and all of that I'm still learning. And so, the coaching part of it is so helpful because I can say, "Look. I'm not good at this." And I don't feel--I can--I feel like I can be transparent and I'm okay.

Mahogany's response about her own pedagogy acknowledged her relational strengths and immediately transitioned into reflecting on the pedagogical role she saw coaching conversations serving. The teacher saw coaching conversations as a way to compensate for a lack of support she received in previous experiences and fill in gaps in the current curriculum. Since Mahogany's metaphor arose early in data collection, it became a touchstone throughout the rest of the study.

Although the idea of a recipe originated in the context of an instructional outcome for her students, that concept also served as a useful metaphor for how Mahogany connected coaching conversations to her existing pedagogy. For example, Mahogany's nominal acknowledgment of Rose's input involved taking copious notes. From a recipe standpoint, she converted the content of their conversations into a text-based list of suggestions that she could refer to at a later date. Rather than waiting for Rose to provide

her with a fully realized recipe, Mahogany assembled the coach's input into a list of ingredients that she could choose from in an effort to perfect the recipe herself.

Mahogany's reflections on integration plans reinforced coaching conversation's role as a source of information rather than collaboration.

NIK: My last big question is, what are your thoughts on integrating the ideas from this conversation into your instruction?

MAHOGANY: I'm going to take a day this week and just kind of look at, like, its overviews. She was telling me how to get to each thing, so now I'm going to go through and look at that. "Okay. What's the end product here? What do the kids need to know? What do we need to talk about before we even get in the book? What do we need to do?" But I'm ready, like, for her to show me some of the good writing practices she talked about to teach the kids so that I can get them from fourth grade writing, which is about what I'm getting now, to a ninth-grader's writing, because at the end of the day that's what I want them to be doing.

Mahogany's reflection also revealed her consistent focus on observable, objective outcomes from the coaching conversations. Examples included her students writing longer paragraphs throughout the study and her own opportunity to share out with the PLC practices from the coaching conversations that she had successfully implemented. One celebration, in particular, revealed the supporting role that Rose and their conversations played within Mahogany's own pedagogy.

NIK: You said one of your goals was to find the recipe for teaching writing where your kids can transfer that over into ninth grade. Where you are on that journey?

MAHOGANY: I would not say I've reached my goal, but I will say that the kids are not as opposed to writing as they were. That means some great paragraphs from them. They all still need work on making writing conclusions and transitions. But it's far above what it was before. Now I see indentions. Now I see punctuation, capitalization. I see the things that I did not see in the beginning. Some have improved by leaps and bounds, but we still have some work to do. But I can see the growth in myself and I can also see the growth of my kids. I mean, they had the highest growth in the school for Literacy! I don't think it was as much, you know, the academic stuff. I think it was the relationship that I had with the kids.

Mahogany's celebration focused exclusively on new skills her students had acquired as opposed to new practices she had integrated. She also subtly placed "the academic stuff" that Rose shared in their coaching conversations as secondary to the power of her existing relationship-driven pedagogy. Her final Clean Language interview included a similar sentiment.

NIK: Since this is our last one, I want to return to a metaphor that you had about finding a recipe. At the time, it was specifically for writing, but it seems like that recipe metaphor relates to your coaching conversations as well. Could you talk around that for a minute?

MAHOGANY: I will say when I first started this, I was nervous, just like any other year at that time. I mean, it's something Rose helped with almost immediately. If I needed help with like teaching a concept, she would say, "Well, have you tried this? I'm more than happy to come in and teach the class so you can see it in action!" And that has really changed my confidence in class. My-- how I teach is still authentic to me, though.

Within the recipe metaphor, the coaching conversations had given Mahogany new ingredients and techniques to try within her own quest for the perfect recipe. The teacher integrated the coach's input to enhance her current "dishes" but set aside anything that contrasted with her personal point of view. The concept of the conversations as sources of new information that the teacher was missing rather than a blending of expertise or modification of existing practices led me to situate this metaphor on the information end of the continuum shown in Figure 7.

Lorelei's Flight Crew

Lorelei's metaphor shared some characteristics with Mahogany's but differed in three important aspects. First, she did not use vocabulary explicitly tied to "flying the plane" until our final Clean Language interview. Second, her explanation of the metaphor in relation to coaching conversations was more focused on herself and the

coach versus student outcomes. Third, the nature of the metaphor indicated that she saw the conversations as serving a somewhat more collaborative than informative role. That final difference led me to situate Lorelei and Rose's coaching conversations closer to the center on Figure 7's continuum of transformative potential.

Lorelei first mentioned a plane metaphor in relation to the lackluster support she had received prior to working with Rose. Like Mahogany, she noted negative previous experiences in explaining benefits of her current coaching conversations.

NIK: I noticed you used the phrase "what a teacher does."

LORELEI: Yeah.

NIK: Talk to me a little more about that.

LORELEI: Well, so, my first couple of years of teaching were real crazy and very messy and there was no structure to anything. They were like, "Hey. Work on this curriculum. This is what you're looking at." And then they threw that out the window and the next year was like, "Hey. Take that thing you were doing and then change it." And so, we were kind of, as it was referred to, building the plane as we flew it. And so, nothing was ever quite clear, and so a lot of what we were doing was teacher-created. "Hey. Find this resource, then teach it to your kids." And to be very honest with you, that was a really, really big struggle for me because there was no structure. That was changed from year to year. Nobody gave us anything that was of any help.

As part of Clean Language interviewing, I noted the plane metaphor and led Lorelei to connect it first to her existing pedagogy and then to the role of coaching conversations in relation to her pedagogy.

NIK: So, one of the things I'm working towards--and I love it when you guys hit on like a true metaphor--is a metaphor for your process of integrating content of the coaching conversations into your personal pedagogy. I notice you used a really clear metaphor for the way that you had to do in the past-- building the plane as we flew it. How would that connect to a metaphor for the way that you are teaching now?

LORELEI: I think, going along the same wavelength of the plane thing here, as a new teacher, I'm still trying to figure out how to fly the plane.

NIK: Gotcha.

LORELEI: But the plane's at least put together, and there's somebody teaching me to fly the plane.

NIK: Gotcha. So, thinking about flying the plane, it already being built feels like that's the curriculum?

LORELEI: Right. EngageNY.

NIK: What is the relationship between--what is Rose's role and your relationship within that? I'm trying to be clear but not lead too much.

LORELEI: Yeah, so, they're there. What is her role on the plane, basically?

NIK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LORELEI: Her role, I guess, is helping me make sure everything's running right. Like, all the parts of the plane are where they're supposed to be and everything's where it needs to be for the plane to take off. So, I guess, in this case, the curriculum would be the person teaching me to fly the plane. But she's the one making sure that everything else is in place so that we can be successful with that.

NIK: Yep. I'm glad I asked that, because I could see that go in two ways. Either her being the one who was teaching, in a co-pilot kind of role, but it seems more like a backup person. Almost like an engineer making sure-- There's a word for that. I don't know what it is.

LORELEI: Like a flight crew member?

NIK: Yes!

LORELEI: She's behind the scenes and really hands-on. I've told you before she offers to teach for modeling, but she's also all the time more of like, "Hey. Let's tweak this to make sure that it works right for you."

Since Lorelei's metaphor for coaching conversations arose at the end of data collection, I used it as a new lens to consider during iterative data analysis cycles.

Lorelei's explanation of her metaphor was more extensive and explicitly tied to the role of coaching conversations than Mahogany's. She also focused more on her own pedagogical growth than on her students when asked to reflect on how the conversations translate into her classroom.

NIK: What components-- Are there shared components between this specific lesson and your conversations with Rose as a coach?

LORELEI: I don't know that I would pinpoint anything specific, I think. Well, I take that back. I think that they helped a lot in kind of giving me and my co-teacher confidence of, "Hey. You can try this in your class. It may not work. You may have to tweak it, but—" And I think that being able to find something like stations and not feel like, "Oh, my God! I can't do that because my kids lose their mind!"

NIK: And where does that feeling come from?

LORELEI: She, in the way that we need to be more forgiving to our students, in our first year of doing this curriculum, she has been very supportive. You've sat in countless conversations where I've been like, "Hey. We didn't do that." Then she's like, "Okay. Well, you're not that far. You're not--" Her go-to is, "You're not that far off." Makes you feel a little better. But yeah, so, she's very supportive and very like, "Hey. That's not so good, but let's try this instead." Or in asking those reflective questions of us.

In addition to focusing on her own pedagogy versus student outcomes, Lorelei's reflection also alluded to Rose providing negative feedback such as, "That's not so good, but let's try this instead." Like a conscientious flight crew member, she noticed when something did not look right and provided immediate intervention with ways to address the issue. Their collaboration around Lorelei's missteps allowed the teacher to understand the coach's input more fully and make small tweaks to her pedagogy.

Interestingly, Lorelei and Mahogany both engaged in coaching conversations with the same coach but recalled her input slightly differently. For instance, Lorelei attributed more collaborative language when recalling Rose's input. Her memory of their conversations included more instances of the collective terms "let's" and "we" than the singular terms "you" and "me." Comparing their conversation transcripts did not reveal any significant difference in the coach's input. However, there were noticeable differences between Mahogany's trend of nominal acknowledgment versus Lorelei's

tendency to engage in likeminded discussion. It is possible that the difference in their own interactions may have influenced their perception of the coaching conversations. Mahogany's recipe metaphor revealed a largely one-directional flow of information from coach to teacher, while Lorelei's flight crew metaphor indicated constant bidirectional communication. The two metaphors also differed in the value they placed on the role of the coaching conversations. A chef's decision of whether or not to include new ingredients in a recipe is relatively risk-free. There are more serious consequences to a pilot deciding to disregard the flight crew's advice about potential problems with the plane.

Susanna's Battle

Susanna's metaphor came from a recurring theme within her coaching conversations themselves rather than the follow-up interviews. Less than five minutes into their first observed conversation, Susanna shared her frustration with her current students.

SUSANNA: Even something as simple as they pack up five minutes early. Like it hits that five minutes before, and they have their book bags packed. And it's just funny, I never really thought about that, but it throws me off because then all the sudden I have kids standing for five minutes. Which *I* didn't let happen last year--

KP: Exactly!

SUSANNA: --and if they did, I gave them such a hard time about it. And then this year, they just up and stand, and it's me against 30, maybe 33. So, I end up not doing very well with that battle.

KP: Well, we can put some things in place. Some strategies we can look at to keep the kids engaged during the entire class. And when you plan, overly plan. Plan more for them to do, they start to stop looking at the clock or watching the time because, "Oh I have to get this done" or "We're doing this" or "She wants me to have this done or I'll get a low grade."

SUSANNA: That would be awesome.

That initial exchange laid the groundwork for viewing the role of Susanna and KP's coaching conversations as creating a battle plan. It also revealed an aspect of that dyad's conversations that was unique within the study. Susanna almost exclusively focused on the problematic nature of adjusting her pedagogy to address the needs of a specific group of students and correct issues that arose from a specific situation.

Susanna's struggles to adjust her instruction to fit the needs of CP students were exacerbated by problems that arose from the students starting the school year with substitutes because Susanna was on maternity leave. Those related issues led to a consistent pattern of Susanna using adversarial phrases to express her frustration. Examples included "picking my battles", "it's always a struggle", "this is their territory", and "I have a group that kind of wants to fight me." Within their conversations, KP mirrored Susanna's verbiage to a certain extent but in a more constructive direction. For instance, KP provided the following input following the previous exchange.

SUSANNA: And I think my management in the past has been, um, being personal with the students. Usually, if I'm personal with enough of the students I can get a group--

KP: On your team.

SUSANNA: --that's on my team! They even shush each other. And I'm not there yet with them at all, so I've got to--

KP: So, now we have to reverse that.

SUSANNA: Right.

KP: And in a CP class, it can be a little challenging--

SUSANNA: Yes. [smiling]

KP: --because you have to do a little more and put more strategies in place for them to now join your team, as you put it. I like the way you said that. Because in

the end we do want to meet them halfway. We don't want you to come in like a drill sergeant--

SUSANNA: Mm-mm. [shaking her head]

KP: --and come in with a disposition where they're just going to shut down even more.

KP used softer terms like “challenging,” pointed out the dangers of taking too adversarial a stance, and inserted positive aspects such as getting students “on your team.” Within the battle metaphor, the coach offered diplomacy in response to the teacher’s enmity.

This example also displayed examples of two subtle coaching moves that KP employed but Susanna never explicitly mentioned. As discussed in relation to Rose’s input, KP employed the collaborative term “we” a great deal throughout their coaching conversations. She also consistently engaged in what I coded as *reattributing input* by inserting ideas into the conversations herself, then subsequently referring to them as the teacher’s own idea. In addition to the “on your team” example above, KP repeated that pattern in the following examples from this and other conversations.

1. So, I don't want you to feel like you're failing because you've made significant strides in this class in terms of their motivation. They're feeding off your energy now, right? Which is good. And they actually have a belief that, “Okay, I can do this. She's given us all these opportunities.”

[later in the same conversation] I think that would help out in this class, too. Because, like you said, there they are now feeding off your energy and you want to continue to build up their confidence.

2. So, if you have to, slow the content just a little bit in CP so that you can increase that engagement by incorporating hands on activities.

[in a subsequent conversation] They're a little bit more tricky. And I think that's what the challenge is. But if you know that ahead, you're able to restructure your curriculum for them and build in more activities where you can get up, be engaged, maybe more hands-on activities like you said last time.

Susanna ended up using identical or similar terminology from those examples within her conversations, instruction, or reflective interviews. The coach's subtle, relational approach led the teacher to internalize the input without outwardly acknowledging it.

Susanna did push back against some of KP's input in a pattern that extended the battle metaphor to the coaching conversations. Their conversations followed a predictable pattern of Susanna bringing up a classroom issue, KP offering a strategy to combat it, Susanna either accepting the strategy or rebutting it with why it may not work, then KP offering additional information. That volley generally led to collaborative next steps for Susanna, but not always. Even within the coaching conversations, the teacher thoughtfully picked her battles.

With regard to the battles Susanna did decide to pursue during her coaching conversations, engaging in more constructive pushback gave her and the coach more insight into one another's pedagogical perspectives. That new understanding allowed KP to fine-tune her input and prepared Susanna to integrate some responsive elements into her instruction that contrasted with her existing pedagogy. That dual dynamic led me to situate their coaching conversations in Figure 7 as collaboration with early indicators of transformative potential. Arising from uniquely combative circumstances, conflicts within the classroom required the teacher to seek the counsel of a trusted adviser. Their deliberations over tactics resulted in a narrowed-down battle strategy that she embraced fully and could enact with confidence.

Hannah's Snake Skeleton

Hannah's metaphor for coaching conversations shared certain attributes with each of the other three teacher metaphors. Like Lorelei's plane metaphor, Hannah did not

explicitly name her metaphor of a snake skeleton until our final Clean Language interview. However, much like Susanna's consistent battle metaphor, there were elements related to structure and flexibility through Hannah's data. Finally, she and Mahogany both discussed their metaphors in relation to classroom instruction before applying it to their coaching conversations.

Hannah's metaphor of a snake skeleton arose from our discussion of her attempting to merge the open-ended, inquiry nature of 3D instruction with her existing structured pedagogy centered on direct instruction.

NIK: That's really interesting that you kind of have two metaphors going on now. You've got the sequence which is very predictable. You like them to know what's gonna come next. But then, figuring out the missing pieces of the puzzle is a little messier. Where do you feel like those two things live in your pedagogy?

HANNAH: I guess that's, like, the struggle, yeah? Trying to make a sequence out of chaos.

NIK: That's beautiful! Talk some more about that. How do you see those two things working with each other?

HANNAH: Just having a skeleton structure, like--you know you're getting a warm up, you know I'm gonna stand up here and talk for a few minutes, you're going to have your work time, and then we're gonna come back and review. And then that could be anything, you know? The review could be a game. Your work might be you walking around the room. Or I might bring something crazy in the classroom. So, just knowing that--wanting them to know and anticipate there is gonna be that skeleton of the day of our class but not knowing what could that be as far as the actual activity.

Hannah's mention of the skeleton was a perfect opportunity to maximize the Clean Language protocol of using the teacher's own words to delve more deeply into a central metaphor. Much like her conversations with KP, taking Hannah through that process involved negotiating to push her out of her comfort zone.

NIK: What type of skeleton would that be?

HANNAH: Like, just the basics, you know. Walk in, warm up, review, either presenting the new material or practicing the previous material, giving them work time, and some sort of closure. Just the basics, I would say.

NIK: Can I push you even more metaphorically?

HANNAH: Okay.

NIK: Thinking physical skeleton. What animal's skeleton would your--that anticipating structure resemble?

HANNAH: [looking quizzical] Okay?

NIK: I know. It's always fun to take science people to a metaphor place.

HANNAH: I'm trying to think. I feel like--I just get snake, I don't know why.

NIK: Yeah?!

HANNAH: Just how the mouth is big, able to grab any of the information and funnel it down to the very like tapered end and the basics of what they need to get. Along the way you could have any type of activity, but by the end of the snake you should be able to have this topic understood.

NIK: What needs to happen for this to work as a predictable structure?

HANNAH: Preparation. I spent my summer thinking of all the possible ways everything could go. It's spending a lot of time looking at that and just making a plan and then, you know, kind of leaving the outlets of what they don't understand open until we get there. So, you know, one day might be like, "Okay. That didn't work! That's when you go back and do that over. So, we'll put that as our opener." And, you know, just leaving some areas open for--based off your kids. Because you never know--they could get everything and you just keep running the lessons. So, yeah-- Preparation, time, research.

Much like Lorelei, Hannah focused on changing her own pedagogy rather than student outcomes or problematic contexts. She also explicitly explained the role of coaching conversations in relation to the same metaphor.

NIK: How do you see coaching conversations living within this?

HANNAH: I think it coexists and works well, as far as a coach and I working together to anticipate the outcomes. They help me focus, like I said the mouth can be so open and you have all these different things you could go with. It can

be too much, so funneling it down to what exactly I need to do next. And you can only do that if you're in it with me and from the beginning.

NIK: You can't step in mid-snake?

HANNAH: [both laughing] Nope. That'll get you bit!

Hannah's closing remarks revealed that she not only valued coaching conversations but also appreciated the long-term collaboration with her in-house coach.

Hannah's appreciation of the process did not mean that she immediately embraced all of KP's input. She engaged in constructive pushback more often than any other teacher participant. While Hannah may have implemented fewer of her coach's suggestions, she did so in a way that showed a higher level of authentic integration. She also planned to make additional significant changes to infuse more fun and chaos into her very traditional pedagogy. Those factors led me to situate this dyad's coach conversations as having the most transformative potential on Figure 7's continuum of roles.

The snake skeleton metaphor perfectly captured the role of Hannah and KP's coaching conversations. The many facets of 3D instruction served as the wide-open mouth with Hannah's active and transparent disagreement acting as fangs that required careful attention. KP constantly maneuvering to find some aspect of 3D instruction that Hannah could embrace constituted a body that twisted but stayed anchored on a spine of the teacher's pedagogy and her students' needs. Finally, the back and forth nature of their conversations moved the teacher's pedagogy forward in small but noticeable ways.

The preceding metaphors conceptualized the teachers' experience of conversation and integration throughout the study. The metaphors illustrated varying forms, functions, and transformative potential inherent to the coaching conversations. The remaining

sections of this chapter provide detailed explanations and examples of findings related to the nature of the coaching conversations, the experiences that teachers and coaches had while engaged in them, and the decision-making process that teachers undertook to integrate the content into their existing pedagogy.

Themes Related to Coaching Conversations and Pedagogy Integration

Phenomenological qualitative research does not require nor even desire a strict separation between the research and participants or absolute objectivity in the findings. Instead, researchers may bridle their own perspectives while seeking to understand the participants' lived experience of the phenomenon within the contexts of the study (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2014). The following interpretive findings are supported by anonymized data from the participants, with my role during interviews indicated by "Nik" as the speaker.

Shared Control Supports Authentic Collaboration

This study focused on teacher-centered coaching conversations within Knight's (2009) relationship-driven coaching model as distinct from other approaches such as Sweeney's (2011) student-centered, data-driven coaching model. Although the content and specific interactions were different within each coaching conversation, they all involved a similar ebb and flow dynamic of shared control, where teacher and coach each took on a leader or follower role at different times throughout the conversation.

The visual in Figure 8 captures the flow of one conversation but is indicative of similar shifts in each observed conversation. This schematic demonstrates the shifts in control as the coach began by sharing her observation feedback; the teacher took more control by responding to the coach, sharing her own ideas, and asking questions; and the

coach ended by responding and celebrating the teacher's efforts. Appendix I shows the original visual in the context of my field notes for this conversation.

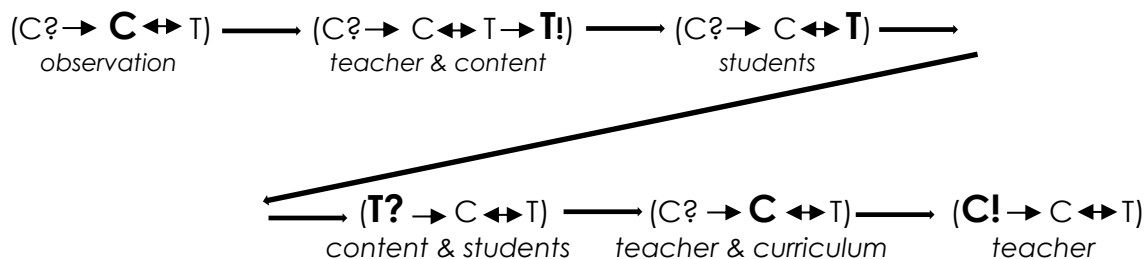


Figure 8. Ebb and flow of a coaching conversation. C = coach, T = teacher, = directive comment, ↔ = discussion, bold = control of conversation, ? = asking questions, ! = showing strong emotion

In order to provide the reader with a foundational understanding of the coaching conversations referred to throughout this chapter, the following abridged transcript and guiding explanations illustrate the conversation reflected in Figure 8. This was the second observed coaching conversation in the study and my first time observing Mahogany and Rose. Rose reported that it was the first scheduled coaching conversation of three planned coaching cycles. Each cycle would consist of an initial conversation to establish a focus for support; some instructional action on the part of the teacher, either independently or with the coach; and a follow-up conversation to reflect on that instruction. This conversation took place in early November. Up to that point, Rose had supported Mahogany by providing resources, leading grade-wide training on the curriculum, visiting her classroom, emailing feedback, and having informal conversations. The conversation took place in Mahogany's classroom and lasted approximately 42 minutes.

In addition to generating field notes, I recorded audio and video of the conversation using Zoom software on my laptop and a Voice Recorder app on my phone. Bracketed text indicates observational notes that I inserted while transcribing the audio-video recording of the conversation. Dashes in the text show incomplete statements caused by the speaker changing thoughts midsentence or the other participant interrupting at that moment. Analyzing the audio and video recordings revealed that participants made midsentence shifts to either correct or clarify the preceding thought. The listener's reason for interrupting varied depending on the participant's role. Teachers and coaches tended to interrupt one another either to show interest or agreement or to paraphrase the preceding statement for their own understanding. Coaches also interrupted teachers to interject personal or curriculum connections, and teachers interrupted coaches to interject connections to their students or classroom instruction.

This coaching conversation began with Rose reflecting on a recent classroom observation and inquiring about Mahogany's pedagogical practice around close reading.

ROSE: Alright, awesome! So, first, thank you so much for allowing me to be your coach and work directly and closely with you this semester. I really appreciate it. We just want to make you better, and I want to support you with whatever you need. So, um, was that last week? Whatever day it was. [looking through notes on laptop] It was 11-7.

MAHOGANY: That sounds right.

ROSE: Yes, yes. It's been a while. But I kind of wanted to just go over— typically, when you introduce, like, an article, or read an article last-- Like, what is your general expectation for students in regards to, like, how they interact with the text?

MAHOGANY: We-- I pulled a list of the things that close readers do that we've been adding to. We go through it and then we read it all together and then they, as a table, go through the article. And that day, they had already seen the article at least twice.

ROSE: They have?

MAHOGANY: Mm-hmm.

ROSE: Okay, what was interesting was a couple of kids— Like, a table over here. [gesturing to table near the door of the classroom] The young man we kind of talked about him where he just was not engaged and he didn't have anything on this paper. I asked him, like, [soft upbeat tone] “Hey. Can you tell me about your article?” [more downbeat tone] “Oh, I don't know. We just read it.” [back to conversational tone] And, you know, comments like that. But just as I rotated around the room. A lot of students didn't have a lot of annotations? So, I don't know if that's something that you expect for them to do while you're reading? Do they ever read have time to read independently, like, the article first--

MAHOGANY: Yes.

ROSE: So, what is your, I guess, your cycle for when you introduce a new text?

MAHOGANY: Um, first go-through do like just reading.

ROSE: Yep.

MAHOGANY: And then circle or highlight the words that you don't know.

ROSE: Yeah.

MAHOGANY: Let's talk about those. First, let's look at, like, what's around them to try to figure out what it means. And if we can't figure out what it means, let's Google it. Or, let's pull out a dictionary. [motioning playfully, Rose laughs] Um, but they--as far as marking on things-- It's like they're a little shy and I say, [emphatic tone using hands to emphasize each word] “Okay, look, I want you to write on this.”

ROSE: I see.

Rose moved the conversation forward by offering a specific suggestion for future lessons.

After listening with minimal engagement, Mahogany took control of the conversation by connecting Rose's idea to an existing resource of her own.

ROSE: I'm wondering if we do like the color coding system or something where it can-- I don't know. Or you have a doc cam in here?

MAHOGANY: [folding arms with hands in front of her mouth] Mm-hmm.

ROSE: Um, I think that'll be a way for them to kind of interact more with the text. Because a lot of them have questions, and a lot of them. I was like, [mimicking serious student interaction] "You got to go back and reread because..." Especially now that I'm hearing that they've read it two or three times--they should have been very familiar because the article was not long. Um, especially with the task that you were-- I mean, it was like a graphic organizer and that whole thing they should have been a little bit more familiar with it. And so, figuring out a way to model what you expect. [Mahogany walking away to mute email notifications on laptop as Rose continues] Modeling what you said about your anchor chart, and what they've been doing at the very beginning of the year. I think that'll be very helpful. Even--I'm trying to think--um, if you develop a color coding system along with the circles and that kind of thing. [Mahogany noting in journal] Um, maybe we can blow up and do, like, a poster that with an article, um, and get it laminated and so you can always kind of refer to it.

MAHOGANY: Yeah, I have this bookmark that is--

ROSE: Oh?

MAHOGANY: It's pretty cool. It's an annotation bookmark, so it kind of does go with the things that close readers do.

ROSE: Nice!

MAHOGANY: Because it has, like, a question mark by any words that there's, like, a way to draw, like, a triangle over certain things. And so--that's a good idea, though, blowing that bookmark up to use with an article. I talked to [the principal] yesterday, and we talked about taking a model essay and blowing--like, color coding and blowing it up. And I was like, "so, I can do this, too!" [taking notes in journal]

After becoming more visibly engaged while sharing about the annotation resource, Mahogany continued to steer the conversation by sharing additional plans she had in mind for the upcoming unit. Rose either responded positively or offered additional suggestions along the way. At one point, Mahogany shared that she had already taken care of getting resources Rose was planning to provide to her, then connected those resources to a project she was planning for her students.

ROSE: So, I have the media center parapro pulling books that are centered around the Great Depression, because it was like 1920s-30s. [laying out laminated

resources] Also about civil rights. You're going to learn a lot about and talk a lot about race relations.

MAHOGANY: I did, and I had her pull some books on discrimination too and that's--

ROSE: Did you? Okay! [walking over to cart with books from Media Center]

MAHOGANY: [following Rose and showing different books on the cart] And um, because, you know, those are some things that we're going to be talking about and it's, like, Hispanic women--

ROSE: Well, she may want to just disregard my email to her, then. Except I'll still have her pull some Great Depression stuff.

MAHOGANY: Mm-hmm. [both looking through books]

ROSE: This is so good. So, just having this all around the room, because if kids have wandering eyes, at least they're looking at something related to the text.

MAHOGANY: And so, they're gonna have to do a story. They're doing a video project for me.

ROSE: Okay. What's that going to consist of? [both returning to the table]

MAHOGANY: It is taking, like, the words "discrimination," "ethnic cleansing," from, like, the article that we read about the refugee transitions, and *Inside Out and Back Again*. How discrimination is played out. Racism and inequality. And so, I have, like, stuff for women's rights, for Hispanic rights, for African American rights. And they're going to take these things and they're going to talk about this in their video. They can talk in the video, or they can create a script that someone else can, like-- And they record the rise or it can be an interview.

ROSE: Right.

MAHOGANY: But they have to use, like, main sources like *Inside Out and Back Again* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but they also have to use, like, articles that we've read in class. They can use, like, internet articles, but it has to be, of course, from a reliable source. [Mahogany speaking more animatedly, Rose focused on Mahogany]

Rose remained in a follower role by celebrating addition ideas Mahogany shared and asking clarifying questions until she shifted conversation into asking about specific students. This portion of the conversation stayed mostly under Mahogany's control with

Rose asking guided questions and sharing some strategies she had used as a classroom teacher.

ROSE: How's our little homeboy from over here? [gesturing to an empty student desk] Is he doing better?

MAHOGANY: Mm-hmm. You want to know what happened? He didn't--they didn't realize the grades were going in Wednesday and I say, "Y'all. This was the first time in history of me being a teacher that I got my grades in the night before." And they was like, "Wait, we can't turn in stuff?" "Mm-mm." [shaking head with negative face, Rose mimicking same] "I mean, you can turn it in before your report card!" And he was like, "But I'm going to miss those assignments." And I was like, "Hmm." [making judgmental facial expression]

ROSE: [laughing] You didn't make that face...

MAHOGANY: Yes, I did and he said, "You put 'does not participate.'" I said, "Do you?" [Rose laughing] And he was like, "I haven't been. I mean..."

ROSE: I'm glad he reads it!

MAHOGANY: And I told him, I said, "You're nephew and I'm auntie. But auntie gon' hold you accountable. My love for you, does not stop with missing work. You got to do it just like everybody else!"

ROSE: But that's what shows him you have expectations for him.

MAHOGANY: He's really, really smart. He's just lazy. Like, "Y'all gotta do betta. All of them." I said this so many times, "I don't give grades; you earn 'em."

ROSE: That's my philosophy as well.

MAHOGANY: And I had to—like, a whole class, I had to print because of the way their grades were--

ROSE: Yeah.

MAHOGANY: And, like, how homework is calculated, they, they all of them had, like, at least five missing assignments, the whole class. Their work ethic in that class is just low. Like, everybody else did the Kahoot, but they didn't do it because they hadn't done their homework. So, then you can't do the Kahoot because we need to go over that information. So, I went in and I put a "missing." I put an "M" for all of those.

ROSE: And missing calculates as zero?

MAHOGANY: A zero. And then I went in, I graded their mid-unit and I put that in and I printed it today. And I said, “This is a result of your child's true work ethic in my class. Please sign this and return the Monday after break.”

ROSE: And hearing that from you that probably means a lot to them.

MAHOGANY: I mean, I tell them that all the time!

ROSE: Being on top of it with the parent communication. I am such an advocate of that, like, totally. I think just having those very candid discussions, number one, maintain good contact with the parents. I’m like, “I’m trying to be your momma and daddy’s best friend.” [Mahogany taking notes in journal] My kids used to say, “Why you text my mom?!” “Because, like, we need to make sure that we’re hitting on both angles.” Right? And then, not lowering your expectations is key. So, that's one thing that I think they're going to eventually rise to the occasion.

After discussing parent communication, Mahogany shifted the conversation by asking for Rose’s opinion on addressing sensitive material up front. The teacher and coach shared control by layering their ideas, rather than one leading the discussion.

ROSE: So, I'm super excited. I can drag this book out, like, all--we can do a whole course on *To Kill a Mockingbird*!

MAHOGANY: Yeah, should I have a conversation with my children about the “n-word” too? Before, before we even go into it and, you know--

ROSE: Yep.

MAHOGANY: The ending of which one you use and all of that, because we—like, I shouldn’t hear that in the hallway. It’s a cuss word, where you should not be saying that.

ROSE: Correct.

MAHOGANY: And so, we're going to talk about that.

ROSE: Pull up the--there's an interview with Oprah and Jay-Z and they're having a-- You can probably just get the snippet of it. [Mahogany taking notes] Where they're talking about--this is when Oprah's talk show was still on--talking about the “n-word” and they agreed to disagree. But she gave her background. He gave his background.

MAHOGANY: Oh, I think that'll be interesting, be a way to kind of introduce that topic. They're all familiar with Jay-Z. They're all familiar with Oprah. All relevant. I think that'll probably be something that we can look at. There's an article--I'm gonna see if I can find it--that talks about--that talks about that as well. I can't remember the name of it, but I will try to find it as well.

As the conversation began to wrap up with Mahogany discussing her next steps, Rose took the opportunity to connect that teacher-created project to the EngageNY curriculum the school was adopting that school year. The coach retained control of this portion of the conversation while guiding the teacher through the curriculum and making specific suggestions.

MAHOGANY: I'll be coming up with, like, my requirements for the video project because this is what was happening. I was like, "Would you guys like-- We're getting ready to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They're writing. Would you guys want to do a project on racism and discrimination?" And this is, "Ooh!" in unison.

ROSE: Maybe when you create your criteria. Maybe we can roll it out to the eighth grade team. And I can help, you know, with creating a rubric, or what your requirements are and all that stuff. And we can share it with the team and I mean, look, depending on how robust it is going to be. And I'm going to look at-- Let me actually pull up what a performance task is for this module really quick [accessing curriculum on laptop] and see if we can, like, "Hey, you can choose. You can either do the performance task in EngageNY or you can do this, this culminating activity." So, let's see what that's all about. Let's see here. [reading from laptop] Assessments. Final performance tasks. Let's see what it has them doing. [resumes reading] Students will analyze key quotes from the novel that reflect on overarching themes as evidenced in units one and two. Students will form small groups and develop a reader's theater script [motioning knowingly to Mahogany] in which each student will select a different critical scene from the novel that develops a theme of their group's assigned quote.

MAHOGANY: Oh, interesting!

ROSE: So, yeah, I think what you're thinking is definitely in line with-- Let me see how the first few lessons start out. [silently reading from laptop]

MAHOGANY: Since I have, like, a different—Like, I'll have a plethora of my family there. [Rose turns to listen to Mahogany] So, I could do in a piece, I could say, "When's a time you felt discriminated against?"

ROSE: So, maybe that's going to be, like, your model video.

MAHOGANY: Yeah, yeah.

ROSE: Definitely provide them with an exemplar. They're going to be reading *Ain't I a Woman, The Incident* by Countee Cullen, that's gonna be great! Yeah. All right, good. So, let's look at the first few lessons. [reading from laptop] Launching. They'll analyze Shirley Chisholm's speech. So, this is going to be really good. So, I could review, if you want to, how to access this.

MAHOGANY: Mm-hmm

ROSE: So, now go back into--I'll show you really quickly-- [turning laptop toward Mahogany] go in the Secondary ELA folder. Eighth grade.

MAHOGANY: [watching Rose navigate site] This is module--

ROSE: This is module 2A.

MAHOGANY: I got it.

ROSE: Then go into the module level documents and look at the overview.

MAHOGANY: Okay. [writing down notes]

After spending several minutes talking through components of the curriculum program's website, Rose ended the conversation by checking in on Mahogany's mindset and responding to her news about starting a graduate program.

ROSE: I hope you don't feel overwhelmed.

MAHOGANY: No! Mm-mm! This is helpful.

ROSE: Good. I want it to be helpful.

MAHOGANY: Just getting ready to start my master's in January, so--

ROSE: Oh, congrats! At [a local university] or--

MAHOGANY: No, it's through [another state university]. They have a cohort in the area.

ROSE: Nice, nice. And what are you going to study?

MAHOGANY: Curriculum and instruction.

ROSE: That's my heart.

MAHOGANY: Yeah, cuz I wanna, I want to-- I mean, I'm an old person, but I'm a new teacher.

ROSE: You're not an old person!

MAHOGANY: No, like--when you look at new teachers, I'm definitely a good bit older than them.

ROSE: I'm surprised this wasn't your career choice from the beginning. You have like, the innate, like, [gesturing proudly] teacher! But anything you need with that, you know, I love curriculum and instruction. [closing laptop] Obviously! That excites me so anything you need, you know, with starting the program or--

MAHOGANY: Okay! [turning back through journal]

ROSE: You know, someone to kind of bounce ideas off.

MAHOGANY: Okay, I will.

ROSE: I'm here! Well, thank you, ma'am! Have a happy, happy, happy Thanksgiving if I don't see you before I leave.

MAHOGANY: Thanks. You too.

Rose and Mahogany began by reflecting on the teacher's pedagogy with the coach leading the conversation and ended on a personal, celebratory note and neutral dynamic. Although the content was specific to the middle school's curriculum and Mahogany's existing pedagogy, the structure and function of their conversation were characteristic of every coaching conversation observed during this study. The ebb and flow of power and responsibility throughout the conversations allowed the teachers and coaches to collaborate authentically towards integrating new knowledge and practices into the teacher's existing pedagogy.

Safety, context, and perspective are key. This conversation highlighted three trends that were common among the coaching conversations in this study. First, the teacher and coach shared control by seamlessly moving between the roles of leader, follower, questioner, responder, explainer, and provider throughout the conversation. Equally important was what they did not do. The coach did not judge the teacher's decisions or evaluate her against an outside standard of proficiency, and the teacher did not passively receive the coach's feedback or resist sharing her own thoughts. That dynamic was indicative of Knight's (2009) coaching model in which the coach uses observations and questions to address the teacher's pedagogical concerns rather than to change students' behavior and achievement. Second, the coach used observational feedback to drive her questioning and the teacher shared ideas she had gathered from other colleagues. Both of those elements situated the coaching conversation within the larger context of their collaboration with one another and interaction with other sources of support. Third, the teacher and coach exchanged ideas that connected to both the curriculum and the teacher's existing pedagogy. They layered their ideas in a way that started the teacher on a path to integrating new elements into her pedagogy and provided the coach with a better understanding of how to support that process.

The next three sections explore the trends noted above in more detail by presenting findings that arose from analyzing the conversations along with reflective interviews and classroom instruction related to their content and inner workings. The safe space created by the shared control and non-evaluative nature of the coaching conversations was foundational and vital for the other two aspects to succeed. A narrow, directive focus may have isolated the conversations from their larger context, while a

judgmental, evaluative approach may have resulted in surface level implementation but not authentic understanding and integration. Analyzing these three interrelated components revealed common aspects among the participants and highlighted some findings unique to each teacher, coach, and dyad.

Safe Spaces Encourage Transparency and Risk-Taking

Coaching conversations allowed teachers to question their own pedagogy and deliberate about new practices within the safe space established by their instructional coach. The teachers expressed two factors as most instrumental in creating that environment. First, the instructional coaches played a non-evaluative role distinct from the evaluative process undertaken by administrators. In addition to that logistical distinction, each coach employed specific conversational moves to establish and maintain an environment of trust and positivity.

Teachers value non-evaluative conversations. Teacher participants repeatedly contrasted their non-threatening interactions with the instructional coaches with other, less benign interactions. During their first coaching conversation within this study, Susanna requested that KP come observe a specific period. KP made it a point to remind her that their coaching interactions exist separate from the teacher's evaluation by administrators.

So, before I come into your 1A class just for observations--and again, this is not going to be recorded when I come in, in terms of placing in the teacher evaluation system. This is just for me to come in and see the parameters, and see what the class is like so I can give you some strategies based on the observations.

Susanna's reflection during her post-conversation interview indicated that she embraced KP's non-evaluative message.

I feel very comfortable with her. I don't feel like I'm being evaluated, like if my administrator walks in. Which is great for me, because I feel like I can always turn and go talk to her and get legitimate feedback about what I need to change or what maybe just things I could try my class.

Hannah shared the same idea in response to being asked how her most recent coaching conversation with KP fit into their overall coaching collaboration.

I think that it's casual. It's not--when she's there--it's not like she's watching me to do that one thing. We're just interacting and we're working with the kids. And so, it makes me feel like, because it's casual, that I am actually growing. Because I'm not, you know, putting on a show or anything.

KP's assurance and the teachers' responses focused on the function and feeling of coaching conversations by contrasting them to more formal, less authentic interactions with their evaluators. In addition to expressing sentiments that aligned with the coach's desired dynamic, the teachers also alluded to another vital aspect of coaching conversations. The teachers valued the conversations as sources of authentic feedback for improving their existing pedagogy. In other words, they felt safe not only to relax but also to grow.

Whereas the high school teachers tended to contrast their experiences with KP to the formality of their current work with administrators, the middle school teachers were more apt to contrast Rose's coaching conversations with lackluster support they experienced in the past. For example, Lorelei recalled about the coach prior to Rose,

She was a little less personal, I felt like. And so, that made it hard to have conversations so that we spent a lot of time after PLC meetings very frustrated. And so, it was like anytime there was reflection, it was punitive like, "Here's everything that you guys need to make sure that you're doing, because your kids aren't blah blah blah." That's just how it felt. Even if it was not intended that way. This year, I feel like in our conversations Rose is really doing everything that she can to get us where we need to be and make sure we have what we need. Last year was a lot of, "Here. Make what you need or pretend like you have what you need."

Lorelei's reflection centered on a previous experience with an instructional coach in the same district. Mahogany, on the other hand, pointed out how her coaching conversations with Rose were helping to fill in lingering gaps created by a perceived lack of support from one of the university supervisors in charge of her pre-service practicum.

As far as the content, I am going to have to review, because even with my practicum for ELA, my instructor was on bedrest. So, it was a lot of red ink and it didn't matter to me. Like, she couldn't help that I needed to know, like, how to teach writing. How do I teach grammar in a classroom? And I didn't get that. So, right now, I'm looking at what the kids don't know and Rose is helping me figure out how to teach it to them.

Lorelei's and Mahogany's reflections on previous roles revealed elements that also played out across Susanna's and Hannah's comparisons. First, the teachers in this study felt more at ease in the coaching conversations with their current instructional coaches than they did in similar interactions with either previous coaches and instructors or current administrators. Based on that lower level of anxiety, they felt safe opening up about their struggles and engaging in productive debate about new ideas.

Coaches establish and maintain safe spaces. Establishing coaching conversations as a safe space for teachers took intentional work on the part of the coach. One of the first things KP discussed in our initial interview was how her support of teachers relies on building a personal connection with each one.

Because I feel like in order to coach a teacher well, you have to know a little bit about them. You have to know a little bit about their struggles, their strengths, their weaknesses, what motivates them, how they feel about being a classroom leader. It's just a lot of, to me, parts to the equation. And if you don't have all of them, I don't know if you'll be able to effectively coach the teacher up to where you're building their capacity. Versus just, "Okay, let's just get this class into functioning, at a functioning level," and then move on.

Accordingly, KP devoted a great deal of time during her first observed coaching conversation with Susanna to checking in on Susanna's family and acknowledging the challenges of keeping up with her teaching workload while being a new mother. KP also shared how her current relationship with Hannah took time and consistent effort to build.

That conversation was a long time in the making for her. Every time I see that teacher in passing I'm always just reminding her of her successes and letting her know how proud I am of her and motivating her. And so now, our conversations have become more frequent. I feel like there's relationship building there to where we could potentially be friends. You know, this is where she can come to me because the initial--initially the relationship or lack of relationship, I think it could have hindered our relationship or productivity. So, I just capitalized--every time I see her, I capitalized on it that moment. So that she feels supported and she understands that, "Hey, I'm in your corner. Keep it going." Just letting her know that I am her cheerleader. So, preparing for that conversation had been occurring since, like, the first time I did an observation and that was a week and a half ago. We just couldn't get together to actually sit down and talk.

To use KP's words, the same type of "cheerleading" that went into establishing a supportive space for Hannah continued throughout their coaching conversations.

Both coaches consistently used specific conversational elements and purposeful actions to maintain the safe space that they created for the teachers. Conversational elements included discussing personal as well as pedagogical matters, celebrating the teachers' ideas and accomplishments, and framing their struggles as opportunity for growth rather than evidence of failure. Regarding personal matters, KP spent time in each coaching conversation discussing Susanna's new motherhood and Hannah's upcoming pursuit of a new teacher certification field. Those discussions took place at or near the beginning of the conversations, prior to engaging the teachers in reflection on their current pedagogy and recent instruction. Alternatively, Rose tended to stay more grounded in pedagogy during her coaching conversations, although she did respond with

curiosity and sympathy when Lorelei began one conversation by sharing about a recent car accident. Rose also offered support when Mahogany mentioned starting a master's program as one of their conversations was ending. While one coach intentionally initiated extracurricular connections within her coaching conversations, the other allowed space for them responsively based on teacher initiation.

Table 7 organizes various celebrations of success and opportunities for growth into phrases that each instructional coach used with their teachers. Reviewing the coaching conversation transcripts through this lens revealed some interesting findings. For one thing, with the exception of common words like *awesome* and *amazing*, the coaches used unique expressions with each of the teachers. In some cases, the differences arose from the coaches incorporating teacher-generated metaphors into their own vernacular within the conversation. For instance, KP's celebration of Susanna having "gotten more of them on your side" was a direct reflection of the teacher repeatedly using a combative metaphor to describe her dynamic with different students. Other differences came from the coach addressing the specific goals or concerns each teacher had. KP's celebration of Hannah's being comfortable reflected the teacher's initial discomfort with 3D science instruction. Rose encouraging Lorelei that "you're not too far behind" and Mahogany that "you'll move faster when..." related to both teachers' anxiety over not keeping up with the suggested pacing of their EngageNY lessons.

Table 7

Expressions of celebration and growth

Coach	Celebrating success	Opportunities for growth
KP		
re Hannah	<p>“shout out to you”</p> <p>“you’re comfortable, you’re relaxed”</p> <p>“accomplished just about every goal”</p>	<p>“made gains...keep going”</p> <p>“you’ve got this”</p> <p>“going to take time”</p>
re Susanna	<p>“that was good, because they were excited”</p> <p>“starting to get them on the right path”</p> <p>“you’ve gotten more of them on your side”</p>	<p>“some growth is better than no growth”</p> <p>“this is totally normal”</p> <p>“it does take some time”</p> <p>“it’s a process”</p> <p>“every day will get better”</p> <p>“we can put some things in place”</p> <p>“I’m positive you’ll be able to...”</p> <p>“we’ll work on that”</p> <p>“it’s not realistic, right”</p> <p>“don’t feel like you’re failing, because you’ve made significant strides”</p> <p>“please don’t give up”</p>
Rose		
re Lorelei	<p>“yes and yes”</p> <p>“it’s a good balance”</p> <p>“I like that and the kids will like that”</p> <p>“I can see that you’ve started...”</p> <p>“that’s amazing”</p> <p>“that’s really impressive”</p>	<p>“that is challenging”</p> <p>“which is fine, totally fine”</p> <p>“you’re not too far behind”</p>
re Mahogany	<p>“really good idea”</p> <p>“super shout out to you”</p> <p>“right on track”</p> <p>“singing your praises”</p> <p>“awesome”</p> <p>“this is so good”</p> <p>“that’s a great way to...”</p>	<p>“that’ll be helpful”</p> <p>“you’ll move faster when...”</p>

In addition to differences in the wording of the expressions, there was also a noticeable divergence in how often each coach engaged each teacher in the two categories of feedback. KP balanced her celebratory and growth feedback with Hannah but provided Susanna with twice as much reassurance about growth as she did celebration of success. Similar to the individualization of the wording, that disparity related directly to the content of each teacher's coaching conversations. Hannah received guidance on undertaking a new instructional practice, a process which involved personal growth but no significant difficulties. Susanna, however, sought assistance in dealing with consistently problematic student behavior that she struggled to address and overcome. In general, struggle engenders more need for reassurance than exploration.

Rose's interactions were more consistent between her two teachers, and her overall balance was far more towards celebrations than KP's. Comparing the school settings and participant dynamics revealed two possible explanation for those differences. For one thing, all of the ELA teachers at the middle school were in their first year of implementing EngageNY. It stands to reason that their questions would be more programmatic than individualized during that initial period. Secondly, Rose was also in her first year of coaching at the middle school. She shared that during this initial period, "I start with the positive summaries 'Hey. Great job with this. Great job with that,' then questions, and I will eventually move into pushes." When asked more specifically about providing negative feedback, she explained her position more clearly.

NIK: So, right now it seems like you are very supportive of her and keeping everything mostly positive. If you see misalignment with her intentions and her execution, like with the character map, how do you see making the shift into more pushes?

ROSE: I know. We have to walk that line because we're not evaluative. It's tricky. I try to bring attention to it but not say like, "You should have had this or that." Instead I'll ask, "How could you use this?" and I'll offer to make the copies or blow up the poster for them. I try to make those suggestions in the moment so they are doable right away.

Interestingly, Rose and KP independently used a similar metaphor when describing their current status in relation to their teachers. As a former member of the team she was coaching, KP had already established that foundation and was able "to make a quicker transition right into the thing we need to talk about [with] not as much massaging." Conversely, Rose explained that, "I don't want to be overly abrasive or super direct...you've got to massage a little bit first." Celebrating approximations and capitalizing on the teachers' strengths allowed her to begin establishing that same foundation of support that she could use to encourage growth mindset more easily in the future.

Drawing from different inspirations. Similar to how the teachers compared their coaching conversations with other support experiences, the instructional coaches noted how their own previous experiences influenced their current approach to coaching conversations. KP connected her personal, relational coaching style to her own childhood.

I think it's always important to put yourself in others' shoes. I'm coming from a family where I'm a first-generation college graduate. A family that struggled financially. So, I truly understand what it takes to build someone up or to get them to work with you. If you allow them to see that, "Hey. I'm willing to go toe to toe with you. I'm not here just for short term. I'm here to build a relationship with you. We are getting ready to become a family." Because that's what essentially helped me move from my environment.

KP's family background instilled in her the importance of building personal connections, and a specific role model showed her how to accomplish that goal.

It was a teacher, a ninth grade teacher, biology teacher. I mirror the way she taught, the way she interacted with students and staff. She's the first female--adult female--who I looked at and I said, "I want to be like her." It was through her leadership, her exposing her students to just every aspect of her life. And when she worked with colleagues, she was always happy. I started out teaching that way and it just worked. I truly started to become invested in positivity. It started to trickle over to my colleagues...that's when the buy-in truly took place. I was just like, "You know what? Who is KP? This is who she's going to be."

Those early formative experiences shaped KP as a teacher and continued into her work as an instructional coach. She spoke of making the conscious decision to live up to that early role model regardless of pushback.

Because I used to have an issue of colleagues that were like, "You're always so positive! What's so good about today?" And it caused me to reflect and say, "Well maybe I shouldn't always be so ready to help or so positive." But when I received the coaching position, I made the decision, "I'm going to be best science coach for my teachers!"

Her actions and conversations suggested that KP defined "being the best" as coaching through the lens of positivity and personal relationships.

Rose spoke of her more pedagogy-focused conversational style as rising from the absence of examples or role models. She shared how the lack of authentic professional development impacted her own experience as a classroom teacher.

I think it's important that teachers really think about pedagogy and think about how they execute because, like, when I was in the classroom, I really didn't have these types of conversations. I think that I may have stayed in the classroom a little bit longer if I did. Because my issue was never planning and curriculum development. It was execution, when it didn't go the way that I thought. Being able to move quickly and switch. You know what I mean? And after being in the classroom for several years, of course, I eventually figured it out.

Although Rose felt isolated in having to work through her pedagogical struggles alone, it was not because there was no oversight from administrators. Rather, she felt as if that oversight just did not result in any substantive support.

I figured it out, but I didn't get that direct feedback in that coaching way. I didn't have, like, that coaching relationship with anyone. It was more like, they came in--every kid is sitting down, being quiet, following the instructions, and doing the task, we're doing well on the standardized tests. So, I was golden. You know what I mean? And it didn't really help me develop.

Rose drew from that perceived lack of support and dedicated herself to using coaching conversations to provide her teachers with the experience she missed out on.

I think that this experience is gonna help her develop, is going to help her continue to be reflective on her practice, is going to help her continue to think about ways to collaborate with her co-teacher and even be willing to try new things and put it into practice immediately.

Despite their differences, both coaches drew from personal experience when crafting coaching conversations. The nature of their recollections provided additional context for the differences in their conversational approaches. KP sought to continue a legacy of leading through relationships, while Rose committed herself to ensuring her leadership brought about authentic growth.

Dealing with setbacks. Even though all of the teachers expressed an appreciation for the safe space created by their coaching conversations, some dyads experienced lingering reticence in relation to their collaboration and misalignments between what they said within and outside of their coaching conversations. In one instance, separate interviews with Rose and Mahogany following the same conversation revealed some apparent friction within the coaching dyad and misalignment between what they expressed to one another versus what they expressed to others. I interviewed Rose the same day as their second observed coaching conversation, and she shared her feelings about finding out secondhand that Mahogany was expressing concerns about their work together to other colleagues.

NIK: Did that component of this conversation go the way you expected it to?

ROSE: No, I actually--I expected-- You know, honestly I'm surprised because she sought out someone else. I knew she wasn't going to mention it in our meeting. So, it--it honestly it didn't go as I expected. It went in a more, you know, compliance type way. Like, "OK, I got to do it is inevitable." They're still fighting it so I don't know what the person--what that conversation with the person was like. To me, knowing the individual, I know she was like, "Well, Rose just wants to come in and she just wants to work with you. She wants to help you, you know. So, don't think anything of it." I was honestly--when I first found out about it--frustrated, because I thought we were building a relationship where she can come to me about anything, whether it's a concern or not. And I'm still fighting against--not just with her but with the teachers in general--against their assumption or past experience that people are out to get them. And I think, maybe, after talking to that individual her concerns were, like, dwindled down, like, "Oh, ok. Yeah, like, okay yeah. We've already had this conversation. She's already helped me with certain things or she's come and observed me and gave me good feedback." So, I was frustrated at first and thinking, "Why didn't she just come to me?" But you know, the person she went to-- she has a relationship--a longer, you know, extensive relationship with him. I get it. I get it. But I do wonder--at this point, I'm like, "OK, we're six months in guys. I'm not out to kill you. I'm showing you that I'm here for you. At least, I think I am."

Rather than confront Mahogany with this information, Rose reported using the indirect feedback to inform their next coaching conversation about co-teaching by adding a sense of empowerment for the teacher.

NIK: Did you go in with a vision of how co-teaching would look? If so, did what you planned together align with that vision?

ROSE: No, it didn't. Initially I was going to--I thought I was going to go one way or another. That I was about to take over the class or sit back and observe, not that we were going to co-teach a lesson together. But because I knew about her apprehensiveness, I switched to, "Hey, how did you want this to work? Okay, let's pick a date. How do you want my part to work?" Letting her guide that.

In addressing Mahogany's apprehension, Rose displayed the type of responsiveness and individualization discussed earlier as indicative of trying to maintain the safe space environment she thought they had established.

I met with Mahogany the next day and used Rose's word "relationship" to probe within our post-conversation interview. Mahogany responded positively and even referred to her level of transparency within their conversations.

NIK: Do you see a connection between your relationship with Rose and your relationship with your kids?

MAHOGANY: I think I see it as the same as my relationship with the kids. I'm okay being transparent with Rose when I'm, like, when I'm at a deficit. Well, it's something-- because I don't want our kids to be in a deficit mindset or mind being vulnerable. I like saying to them, "Look. I don't know how to do this. I don't know how to teach this, so I need help. And she doesn't make a big deal out of it. Like it's not judgment. She just helps me."

In order to maintain neutrality as well as trustworthiness, I followed the agreed-upon routine of using verbatim transcripts for member-checking, noted the inconsistencies during coding, and used this situation as a lens during future observations and analysis. I eventually shared this finding with the teacher and coach separately.

This situation between Mahogany and Rose illustrated that coaching conversations required intentional work to maintain. Transparency within the conversations did not mean that the teacher and coach shared every thought they had. Instead, each one felt free to respond to misgivings in their own way while focusing on the goal of integrating new knowledge and skills into the teacher's existing pedagogy. The involvement of a third colleague in this situation also demonstrated the extent to which the coaching conversations existed within the context of other interactions and relationships.

Conversations and Integration Take Place in Context

Coaching conversations and related pedagogy integration were inextricably tied to the participants' broader personal and professional contexts. Some aspects of that

context were related to different coaching forms of collaboration within the dyad. For instance, the participants routinely used coaching conversations to plan and reflect on other aspects of their overall partnership. Other aspects reflected external factors such as other staff members and additional sources of professional learning.

Interwoven with other forms of collaboration. Chapter 1 identified instructional coaching as one type of professional learning and one-on-one coaching conversations as just one form of collaboration within a coaching dyad. While data collection for this study focused narrowly on coaching conversations and subsequent classroom instruction, the participants experienced those processes as a seamless part of their overall partnership. Other forms of collaboration included observing classroom instruction, providing resources, modeling new strategies, co-teaching, and co-planning. Figure 9 shows the frequency and directionality of those other forms of collaboration in relation to the dyads' coaching conversations. The size of each speech bubble represents the frequency with which each form arose during coaching conversations. For example, modeling only came up in two conversations, whereas observations played a role in nearly every coaching conversation. Single arrows indicate another form of collaboration as an outcome of the conversation. Bidirectional arrows indicate a feedback loop in which the conversations led to other forms which were then discussed in subsequent conversations.

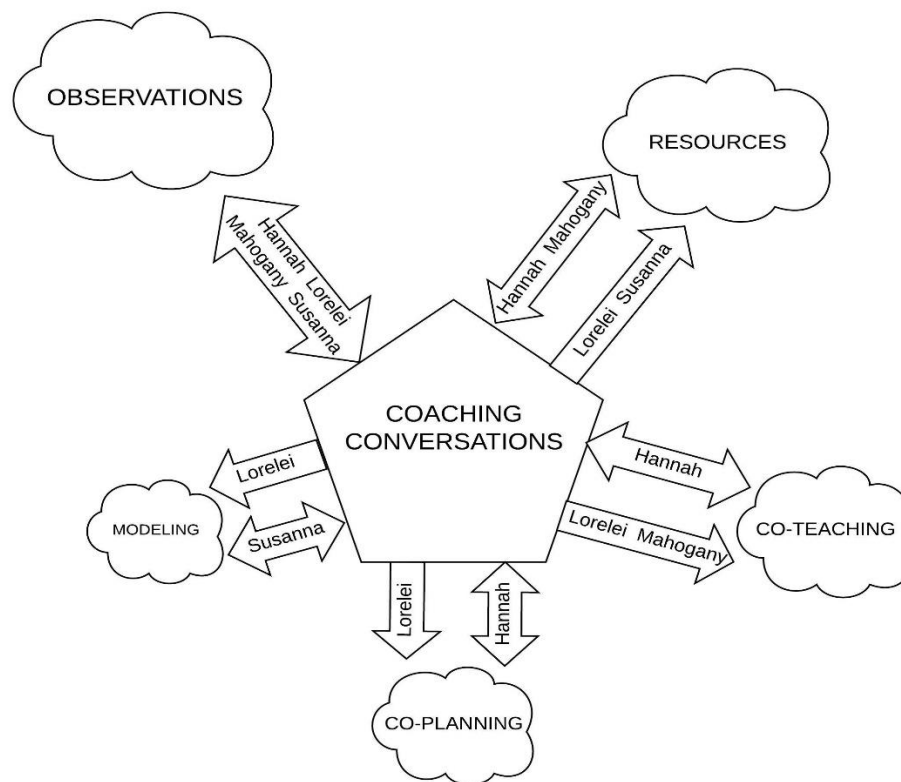


Figure 9. Frequency and directionality of other forms of collaboration within coaching conversations.

Coaches differentiate their collaboration. This visual reveals some ways in which instructional coaches differentiated their coaching conversations with each teacher. For instance, Lorelei's conversations with Rose were the only ones that involved all of the other forms at some point and those other forms tended to be outcomes or next steps rather than the focus of on-going discussion. Lorelei and Rose's dynamic was also unique within the four coaching dyads. Specifically, Lorelei co-taught all of her classes with a special education teacher, but she was not special education certified. Rose was transparent about not having a special education background to draw from herself. Both teacher and coach were therefore using their coaching conversations to navigate a new

curriculum and address a unique subgroup. Their multiple avenues reflected an on-going search for appropriate knowledge and practices. Essentially, they had to decide what to discuss before they could collaborate on how to integrate. Hannah's conversations with KP, on the other hand, involved fewer references to other coaching interactions and situated them as both an outcome and a discussion point within future conversations. Their dynamic differed from Lorelei and Rose's in two important ways. First, Hannah was working to integrate elements of a predefined practice--3D instruction--as a new layer to her existing practice and deep content knowledge. Second, she and KP had worked together as colleagues prior to KP's coaching role, so their conversations were consequently deeper and more prone to debate than delivery.

Although resources and observations played a part in every coaching dyad's conversations, each coach used them in different ways to meet the needs of each teacher and refine their own approach to coaching. For example, KP and Rose each had one teacher to whom they simply provided resources as options for implementation and one teacher with whom discussing resources became a deeper part of encouraging authentic integration. Both coaches tended to engage in deeper, more on-going work around resources with the teacher whose instructional focus aligned more with their own background. KP realized that distinction during her post-conversation interview. The resource in that case was online assessment tasks that KP created for the teachers.

NIK: So, how did the content of this current coaching conversation relate to your overall support for this teacher?

KP: I don't know if you picked up on this, but I have a strong background in chemistry. Physics was an area in college where a B was an A for me...well, that was an A+ for me! [laughing]

NIK: And this is a physics teacher?

KP: This is a physics teacher. So, I don't know her content as well as I do others, I'll say that. I am learning physics--their content--because I want to be able to align their tasks. I do enter their tasks in the online testing platform, so that's forcing me to remaster, I'll say that. So, I do try to talk--I don't know if you caught that--I try to talk about it in general terms, that all tests shouldn't be multiple choice and that there are multiple ways to show the standards. And truly, what does this standard mean?

NIK: Do you feel like that's different when you coach chemistry teachers? Or is that the same?

KP: I do! I do. That's a very good point, Nik, and that's something that I did not recognize. If it's chem--I know chem so well. I know your standards. So, it's embedded in every conversation that we do have and I can discuss your assessments in a different way from the very beginning.

NIK: You kind of speak their language?

KP: I do. You're right.

As mentioned earlier, Rose expressed a similar sentiment toward being in a more delivery stance with regard to resources for Lorelei's special education co-taught classes. Even though she did not explicitly reflect on the contrast, Rose and Mahogany devoted substantially more time to sharing, discussing, and reflecting on resources.

The role of observations within the coaching conversations reflected the coaches' different approaches. Rose tied observations and coaching conversations together in a more systematic way than KP. She explained that relationship during her first post-conversation interview.

NIK: So, the first question is how did you prepare for this most recent conversation?

ROSE: So, just twofold. So, I add to the observation, of course. I always type great things I saw, questions I have, maybe some direct feedback, if any. I usually send that within 24 hours of observation. So, I kind of just review what I said to her. And the second part of it is, I went back in the day that we met, which was yesterday. I saw her that morning. That way I can have additional things to

come in and see if there was a trend or theme based on what I saw the first time. Because it was a different time of day and different kids are different. And so, those are the two things: reviewing the notes that I sent her, and then checking her out, observing her again right before our meeting.

Rose's reflection detailed the observation as serving two roles in relation to the conversation. First, she routinely included coaching conversations within a structured coaching cycle that began with an observation which then led to feedback via email, followed by a face-to-face conversation. Based on researcher observation, each conversation ended with Rose scheduling the next conversation with the understanding that some form of observation would take place prior. In addition to that routine, Rose's mention of the second observation to look for trends across class periods was unique to her work with Lorelei and likely reflected her additional efforts to understand and support special education instruction.

KP also included observations as part of her coaching conversations but not every time and not within as structured a cycle. Early in this study, she explained her approach to classroom observations in a way that aligned with her relational style of coaching.

KP: So, I start talking to the teachers informally. I start visiting their classes. I do check-ins on all the teachers in the science department. I actually create a schedule for the week. "I'm going to pop in this class for five to minutes," or "I'm going to pop in during the lunch break." Just to get to talk to them. Just to make them feel good, you know--share positive information with them or see what happened positive in their week.

NIK: Does that play into your coaching conversations?

KP: Well, I make it a point to visit the classrooms, to talk to them. And I actually retrieve a lot of information, so that's how I'm able to prep. It's not that I want to guide the meeting. But I do want to create an opportunity where they feel like they're being empowered and I'm there to support them.

NIK: Do observations stay in that informal place? Or do they become more formally tied to the conversations at some point?

KP: So, that's something that comes in, I would say, after our fourth meeting or so? My main focus in the beginning is building the teacher up and making sure she feels supported. So, probably about the fourth meeting or right before, I do an actual observation for feedback.

In a subsequent interview, KP explained the role of her observation in relation to her continuing support of both teachers.

KP: So, to prepare for that coaching conversation required a little bit more than before because the teacher was having difficulty with classroom management and motivating students. So, I visited that class a couple times, so that I could see what she was experiencing and to look at my resources and to make sure I gave the best recommendations and best feedback. So, it consisted of me observing the class, reviewing the teacher concerns, reviewing the last meeting notes, and coming up with recommendations and solutions and feedback.

NIK: Does that step of the classroom visit with the observation--talking to the teacher, looking at notes, and then coming up with a recommendation--is that typical of the further meetings in your coaching cycle?

KP: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Like with Hannah. Her co-teacher asked me to come in because she needed to step out, and I saw that as an opportunity for me to go in and lead the class to show her what it looks like. We didn't meet and schedule time for me to come in. It was just an opportunity was presented.

KP's reflection revealed that she connected observations to her coaching conversations more flexibly than Rose. However, both coaches differentiated that connection to some degree depending on the teacher's needs. They also both used observations to encourage integration and reflection rather than to monitor implementation and fidelity.

Coaches strategically combine different forms. While Figure 9 may suggest that coaches included observations, resources, modeling, co-teaching, and co-planning one at a time in separate coaching conversations, they actually combined them at times for specific purposes. One situation illustrated how the coaches intentionally layered different types of interactions to achieve a desired outcome. During a coaching

conversation, Rose recommended modeling a suggested practice for Lorelei and included co-planning as part of that process.

So, I would love to come and teach a period for you. In the new year, I can look at some of the lessons and what makes sense. And then, maybe I can get with y'all, so we can plan together. It's just a way for you to kind of see the class from a different lens and maybe figure out what are some tweaks you want to make. "Oh, I like how you did this!" or "I don't think that'll work for this group."

In her post-conversation interview, Rose added co-teaching to their vision of that process despite it not being explicitly discussed during the conversation.

I think I really want to get in there and teach with her and then teach for her. I think that that will probably be the best way that I can support her right now because saying it--especially for a newer teacher--and seeing it is different than actually witnessing it and then participating in it.

Although Lorelei's reflection on the same conversation expressed her appreciation for the modeling idea, she did not allude to the co-teaching aspect of Rose's plan. That difference reflected a trend in the coaches having more collaborative plans in mind at some points than they shared with the teachers during their coaching conversations.

The coaches also surreptitiously used coaching conversations and other coaching interactions such as modeling and co-teaching to compensate for one another when either interaction was not as impactful as they hoped. KP discussed how a coaching conversation went differently than planned based on Lorelei's attempt to implement a seating practice she had modeled.

Keep in mind that I went into the class before I met with her and I did model for her how to move the students during class in real time. And because I modeled that for her, I thought that would take care of that. So, I planned to move on from that quickly. But listening to her during the conversation, there were a couple of exchanges that could have led to arguments. I got her to focus on the impact that it's making when she's not being consistent with the arrangement. I addressed that she shouldn't argue with the students and wanted her to have solutions in place in case students were argumentative about moving their seat.

Later in the same interview, KP revealed how she was planning to use co-teaching as a way to support areas in which she felt the coaching conversation fell short.

My goal was to let her know that it's trial and error. It is okay to set goals that you want to accomplish and continue to work towards them. But I felt that it was evident in her statements that she just didn't want to deal with the seating arrangements any longer. Because I didn't facilitate that well or move her in that direction, now it's just me going into class to support her.

Rose's unspoken plans and KP's hidden pivots reinforced a dynamic discussed earlier in relation to establishing and maintaining a safe space. While most connections between coaching collaborations were discussed explicitly, the coaches engaged in strategic sharing when withholding certain plans and decisions might lead to more constructive outcomes.

Connected to other professional support. Coaching conversations consisted of one instructional coach and one teacher collaborating on issues specific to that teacher. That individualized collaboration, however, took place alongside and in concert with an array of other forms of professional support. Within this study, teacher colleagues, other professional learning experiences, and school leaders arose as influential factors within the participants' coaching conversations.

Colleagues and professional learning provide content. In addition to administrators and school leaders, the teachers' colleagues played a role in several of the coaching conversations. The nature of that role depended on who initiated that part of the conversation. Teacher participants tended to cite their colleagues as sources of ideas or examples of practices they would like to emulate. For example, Lorelei credited a grade team member when Rose praised an activity she observed.

ROSE: It was a good balance! I mean, you had lots of options for him, so that was a good idea.

LORELEI: That's actually--I didn't make that assignment. [Another teacher] actually sent me the way she had done it with her kids. And I was like, "Okay." And so, that's when we made the templates and things like that.

In one instance, Hannah recalled another teacher's instructional practices for a different purpose. As discussed earlier, Hannah and KP's coaching conversations were unique in that they had established a foundation that allowed Hannah to debate rather than simply accept KP's suggestions. The following exchange occurred during a back and forth about resources KP provided that supported Hannah's co-teacher's tendency to move forward in the curriculum versus stopping to ensure understanding.

KP: When they come back, there's an EdPuzzle I created so you can use to quickly review. I just pulled a transcription and translation video with four questions in it and I'll send that to you. The questions I like, because they are straight-forward, and then you can move on to mitosis.

HANNAH: Mm-mm. Because I know overall they did not do. Now I feel like real review is something we have to do. [Another teacher] was really good. They took a test. You stopped. We spent the whole probably the next class reviewing the whole test and--

KP: Yeah, she just talked about that. That's what is working for her.

HANNAH: Yeah, she does that routinely. And I think last year that she did really good in her scores. When I think, it was because she was stopped every time. But we never go back and review what they missed.

KP: Okay. So, that's something that you want to share when you have your meetings. You want to share that with your co-teacher to let her know, "This works well for my kids. Can we repeat? Can you review the test and the answer choices that help them better understand?" Yeah--yeah, I definitely would recommend that. I can share it with her, too, but recommend--let her know, "Hey, this is needed."

Their exchange illustrated a few different ways in which other teachers played a role in coaching conversations. First, they were discussing differences in pedagogy between Hannah and her co-teacher. Second, Hannah referred to another successful teacher to reinforce her opinion. Finally, KP directed Hannah to follow up with her co-teacher herself and agreed that she would voice her support for Hannah's idea as well.

Coaches tended to bring up other teachers within their coaching conversations for one of two reasons. They either suggested ways the teacher participants could work collaboratively with the other teacher or offered to provide coverage so the teacher participant could go observe the other teacher. After KP provided coverage for her to observe a chunking strategy in action in another classroom, Susanna spent a large portion of her next post-instruction interview talking about what she had seen and how it gave her new ideas for her own instruction. KP used both of those strategies far more often than Rose did, which makes sense based on KP's longer history working with her staff.

Professional learning beyond the instructional coach featured in almost every coaching dyad. As shown in earlier examples, Hannah and KP folded the teacher's pursuit of broad field certification into their coaching conversations on a regular basis. In addition to offering encouragement on Mahogany's master's program, Rose also anticipated that professional learning about co-teaching would add to their conversations and interactions around the same topic.

Mahogany mentioned a professional development on Friday. So, we already had a plan. We're working with a local agency and they're coming together on a full day PD for our co-teaching couples. And so, I think once she has that experience it will--I mean, she had the experience of splitting the classes with me. That's one co-teaching model is splitting the class. She'll probably have a better idea of how to make it work. So, I think after she's exposed to the different strategies, the fact that she already had this plan for us in her mind makes me think that she's been thinking about how co-teaching could work to her benefit and the benefit of the students. And I'm wondering if--and I guess I should've asked her--if she's going to employ the same split, you know, dynamic, with her co-taught period. So, I'm wondering what that will look like with her. Because I need to go back and see, "What does it look like?"

Lorelei's own professional learning about social emotional strategies played two different roles in her coaching conversations with Rose. First, it positioned her in a redelivery role, with Rose asking questions to better understand some of the strategies and how Lorelei was integrating them into her existing routines. Second, it provided specific elements for Rose to observe and provide feedback on during her next classroom observation. In all three situations, the instructional coach viewed additional professional learning as a benefit for the teacher and asset to incorporate into their coaching conversations and overall coaching collaboration.

School leaders indirectly influence interactions. The two instructional coaches in this study differed somewhat in the degree to which their coaching interactions existed separate from or within their work with other school leaders. In addition to her reassurance about that separation with Susanna, KP also explicitly suggested that Hannah reach out to an administrator directly when the teacher inquired about feedback on how her performance might effect a desired change from special education support to classroom lead teacher.

On the other hand, during our first post-conversation interview Rose explained how she provided feedback from her observations to administrators in a process that is sometimes but not always transparent to all involved.

ROSE: When we do our co-observations, we have kind of, like, a reflection time after we walk out. And so, "What did you think? What did you see?" that kind of thing. I'll draft the e-mail and cc [the principal] or forward it to him. So, he--I can make sure that I capture what we both saw and I say thank you for allowing us to visit your room. If it is just me, it's just me.

NIK: So--I just want to be clear if I say in my notes--so, if it's a co-observation, then there's a co-reflection, like a co-email--

ROSE: Correct.

NIK: And if it's a single observation, then it's a single--

ROSE: It is just from me, but I do forward it to [the principal] because he is an evaluator, just so he can have some more qualitative data when he's on her formal evaluation.

NIK: And is that a part of the process that the teachers are involved in? Or cognizant of? Or does that happen just between you and the admins?

ROSE: Yes and no, and I just started doing this. I used to--when I did the co-observations--I would just cc the person so the teachers could see it. But then, I was thinking, like, as a teacher, how would that feel if my evaluator was on the e-mail. So, the only time I've put the cc is when we both were there. If it was just me, I forward it because I just don't [want them to] feel, like, "Well, why is she copying him?" But it's just an FYI. Literally, I forward them to say [to the administrators], "Hey, now you know I did the observation. I keep the hard copy of my notes for them. Here's what I share with them. So, maybe the next time you go in there, you can look for these things."

Rather than seeing this process as an extension of the administrator evaluating the teacher, Rose discussed in another interview how she sees herself as establishing collaboration among the administrators that did not exist prior to this year.

NIK: So, I'm hearing kind of across different conversations--a trend of a blend between one-on-one work with teachers and then situating that work within your work with admin.

ROSE: Yes, the teacher is correct to talk about that a little bit. Yes, so, it's been--most of this decision has been based off of last year where there wasn't--There wasn't fluid communication between admin--and when I say admin, I'm including our special ed department person and the coaches. It's so powerful because it helps me think about the various lenses that we have to think about when it comes to giving teachers feedback. Because I want to see what is the key lever? What's going to change that teacher's instruction? And it could be something that someone else notices that I don't, as I think doing the co-observation. And on top of that because I'm not evaluative I think it's important that we're all on the same page. Because. You know, it might be an uncomfortable situation if a coach has been seeing this behavior in the classroom. The admin sees this behavior and they don't align. So, that's been very purposeful this year and also beneficial, I think, for me as a coach as well as for the teacher.

Lorelei's final reflective interview at the end of the study reinforced that same idea.

I will say--and I know that I said this before--that this having an instructional coach that is actually involved has made a big, big difference this year. Because, I mean, my first year, we had a lady halfway through the year-- they gave her a different job. Still in this district, but a different job. So, she was only part time our coach. And so, we had a lot of lack of direction or, like, administration telling us one thing and them [the coach] telling us something else. And then you're just, like, "Well, screw it. I'm not doing any of these things, because nobody can tell me this." So, you know, I will say that this year Rose definitely is good at communicating with administration and then with us.

It is important to note that while the instructional coach shared information from observations she conducted, the same dynamic did not apply to her coaching conversations with teachers. Rose's one-on-one coaching conversations may have included some insight she gained from discussing teacher observations with evaluative administrators, but her collaboration with the administrators did not directly reference the coaching conversations she had with teachers. That duality across roles typified the balancing act inherent to coaching conversations being part of the larger school context.

The teachers and coaches also engaged with other school leaders in ways that connected to their coaching conversations. Those interactions either supplemented or provided context for the coaching conversations. The teachers and coaches both initiated

those connections at different times. Lorelei shared how her coaching conversations with Rose were related to but different from her work with her PLC chair.

LORELEI: I feel in our big PLC meetings where Rose is there--when we have combined meetings--it's a lot of conversations about overarching things, things that apply to all the ELA teachers and data and all that stuff. Which is good. But my conversations with Rose are very specific. So, it does all eventually relate. But it's, like, touching back to things that are required of everybody. And I think that even though they might be required of everybody--the way we get there--because all of our classes are different, looks different. So, I feel like the coaching conversation specifically for my class--it just connects back to that. But it's specific to us.

NIK: And Rose is also your PLC chair?

LORELEI: No.

NIK: Do you have conversations like those style conversations with the PLC chair? Is she a coach too?

LORELEI: No, she's not a coach. She is magnet seventh grade.

NIK: So, you wouldn't have those style coaching conversations with her? Those more live with Rose?

LORELEI: Yeah. I mean, I do sometimes. So, she knows a lot of them and so that helps, too, because she can give me resources or breakdowns for things that maybe I'm not as familiar with. So, for my conversations with my PLC chair, they're more like resource-based, and my conversations with Rose are more specific to my classroom and the curriculum.

While Lorelei reached out to another school leader based on the PLC's existing knowledge of their students, Rose folded in the special education lead teacher to complement her knowledge of the curriculum.

I'm purposeful about where I schedule times to do walkthroughs for that teacher. So, every other week I do a walkthrough with the special ed lead. Just looking at the co-taught settings. And I thought that was very important because I think, "Wow. She makes a good point as well!" When I go into a room on my own, I might say, "They're doing Engage. There are, you know, the kids are working in the text or interacting with text. Okay!" But she has that other lens of, "I don't see specialized instruction. Everyone's doing the same thing and what they're

doing is high rigor. How are you specializing for those kids that need it?” And so, meeting with her really helps both of us.

Lorelei’s and Rose’s reflections provided a clear example of the teacher and coach both engaging with other school leaders to supplement their conversations.

In her final interview for this study, KP alluded to the department chair’s role as part of realizing that she could have used their coaching conversations and her other coaching interactions in a way that better supported Hannah’s pedagogical growth alongside her personal goals.

NIK: Do you feel like your support is different in any way based on her change in roles?

KP: I do feel like I did rush her a little because I knew that there was a strong possibility that she would be having her own class and the department chair's watching you. You have to sell. You know this opening is coming up, so you have to sell yourself. If I could go back and do it again, I would have not put so much pressure on her to just, “The next class period, let's implement 3D!” You know, we could have practiced it a little bit more, talked about it a little bit more. I could have given her some more resources, or we could have watched the videos together and talked about the videos.

KP’s realization about Hannah’s pedagogical and personal goals continued a consistent trend of balance as an inherent element within the coaching conversations. Coaches balanced their responsibilities to teachers and administrators, and teachers balanced their own learning with their students’ needs. While those different external contexts informed the content of the coaching conversations, every teacher and coach also arrived with their own perspectives that formed an internal context for the conversation as well. One role of the coaching conversation was to bridge those different perspectives to allow for an authentic exchanging of ideas.

Conversations Bridge Different Perspectives

As described in Chapter 3's participant profiles, every participant entered the study with different personal viewpoints on two of the major processes within this study: classroom instruction and instructional conversations. Once the study began, other differences arose. The coaches periodically linked the coaching conversations backed to the curriculum, whereas teachers consistently connected the conversations to their students in some way. In addition to their students' needs, teachers also framed the conversations within their current instructional and personal contexts. Coaches, on the other hand, relied heavily on their previous experiences as a source of ideas and examples. The interplay of those different perspectives influenced every part of the conversations.

Views on instruction and coaching conversations. Since classroom instruction and coaching conversations played such central roles in this multi-case study, it was important to understand each participant's views as a baseline for attempts to integrate new knowledge and practices from the coaching conversations into the teacher's existing pedagogy. Chapter 3's description of the participants included statements gathered prior to any observed coaching conversations, in which teachers and coaches explained their views on classroom instruction and coaching conversations. Those initial statements served as one lens for analyzing the teachers' conversations, instruction, and reflections.

Although each participant offered unique statements on classroom instruction and coaching conversations, there were reoccurring similarities and differences. Their statements about classroom instruction varied to the extent to which those statements focused on the students or the teachers. Similarly, statements about coaching

conversations varied in their balance of focus between teachers and coaches. Finally, every statement explicitly or implicitly addressed classroom instruction and coaching conversations with regard to relational or practical interactions. Figure 10 situates each statement on a matrix of who the participant focused on more and what type of content they described.

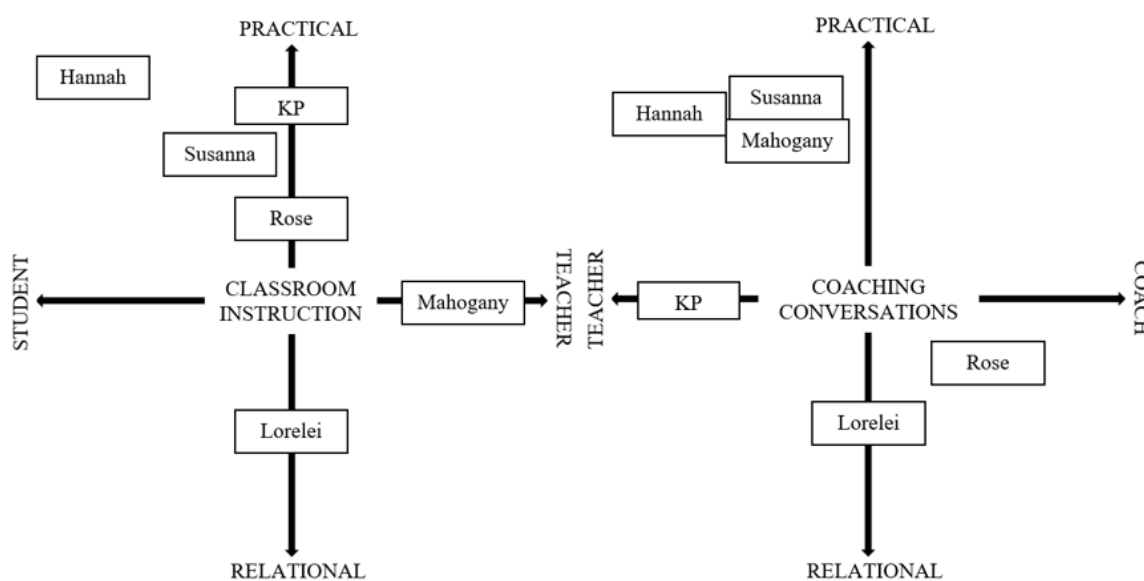


Figure 10. Matrices of initial statements about classroom instruction and coaching conversations.

The following statements from Chapter 3 are used here as examples based on their brevity and obvious differences. Hannah’s initial statement about classroom instruction was that, “Classroom instruction should be student led, where students are making the scientific inquires.” That statement was completely student-focused in that she did not mention the teacher at all. It was also completely practical in that she described what the students should be doing but did not include any social-emotional

aspects or interactions with others. Mahogany stated that, “I believe you have to know your students in order to deliver specialized instruction.” Her statement differed from Hannah’s in that Mahogany described what the teacher should do but not the students. While she did allude to the students, she did so as a source of knowledge and recipient of instruction rather than as active participants. Mahogany’s statement falls in a neutral zone vertically because “knowing your students” and “specialized instruction” both include relational and practical aspects and possibilities.

Considering the classroom instruction matrix separately through the lens of the multi-case study design revealed some notable trends within and among coaching dyads. The high school teachers expressed very similar sentiments with regard to classroom instruction. Hannah and Susanna both focused more on the student’s role than the teachers and discussed instruction through the lens of practical outcomes. The middle school teachers were less similar to one another, but Lorelei and Mahogany both included more relational content in their statements and focused more on the teacher’s role than the high school teachers did. The two coaches were very similar in their classroom instruction statements by attending to students and teachers equally with a strong focus on practical interactions. However, KP expressed views that were much more similar to her teachers’ than Rose did relative to hers. A future section of this chapter goes into more depth about how that misalignment potentially influenced the coaching conversations and how teachers and coaches navigated their differences.

The coaching conversations matrix mirrors the classroom instruction matrix with one exception. Given this study’s focus on coaching conversations as a form of professional learning, it places the teacher in the learner position and the coach in the

instructional position. Pairing the two matrices together exposed consistencies and inconsistencies across the teachers' and coaches' views on classroom instruction and coaching conversations. For one thing, half of the teachers showed very little movement across the two charts. Hannah and Susanna expressed similarly learner-focused, practical sentiments about classroom instruction and coaching conversations, while Lorelei maintained a balanced, relational view on both processes. Furthermore, KP focused exclusively on the teacher in her description of coaching conversations, and Rose focused more on the relational work of coaches. Overall, examining each matrix provided some frame of reference for observing both processes. Comparing them to one another illustrated the degree to which each participant saw classroom instruction and coaching conversations as similar learning processes.

Using the teachers' and coaches' initial statements as a lens for analyzing their subsequent interactions led to findings about relationships among the data. In some cases, multiple data sources reinforced the teacher's initial statement. For example, the content of Susanna's coaching conversations aligned with the practical, data-based focus of her initial statements about classroom instruction. In one conversation, she specifically requested help modifying her pedagogy to incorporate elements outside of that box.

SUSANNA: I'm all about making them a seating chart. I also would like someone else in there with me when I implement it, because I have a feeling I'll get a lot of--

KP: Well, it's all in how we sell it. But no problem. It's all in how we sell it.

SUSANNA: You can teach me how to sell it, then, [both laughing] because I don't sell things well.

KP: No problem.

SUSANNA: That's not one of my strong points. I'm very black and white.

In the post-conversations interview, Susanna further explained how the more relational aspects of instruction live outside of her existing pedagogy.

SUSANNA: Me and KP are very different people. She's a lot more theatrical than I am. So, some of her suggestions, I think, fit her really well, but maybe don't fit me as well. But I feel like she works pretty well to help me kind of figure out what's going to work for me. She encourages me to the fact that I can try stuff. And if it doesn't go great, I tried it and we can adjust everything.

NIK: I remembered hearing about, "It's all in the way we sell it." And you were like, "Awesome! So, show me how to sell it!"

SUSANNA: So, for me-- So, yeah, I'm not good at selling things. I'm black and white. I teach physics. It's black and white. I'm very blunt. I don't get super, like, cheerleader about. And KP is not like that. And she does. So, I really like when she comes in, because she brings in that aspect that I don't really have. Or, I guess--I'm learning, we'll say.

In addition to illustrating Susanna's practical views on classroom instruction, both of those aligned with KP's initial statement about coaching conversations. The coach's pairing of a practical suggestion (i.e., seating chart) with a relational suggestion (i.e., how you sell it) illustrated the balance between those two factors indicated in Figure 10.

In other cases, analyzing the initial statements in the study's larger context led to some juxtapositions among the different data sources. For example, Hannah focused on practical outcomes in her initial statements and repeatedly referred to her students' need for direct instruction. Both of those elements were indicative of a traditionalist pedagogy. However, her classroom instruction incorporated a mix of traditional and contemporary interactions. Field notes from observing her instruction included informal elements such as "engaged with one student (personal teasing)" and "Group 2 personal conversation about makeup" along with more formal elements like a forceful conversation with one student about being tardy by four seconds. My marginal note

about “traditional pedagogy versus casual interactions” led Hannah to talk through that contrast in the subsequent interview.

NIK: I noticed you have a neat balance between-- Where is it? [looking through field notes] So, you have, or say you have, a really traditional approach to pedagogy, but then a lot of your interactions with the kids are on a very casual level. Can you talk a little bit about that?

HANNAH: I don't know, I think it was more the--and I've had it since I've started teaching-- That's what [my field experience coordinator's] reflection was. Like, “Your conversation when you teach. It's not like a lecture, it's more of a conversation.” And I don't know, that's just something I've had. I just feel like when it's more conversational there's less stress on them to be wrong or, you know. For example, I'll wait until I hear the right answer, so I can hear what you know.

NIK: Yeah.

HANNAH: Or, you know, throw out a wrong word. And sometimes they might feel bad, but I always tell them, like, “At least you knew that word!” You know? But I'm just--I don't know. And then, my student teacher, she was really strict. My parents were military, so I think I just have, like--I was brought up to be really structured, and then I'm just--I want them to feel relaxed. It is casual, not-- For me to have a structure for them, but for them not to feel it.

NIK: Oh, yeah! Yeah.

HANNAH: I want to be structured in my--for me and them to feel, you know, free enough to, like, explore science to understand it.

NIK: I think I had a quote where you said, “It worries me when you say things like that!” Which is like saying that's wrong but it's not saying that's wrong. It's a different word. It comes from a different standpoint.

HANNAH: Oh, yeah. And I think I want them to know I care, like, it's not--I don't know. I think I want them to know that I care that they know it, and I don't think my teachers did that for me. They didn't care if I knew it or not, and I failed the test. You know? But I just want them to know, like, “I care if you know it. I care if you're saying it right.” And, like, one of them was like, “You know what I mean.” “No! I want you to write it down. I want you to say it right now.” And that's from my experiences with teachers that I've had. And that's, you know-- maybe that's my experience, too—like, they were like, “No, that's not that's not it. Let's get it right.” Yeah.

Hannah's actual instruction and explanation based on my reflective guiding question showed a more balanced approach to classroom instruction than she indicated in her initial statement and coaching conversations. This exchange also demonstrated the key role field notes played in exploring the observational data more deeply. Appendix J contains the field notes generated in relation to this interview as an example of how that data was collected throughout the study.

Differences based on roles. This study focused on coaching conversations as teacher-centered spaces for personal pedagogical growth rather than data-driven spaces for monitoring fidelity in delivering a specific curriculum or set of standards. However, part of the coach's role within the conversations was to balance standardized expectations of the curriculum and standards with each teacher's current proficiency and personal pedagogy. One on hand, the coaches kept their teachers connected to the curriculum by persistently returning to its documents and language. On the other hand, they also balanced that message with their concern for teacher buy-in and their role as support not enforcement. If coaches served as a voice for the curriculum within the coaching conversations, teachers served as a voice for their students. Even their personal labels for students revealed a deeper sense of connection. For instance, Lorelei regularly referred to her students as "my babies" and Mahogany specifically explained her connection as, "These are the kids that are unique...like, I'm a weird kid. So, we just all get along." That is not to say that the coaches ignored or overlooked the students' needs. However, the coaches' questions and suggestions tended to be more theoretical, while the teachers provided more specificity about their students' academic and behavioral contexts.

Coaches find curriculum connections. Both coaches consistently kept the curriculum alive within their coaching conversations, but their approach differed based on the curriculum's format. Rose referred to the online modules for EngageNY at some point within every observed conversation. The sample conversation at the beginning of this chapter included one example with Rose leading Mahogany through the different module components to figure out how Mahogany's video project could fit within the EngageNY lessons. When responding to the teachers' concerns about differentiating for their students, Rose always began by reviewing the associated documents before offering advice on adaptations.

ROSE: Were they engaged? Like, when you do the anticipation, those little statement questions?

LORELEI: Yes. Well, I would say most were engaged. Most of them had some sort of argument to make. But I will also say that I had some that the processing is not there and I'm not sure how to scaffold statements like that for those babies. But it was, like, you read the statement or you said, "Here. Answer these A, B, and C for this statement." And they were just like, "Huh? What do I do with that statement?"

ROSE: [referring to laptop] I'm trying to pull up one of the statements so I can--because I think seventh grade--it was lesson--it was from lesson one, but it was the homework.

LORELEI: Yes, that's what it was.

Whereas the middle school conversations stayed grounded in the EngageNY modules, the high school teachers did not have similar shared documents.

Integrating 3D science instruction involved more theoretical shifts in pedagogy than delivering specific lessons. KP kept her teachers grounded in the new curriculum approach by consistently using language related to 3D instruction within her coaching conversations. Even so, her focus on 3D was different between her two teachers. KP's

work with Hannah focused almost exclusively on the teacher's progress with integrating 3D instruction into her pedagogy. Therefore, every one of their conversations included discussion and debate about the use of phenomena, cross-cutting concepts, investigations, chunking, and student agency. KP's work with Susanna focused mostly on classroom management. The coach only mentioned 3D methods twice: once when advising the teacher that "you have to slow the content just a little bit in CP by talking about the phenomenon just a little bit longer," and once when suggesting that she use chunking "where you're splitting up the content if you feel like that will help them." In both cases, KP referred to 3D terminology through the lens of student needs rather than teacher pedagogy.

While acknowledging their role in connecting teachers to curriculum and best practices, the coaches also positioned that role within their overall support for the teachers. Rose voiced her desire to communicate that balance to teachers explicitly.

I don't want them to feel like, "All I hear about is Engage!" I care about their pedagogy. I care about your students. I care about those things. And a lot of times coming from so many different directions, from CO and all these other people, they feel that Engage is all people care about. And so, I'm trying to offer a happy medium and be kind of like a buffer. Like, "Okay. We're doing this. Everyone knows that we're doing Engage. Besides that, what else can we do? Because, like, Engage should bump up your own pedagogy."

Rose's reflection also added a layer to her role in relation to other school leaders. Her response to school and district leaders bombarding teachers about EngageNY was to become a "buffer" for the teachers. While she was comfortable being a voice for the curriculum, Rose did not want to become another voice for the administration.

The teachers at the middle school both expressed sentiments that matched Rose's overall goal and specifically her final thought about the curriculum itself playing a role in

growing their pedagogy. Mahogany explained that dynamic in a post-conversation interview.

NIK: And this is your first year with EngageNY?

MAHOGANY: Yeah, like, officially. Last year some of us did the first unit, like, the first three lessons at the end of the year just to kind of get a feel for it, but, like, this is the first official year. And it is good. It's best practices. It's not like-- I mean, we're teaching the standards. But, like--with me being a newer teacher-- sometimes it's hard for me to say, "Okay, what am I going to teach them before I do this lesson? Do they know--" You know kids. I can teach them one thing at the beginning of class at the end of class I asked them what we learned today they have no clue.

NIK: Yep!

MAHOGANY: So, we need to review, like, the concepts and sometimes that can take a little time, like, inquiry and different things like that. Modeling that first and then letting them go back to Engage and do the inquiry. But I feel like it's a good balance. Like, Rose-- it's not, like, pressure. "Oh my god, I can't believe, like, your pulling--you're spending too much time here!" I like that she is supportive when we have to pull out and do something different for a day. As long as you know the purpose is leading up to what they're going to be learning for the EngageNY lesson.

Mahogany's reflection reinforced Rose's vision of balance and further supported the idea of the coach supporting curriculum flexibility. Rather than focusing strictly on adapting the teachers' pedagogy to incorporate new curriculum, the teachers and coaches consistently collaborated on adapting the curriculum to fit student needs and to incorporate elements of the teachers' existing pedagogy as well.

Teachers share student needs. Teachers often considered their students' academic needs in relation to a program or class profile. As discussed earlier, Lorelei's special education inclusion setting played a major role in every coaching conversation. She referred to their readiness when justifying their slower pacing and adapting the curriculum to provide more scaffolding. Hannah consistently attended to her students as

English language learners and students with disabilities by taking ownership of their specific needs. In one of their coaching conversations, Hannah and KP discussed her English language learners in relation to 3D science instruction.

KP: In your fourth period, did you feel like you're incorporating some of this?

HANNAH: It's difficult. I don't know. I don't feel like sitting up there talking to them helps. So, they were like, "This is a lot of papers, Miss!" And I'm like, "Well...?" I gave them the diagram, and then I asked questions, and I split it up. But they don't--And I'm trying to get them to read more aloud and be comfortable with, "Okay, we don't know English. You know we don't know science. Let's just work together." So, as far as 3D my EL class, I haven't made it--

KP: Made it that far yet. But you still are chunking.

HANNAH: Yes.

KP: You are giving less because it's more a lot of repetition. When you asked me to cover your class, I found a video that basically was Spanish. The entire video was pretty much in Spanish. And after I had my group discussion and facilitated some things, I put the video on and I could see them making that connection.

In her post-conversation interview, Hannah also referred to 3D instruction as it related to documented needs within her special education population.

HANNAH: You know I felt like direct instruction was the biggest way students learn, especially our group.

NIK: Can you talk a little bit about our group?

HANNAH: Just my population, my special ed population. A lot of their accommodations include direct instruction, so with their attentive issues and their lack of verbal skills, having those conversations means that group discussion really doesn't pique their interests. I feel like having notes, having a topic really helps them learn.

In both of those examples, Hannah's comments focused on the students' cognitive needs and her pedagogical responses. KP's response connected back to curriculum terminology and focused on providing a resource in one non-English native language, despite multiple languages being represented among the students. That difference illustrated the student-

specific aspect that teachers brought to the coaching conversations based on their knowledge of the students and their subgroups.

In addition to status within specific programs, the teachers also discussed learning profiles of different courses and periods. Susanna's conversations with KP focused exclusively on adapting her existing pedagogy to address the needs of her CP students.

KP: So, let's start by talking about what class you would like for me to work with you on and what goals you want to accomplish.

SUSANNA: Okay, um, so, my CP Physics class and I can use a lot of assistance there. I don't have any specific goals, but I can definitely talk with you and we can work those out.

KP: Okay, tell me why you think it's your most difficult class.

SUSANNA: Um, it's my most difficult class because just getting--one, just getting them engaged is difficult, because most of the kids in that class are very apathetic. So, I have a group of kids who are apathetic. I have a group of kids who actually want to learn, are engaged the majority of the time, and then I have a group of kids who are, um--they just want do their own thing. They don't really care.

Although Susanna labeled the students as the source of struggle in this initial exchange, in further conversations and interviews she was open about how her lack of experience led to her discomfort with that class. In her final reflective interview, KP provided more background on Susanna's discomfort and noted how Hannah's experience with a different student population affected her pedagogy as well.

NIK: Susanna has stated that she connects better with the upper level kids and struggles a little bit with her CP classes. But it sounds like Hannah is the exact opposite?

KP: Right? You hit it!

NIK: Can you talk about that a little bit?

KP: Sure. So, that just goes to show every teacher has their own opinion in terms of how a classroom should be. Susanna typically doesn't teach CP Physics

students. We just had a shakeup in our master schedule. Susanna traditionally worked during her student teaching with honors students. She hadn't experienced working with students who needed more support. Hannah went to a Title I school, student taught in a Title I school. So, you see the difference. Different expectations yield different results. And finding that balance to be able to teach all levels of classes--it takes time, but you do need to be exposed to it.

By sharing additional information about the teachers' academic backgrounds, KP's reflection showed a parallel between how coaches attended to the differences between the teachers in the same way the teachers attended to differences among their students.

The teacher's role as voice of the students was not absolute, however. In another conversation between KP and Susanna, it was the coach who brought up needs among the students that revised the teacher's perspective.

KP: Because if you see that they weren't able to answer these DOK level one and two questions, somewhere we've missed the mark.

SUSANNA: Well, that's--I mean, that's theoretically what the closers are for. I've had compliance issues with them doing the closers.

KP: I don't think they like the closers.

SUSANNA: I think the closers are also--I've talked to [my PLC chair] about this--we built them for our honors course.

KP: That's what I was getting ready to suggest. They're probably too hard.

SUSANNA: They are too hard. I looked at one of them today. I was like--it's just--you're right. And so, that just--I mean, it just takes a lot of work. Essentially feels like starting from ground zero materials that we have for CP.

KP: But you can build and create as you go. And your instruction should be designed that way because it's based on what your students' needs are. So, if you are formally assessing them on the regular-- You know that, like you say, that these closers are too hard, then create a three-question, four-question quiz that you can give them instead of the closer. Because think about it-- students are doing really well in class. They're motivated. They like your energy. They're laughing at your jokes, feeling good in CP. And then they take their closer and then walk out the door feeling like they don't--like they failed here.

SUSANNA: I definitely agree with that.

KP reframed Susanna's perspective on the closers from a lack of compliance on the students' part to a need to adjust the content on the teachers' part. Rather than directly telling the teacher to make the change, the coach guided her in that direction and used student perspective to facilitate her understanding.

While teachers tended to discuss academic needs in broad strokes across groups or classes, their discussions of student behavior focused on individual or small group dynamics. One example of teachers connecting coaching conversations to individual student behavior involved Susanna and KP reflecting on pushback Susanna received on instituting a seating chart. During that conversation, KP advised Susanna to "stay steadfast with that because if the students see that, 'Oh, she gave up,' then they feel like they were successful. They won. And they are going to continue to try to run the class." In her reflective interview following that conversation, Susanna included the student in her larger discussion of having to consider individual behavioral trends when implementing KP's suggestion of a direct approach to establishing assigned seats.

The battle is when one student decides to not do what we set up, to do what they want to do instead. One, I have to consider "Is the student moving themselves because it's actually better for students?" Because I've had multiple students who move themselves because they are not going to function there. Or is it worse for them? You have students who also move out of the seat that you put them in specifically, and it's now going to be worse for them. Yeah, so, having to figure out that student and then figure out if it's best for them. Also figure out how much backlash I might get from that. Like, one of my students, I know if she chooses to move herself, I have to approach it in a very specific way, so that it does not go to a level 10 very quickly. Because that's just how she is.

Lorelei shared another example of student behavior as a mitigating factor when she pushed back against Rose's suggestion about having students engage in small group stations.

LORELEI: We have discovered that it doesn't really benefit our kids to have them move through stations. A lot of times what we'll do is we'll rotate the activity. Like, everybody stays in their group, but then the papers move for each group or turn. Or we do--we have a gallery walk. That was okay. Or we have them go from, like, poster paper to poster paper around the room.

ROSE: Got it.

LORELEI: And they're responding to something and we've done that with a couple of the Engage ones where it required them. But, more times than not, we will have them either to work with our partner or we will rotate the papers and other partners.

ROSE: And are the partners--are they heterogeneous, like, or a group based on ability or are they--

LORELEI: They are really based on the behavior of their peers. There are some of them that are moved entirely across the room from people they can't sit next to...I would like to be able to do ability grouping. Just, like, all my kids who have similar abilities are the kids that can't sit together.

ROSE: Really?

LORELEI: Yeah, or at least it feels that way.

Even though this study focused on teacher-centered conversations, Lorelei's reflection was an example of two ways student behavior factored into the coaching conversations. On one hand, teachers used the coaching conversations to get input on how to handle specific students' behavior. On the other hand, student behavior in the classroom had a direct effect on how the teachers approached transferring ideas from the conversations into their classrooms.

Differences based on experience. In addition to differences based on the participants' roles, the teachers and coaches also relied on different sources for their contributions to the conversations. Teachers responded to feedback or suggestions through the lens of their current contexts and sought feedback on recent classroom experiences. Coaches served as a source of ideas and reflective questions. In addition to

their knowledge of the curriculum, they tended to rely on their own experiences as classroom teachers as a source of new ideas and guiding questions.

Teachers focus on current context. In addition to connecting the content of coaching conversations to students, the teachers also used the conversations to share and reflect on current issues of personal and instructional relevance. As discussed earlier, Hannah's upcoming transition to a lead teacher position through additional certification featured in both of her conversations with KP, and Mahogany mentioned in passing that she was set to begin a master's program. An earlier section also alluded to KP checking in on Susanna's status as a new mother. However, Susanna's recent maternity leave also played a major role in her difficulties connecting to the students in her CP course. She and KP devoted the majority of their first conversation engaged in exchanges similar to the following example.

SUSANNA: So, so far--I've just tried--I've tried--one, getting to know the students because I'm coming in this semester a little late, so I didn't really get to establish a routine that I would have liked at the beginning of the semester. So, trying to get a routine down in that class would be really helpful. Um, basically so far I've just been trying to get to know the students.

KP: So, unfortunately--you know, this is the normalcy when you're coming back in after the students were able to do some things that, um, [laughing] that they are not normally able to get away with.

SUSANNA: Yep.

KP: They were able to do them with the sub.

SUSANNA: Mm-hmm.

KP: So, it does take some time. Please don't feel like you're doing anything wrong. It just--it's a process.

SUSANNA: Right.

KP: If you look at it that way and know that every day you are getting to know them a little better. They are getting to recognize your expectations. Every day it will get better. Then, I think you'll be successful in getting the class where they need to be throughout the semester.

SUSANNA: And I think my management in the past has been, um, being personal with the students. Usually, if I'm personal with enough of the students I can get a group that's on my team! [both laughing and smiling] They shush each other. And I'm not there yet with them at all.

KP: Ah!

SUSANNA: They're already all friends and this is their territory!

KP: And you're stepping back in.

SUSANNA: And I'm stepping back in.

KP: Right.

SUSANNA: And so, I've got to--

KP: So, now we have to reverse that.

Along with her discomfort with teaching her first CP course, Susanna's lack of a relationship with her students and the students' extended contact with a substitute teacher lay at the foundation of many of the struggles she discussed in her coaching conversations. The teacher also returned to that issue when explaining her hesitation about certain suggestions from the coach.

SUSANNA: --Plus with the seating chart, too. I always struggle with the balance between letting them sit with their friends, because they actually talk to them when they work. Because, like, I just moved seats in another class and no one speaks. It's so quiet!

KP: And you don't want that, I know.

SUSANNA: It's so weird. I'm like, "Talk to your--" I'll ask questions. I'm like, "Turn and think, pair, share." Nothing. "Talk to him. It's your neighbor. It's fine." It's like they don't know that I'm being serious.

KP: And now they won't talk?

SUSANNA: To anybody! It's so awkward. And I'm already awkward enough. I'm like, "I want you to at least talk." They're getting a little better. I think they have, like, they have to get used to that person that they're sitting next to and get used to me. So, I always struggle with that, especially with CP kids. It's about the balance of having them sitting next to someone that they will ask that question because they don't know how to do it, but they won't ask me. They'll actually ask their neighbor who's their friend, as opposed to putting them next to someone random and they'll just sit there.

Susanna's tendency to cycle back to the same obstacle repeatedly occurred in multiple conversations. An upcoming section of this chapter explores that tendency more thoroughly along with other ways teachers responded to suggestions within the coaching conversations.

Teachers also used coaching conversations to share their upcoming plans or reflect on recent classroom instruction. Sometimes they shared their plans in response to a coach's questions, and sometimes they volunteered that information to receive feedback and additional new ideas. Mahogany's video project in the sample conversation at the beginning of this chapter was one example of the teacher sharing upcoming plans that connected to a line of questioning Rose initiated. Susanna explicitly tied ideas about upcoming instruction to an earlier attempt to implement KP's suggestion about using stations with her classroom instruction.

KP: Any other strategies that you were able to implement?

SUSANNA: I did. I don't know if we've talked about this yet, but I did the stations for their review and it worked. The first couple of stations they were kind of, like--the lollygagging or whatever. And then it was like they were like, "Oh, hey, I got it now!" And I encouraged them, being like, "This is--this will help you on your test." And so, in that process they made a study guide which was a little packet that they already had. And then they could use that when they did test corrections. So, it was full circle. And they liked changing activities. It was too much with nine stations to do it, though.

KP: And you were a little over ambitious on that. But I like the concept.

SUSANNA: So, next time, maybe I should do half the stations but still keep them in small groups. Double the stations so you only stay on one side.

KP: That'll be a good trial and error.

SUSANNA: Yeah, having them do different things every 15 instead of, like, five, six, seven minutes.

KP: Okay. Oh, okay. Yes, I agree. One of the cheerleaders was talking about this. I forget her name. Yes, she was talking about how she felt prepared for the test.

SUSANNA: Yeah?

KP: Yeah, she said, I think, "I did okay. I think I did okay!" But she was very excited. And I know that was a contagious spirit for her friends. The ones that like to hang around her but not do a lot of work.

Susanna and KP's exchange illustrated how the teacher arrived at the coaching conversation prepared to share not only a reflection on her instruction but also a potential modification she was considering in future instruction. KP's conversational move of pairing her own reassurance with feedback from a student served both a practical purpose with respect to instruction and a relational purpose of supporting the bond with her students that Susanna felt was lacking.

One final finding in relation to teachers discussing their current context in the coaching conversations was the different ways in which teachers sought input and assistance from the coaches. For instance, the majority of teachers' requests for assistance came in response to the coaches specifically asking how they could help. The only two times a teacher asked for help directly were Lorelei's questions about which rubric they were supposed to use for an assignment and why her students could not access a file on the assessment platform. Both of those were logistical rather than pedagogical concerns. Within the observed conversations, the teachers never explicitly

asked for specific instructional assistance without the coaches' prompting. Instead, they indicated their need for support indirectly in some consistent ways. The following examples came from different conversations with each teacher.

HANNAH: But now I'm worried because I'm, well, not so far, but probably a week or two behind everybody and I don't know if I'm going to be able to finish.

MAHOGANY: But, like, I don't know what--I don't know what to do to, like, spark things for them. I don't know. I really don't know.

LORELEI: I am not sure--Okay, to be very honest, I'm still trying to work through some of the details and how I want to present the writing to them and walk them through it. I'm not sure yet.

SUSANNA: I can tell you I've given up on that one. Well, I haven't completely given up on it.

In every instance, the coaches responded with reassurance and either specific suggestions or options for the teachers to consider. By stating their current context in negative terms, the teachers had revealed their need for assistance without directly asking for it.

Coaches draw from previous experience. Although the coaches consistently maintained a connection to the curriculum within their conversations, that was not their only source of ideas. Every coaching conversation also included some reference to the coach's personal classroom experience. For instance, the coaches routinely invoked specific references from their past when providing examples for the discussion at hand. The coaches also turned to their own experience when the teachers asked for novel input rather than reflective feedback on the curriculum.

Each of the coaches had one aspect of their previous experience that they consistently turned to as a reference point. KP spoke about stoichiometry—the relationship between substances in a chemical reaction (NGSS Lead States, 2013)—in conversations with both high school teachers. Despite the fact that neither teacher taught

chemistry courses, KP consistently connected their current instruction to her previous experience teaching other content in similar situations.

SUSANNA: Yeah. So, that was good, because today we went over it. We went over a lot of math, which is--

KP: Sometimes I did the same thing in chemistry, Susanna. If I knew that my students were going to be working on solving stoichiometric problems and gas law problems, and I recognized way back that they didn't even know how to count significant figures or convert units, then I spent a lot of time there to get them ready for it. And there's nothing wrong with that. Yeah, don't feel like you have to accomplish meeting all the standards by a certain time. It's not realistic, right? And, like you said, your students--they need more repetition, they need more practice, they need a lot of you explaining on the board and modeling for them to meet them where they are. Because some growth is better than no growth.

As discussed earlier, KP acknowledged that she was just beginning to learn the physics standards. Speaking from a place of comfort and experience allowed her to confidently reassure Susanna about her instruction. KP used her references to illustrate a common point about pedagogy rather than to reinforce specific content.

Likewise, Rose brought up the concept of a print-rich environment—one that includes literature, information, stories, rhymes, songs, charts, and poems (National Council of English Teacher [NCTE], 1997)—in each of her conversations. Searching EngageNY's modules (EL, 2013) for that term yielded no results, and searching for each of NCTE's examples separately revealed that non-book components such as anchor charts and posters featured widely in the younger grades but tapered off by middle school. It would appear that Rose drew from her English teacher experience rather than the current curriculum when looping that element into coaching conversations.

In addition to routinely turning to specific references, the coaches also mined their past teaching experience when the teachers asked for new ideas or when the coach decided to offer new options to augment instruction or address student needs. Their

recollections tended to follow a few patterns. The first was proactively providing teachers with resources from a past experience of their own that lived outside of the current curriculum. For instance, Mahogany expressed concern about the historical context of their EngageNY module's central text. In their next coaching conversation, Rose not only shared a suggestion for theming the entire classroom around the text but also arrived with posters and supplementary texts to do so.

MAHOGANY: Yeah, because the kids...I might lose them. I want them to stay engaged with this because there's so much they can learn from it.

ROSE: It's gonna be--it's gonna be good. So, speaking of, these are some exemplars [laying out poster-sized laminated resources] of what I'm talking about having. Usually when I introduced a text, and just throughout the unit, I would have everything about the text all over the room. So, various--like, these anchor charts talking about symbols, characters-- Sometimes I'd put, like, sticky notes about the character or whatever we talked about and keep that up there. [Mahogany sorting through resources while Rose paused to focus on different ones] And this storyboard, I usually put this on the outside of the door. So, it'll say, "Eighth Grade Is Reading" and then you'll put the book cover up and just anything you can think of. So, this is just plot information about-- I love this. So, this might can go outside of your classroom, on the inside-- Just, again, anchoring what you're doing throughout.

Rose's suggestion displayed another common aspect of coaches sharing their own experience with teachers. Part way through her description of the resources, Rose shifted from first-person to second-person. "I usually put this outside the door..." became "you'll put the book cover up." Along with the fact that Rose had never taught eighth grade, that shift in person indicated that Rose went from sharing her own past practice to actualizing that practice in Mahogany's present. That subtle shift allowed her to suggest implementation without overtly pairing "One thing I did..." with "...so you should, too."

In her post-conversation interview, Rose explained that she valued that suggestion because she had seen its effect through positive student outcomes.

Or, you know, there's books like--I think I was teaching, what was I teaching? It might have been *To Kill a Mockingbird* last year and I had, like, books about whatever. Just on the panel of my whiteboard and just around the room. And one kid, after he was done with his quiz, he just went like, "Oh what's that?" It was a picture book, like a photographic book, like a coffee table book. It had a lady--she's, like, the famous lady with a dirty face and she's, like, holding up...something, I don't know. It reminds me of that Dust Bowl, that whole thing. So, it was that book, and he grabbed it and, "Oh!" Just kind of flipping through the pictures. You know? So, I want her to definitely do that for every text or if the topic just points [to a theme] or if the module is going to be like thematic, everything. Like for seventh grade their topic is working conditions. So, everything in her room needs to be something that's along those lines that are related to the content of the text.

Rose's reference to seventh grade, which did not teach *To Kill a Mockingbird*, further demonstrated that coaches did not just make direct connections between the current curriculum and their past experiences. They also adapted high-value personal practices to fit the teachers' current context.

Although Rose did not address her reflection directly to the teacher, pairing a suggestion with a story of student success was a final common approach coaches took to sharing experiences from their past. KP took that approach when helping Susanna think through better ways to handle a recent classroom argument with a student.

I did have this one young man that stands out because he was trying to argue with me and we--You don't want to ever argue with a student or go back and forth with them. He was upset because I broke up his group. He kept asking me, "Why! Why do I have to move?" So, everyone else moved and I said, "Okay, you know what? You're by yourself. Show me that you deserve to stay back here and I will not harass you." And that was the same student that came to the board three different times to work out problems because he wanted to show me that he could sit back there and handle it. But you know what it was? I worked with him to form a relationship. There; you see the power in that?

In her post-conversation interview, Susanna specifically alluded to her appreciation for KP's teaching experience as filling in the gap created by her own inexperience.

NIK: What is the relationship between that one occurrence or those types of occurrences and your work with KP?

SUSANNA: Well, being a newer teacher, that is one of the things that you fear is that you're going to have something like that go down. And really the only way to really learn, I think, is to experience it. So, it gave me experience that I could share with KP. Then she can use all of her experience that she has from all her years teaching, and give me ideas of, maybe, what I did good, what I can do next time make it [better], and just give me ideas of things to try.

Susanna's reflection on her coaching conversations illustrated three of the major findings discussed so far: shared control, safe spaces, and different perspectives. First, she arrived prepared to lead at least part of the coaching conversation by seeking input on her recent experience. Second, she thought of that negative student interaction as a valuable experience she should share with her coach. Her decision to expose a negative experience that only she knew about up to that point illustrated her faith in the safe space of their conversations. Third, she specifically highlighted the different perspectives that she and her coach brought into their conversations. Susanna valued accessing KP's years of experience as a way to inform and compensate for her own inexperience in the classroom. Each of those aspects played a role in laying the groundwork for the teacher to integrate the content of the coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy.

Integration Begins by Responding to Input

Teachers began the process of integrating the content of the coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy during the conversations themselves. Rather than providing content for the teacher to integrate on their own, the conversation served as a collaborative space to begin connecting the content to instruction. Using Knight's (2009) teacher-centered coaching model, the teachers were empowered to choose which content from the coaching conversations to pursue in their classrooms. They were also responsible for the instruction that incorporated that choice. The coaches provided input during the conversations, supported teachers' efforts in the classroom, and facilitated

their reflections afterward. The teacher's response to the coach's input represented an intersection between their roles and served as the first step in the process of integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy. Appendix K contains a comprehensive account of how the teachers responded to coaching input during each of the observed coaching conversations.

Comparing the various coaching conversations allowed me to conceptualize the teachers' responses, decision making, and planning into three interpretive categories. These categories captured the form and function of the teacher's response. *Nominal acknowledgment* described short or nonverbal responses that acknowledged hearing the coach's input but did not lead to any further discussion on the teacher's part. *Likeminded discussion* involved the teacher agreeing with the coach's input and adding their own ideas during a continuing discussion. *Constructive pushback* involved the teacher explaining their resistance to the coach's input or offering an alternative suggestion. Figure 11 displays the nature of each dyad's interactions as a conversational flow characterized by the teacher's concerns, the coach's input, and the teacher's subsequent response.

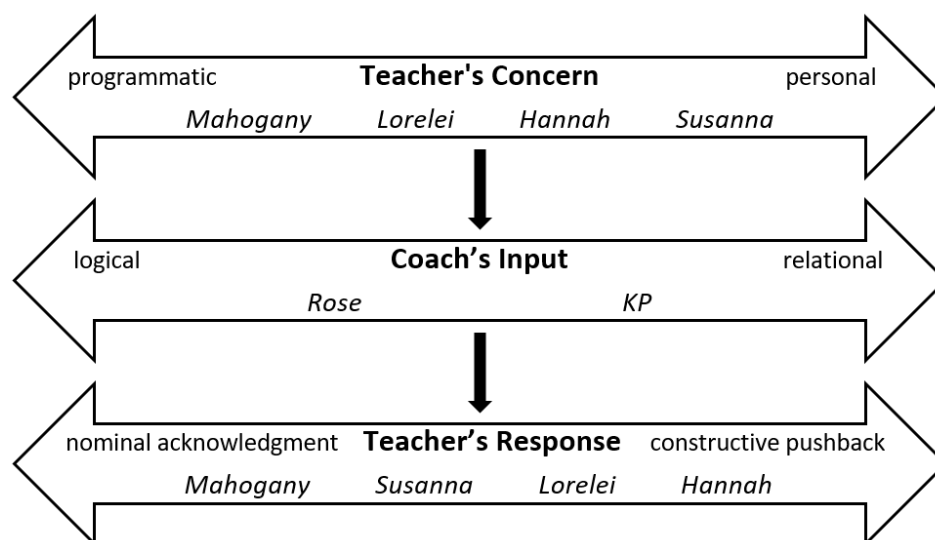


Figure 11. Continua of conversation interactions within dyads. The response continuum shows only the anchoring extremes without the centrist response of likeminded discussion.

Other researchers may have organized these responsive interactions differently. For example, someone using a more quantitative lens to assess the response's impact on instruction may have arrived at categories such as null, low, moderate, and high impact responses. Someone arranging these same qualitative categories from positive to negative interactions might have used different adjectives to describe *discussion* and *pushback* and placed them at opposing ends of a continuum because discussion has a positive connotation and pushback is typically viewed in a negative light. However, using this study's theoretical framework of social constructivism and transformative learning theory led me to arrive at categories that reflected the relative level of social nature and transformative potential of the different responses.

Table 8 indicates several trends across coaching conversations, but understanding the qualitative nature of those quantitative findings required analyzing them alongside other related data. For instance, Hannah received far fewer unique points of input from

KP than any other teacher in the study. One might assume that their coaching conversations were simply shorter than the others. However, their conversations were fairly consistent in length with the participants. In actuality, the primary differences lay in the amount of time they spent discussing each of KP's points and in that Hannah responded most consistently with constructive pushback. The relationship between those two data are explored further in the findings related to that response type. Additionally, it is clear that Susanna and Mahogany engaged in nominal acknowledgment far more often than the other teacher participant at their site. As shown by these examples, considering multiple sources of data was a vital component of interpreting the form, function, and rationale of the teachers' different responses to the coaches' input.

Table 8

Distribution of Teacher Responses across Coaching Conversations

Response category	Hannah-KP		Susanna-KP		Lorelei-Rose		Mahogany-Rose	
	<u>CC1</u>	<u>CC2</u>	<u>CC1</u>	<u>CC2</u>	<u>CC1</u>	<u>CC2</u>	<u>CC1</u>	<u>CC2</u>
Nominal acknowledgment	1	0	5	1	1	1	8	1
Likeminded discussion	1	1	1	2	5	1	4	3
Constructive pushback	2	3	1	5	1	3	2	1

Note. CC1 and CC2 indicate first and second observed coaching conversation.

Table 9 illustrates a snapshot of coaching input and teacher responses within one coaching dyad. The following findings related to the three categories of responses include descriptions and examples from each of the coaching dyads. In most cases, the

teacher's response led to a reply by the coach that moved the conversation on to a new talking point. There were occasions, however, when the coach's reply led the teacher to respond in a new way to the same topic. The examples are not intended as an exhaustive list of occurrences within each coaching conversation. Instead, they are used to illustrate how commonalities and differences led to an understanding of teachers' responses with regard to the integration process.

Table 9

Example of Teacher's Responses to Coach's Input

Date	Coach's input	Form of input	Teacher's response	Coach's reply
Nov. 30	3D instruction	Question "Did you feel like"	CP Student needs	Framed as opportunity for growth
	Provide independent resources	Directive "So continue to"	NA "Yeah"	Shared additional rationale
	Differentiate pacing	Directive "I tell you all the time"	CP Worried about finishing	Reassured
	Lesson openers	Directive "You just"	LD "Yeah. I know and..."	Celebrated success
Feb. 15	3D instruction	Directive "We're gonna have to"	CP Student needs; LD "as I understand more"	Acknowledged obstacle; Appealed to existing pedagogy
	Student work packet	Question "Do you feel comfortable"	CP Student needs; CP Shared alternative	Shared additional rationale; Supported decision

Note. CP indicates constructive pushback, LD indicates likeminded discussion, and NA indicates nominal acknowledgment. Directional arrows are included when the coach's reply led to a new category of teacher's response about the same input.

Nominal acknowledgment. Nominal acknowledgment involved teachers responding briefly or nonverbally in a way that did not elicit a substantial reply from the coach or engage the coach in further discussion about the input. This category of responses was the most elusive to delineate, and the label for this category of response changed throughout data analysis as deeper understanding evolved. Earlier conceptions included *brief agreement* and *responding briefly or nonverbally*. The first label accurately described the form of these responses with regard to their brevity, but further analysis revealed other functions in addition to agreeing with the coach's input. In an effort to widen the scope of the category, I eliminated reference to its function altogether in the second label. The result was a label that described what I observed but did not encompass any interpretation of the interactions. The proposed interpretive label captured the open-ended nature of both the form and function of the responses.

Brief or nonverbal responses. Teachers communicated nominal acknowledgments through brief verbal responses or visible but nonverbal reactions. *Nominal* was defined as “merely named without reference to fact or reality; not substantial; very small in relation to an expected or required outcome” (“Nominal,” 2009) and referred to the form of the responses. Those definitions referenced both the brevity of the responses and their low transformative potential relative to the other categories. The majority of the verbal responses included just one- or two-word or a non-word utterance such as “Mm-hmm.” Teachers who frequently expressed nominal acknowledgments tended to use the same ones repeatedly. For example, Susanna and Mahogany both responded to roughly half of their coaches' input with nominal acknowledgements. The majority of their combined responses involved some form of

“Yeah,” “Right,” or “Mm-hmm.” Mahogany also consistently demonstrated nonverbal responses by taking notes on Rose’s suggestions. In a post-conversation interview, Rose alluded to noticing the role of note-taking in their conversations.

NIK: I had made a note that you have a consistent either habit or approach of rewording the things that she says she's doing in common language into ed-speak. Which is a confident thing.

ROSE: Yeah! It's like, "Oh, I'm doing that? I've heard that word before." Yeah, I saw her writing it down. She's like, "Oh, that's what that is. There we go."

NIK: Right.

ROSE: She doesn't have the language for it, but then giving her that language. It's the same things we use with kids. We reword it to them.

As with the other nominal acknowledgments, note-taking demonstrated a low but visible level of interaction and did not significantly impact the next steps in the conversation.

Although teachers were not required to respond in any given way, some nominal acknowledgments equated to smaller responses relative to the volume of input from the coach. For instance, another component of the abridged sample conversation involved Mahogany responding nominally to a great deal of input from Rose.

ROSE: Okay, every time when I do the pacing, I use the overview to help me kind of navigate. I also use it if you kind of want to get a big picture of the unit or the module. I also like using--if you go into each unit folder, if you scroll all the way to the bottom-- After all the various lessons is a document called Overview. It's like a unit—Module 2A Overview. I love--

MAHOGANY: Instead of the lessons?

ROSE: Correct. It's a general overview. It tells you the standard, tells you the learning targets, supporting targets, assessment, and any anchor charts that go along with it. It just gives you kind of, like, you know, a bird's eye view of the unit. So, if anything--and again, I don't want you to work on a lot during the break--but if anything, I would review those documents to kind of just give you--because some things that you may be thinking [about], it's probably already in there. Because, like, Engage, like I tell everybody, is just good teaching.

MAHOGANY: Right.

ROSE: And it's good planning and so, things that we're thinking is already in there. Even with, like, when I was helping the seventh grade with Liddy. I was like, [snapping and talking excitedly] "Oh, I'm gonna do all these things!" and it was in--when I read and studied the overview, it was in there. Even, like, the task of—now, creating your ideal work environment, like--that was something I came up with, but their performance tasks kind of align with-- I told them to kind of go and find your favorite name brand. Then, research how the products were made, and then determine, based on your research, was it poor working conditions, you know? Before, it was, like, Nike sweatshops, Nikes, the Nike factory and blah, blah, blah. And so, looking at--I don't know, Polo or Tommy Hilfiger. And so, their performance task was researching the garment industry. So, as a front-loading activity. It's already in there. And so, when we do a lot of background--I think Engage--they do-- And it depends on your philosophy. Either you want to give them all the nuts and bolts on the front end or you want to scatter it throughout. I think you still can scattered throughout, but you want to set a time for--[Mahogany taking notes and nodding in agreement] set the setting and set a purpose for reading. Once they are in it, they're gonna--they're gonna plow through that book. And I would venture to say that your enhanced [classes], they're going to be able to read the whole book.

MAHOGANY: Mm-hmm.

Mahogany's nominal acknowledgments to Rose's lengthy input included a one-word response, a non-word utterance, and the nonverbal response of taking notes.

Their exchange also demonstrated another common pattern among nominal acknowledgments. In just over two minutes, the coach provided the teacher with at least seven points of input: accessing the platform, review curriculum materials, sharing a personal classroom example, adapting a provided resource, considering one's personal philosophy, and anticipating a positive student outcome. Several similar exchanges revealed a trend of teachers responding with nominal acknowledgments when the coach provided several different types of input using a fast-paced delivery style with few pauses in between thoughts. That finding suggested that the nominal form of some responses resulted not only from the teacher's views on the content of the coach's input but also the

way in which that input was shared. The volume and pacing of input from the coach likely elicited the teacher's acknowledgment rather than prompting discussion or pushback against its content.

Agreeing, listening, and avoiding. The definition of *acknowledgment* as "recognition or confirmation of the receipt of something" ("Acknowledgment," 2009) best captures the multiple functions that these responses served. Some other definitions reference the positive function of acknowledgments. Similarly, early rounds of analysis labeled the responses as *agreement* based on the positive connotation of the words and phrases involved. In addition to the previous one- and two-word examples, teachers also used phrases such as "That's a good point" and "I hear you." However, analyzing the responses in the context of the entire conversation, the teacher's interviews, and classroom instruction revealed that they did not always indicate agreement. Those multiple sources of data allowed me to delineate three functions that nominal acknowledgments performed for the teachers: agreeing with the input, indicating active listening, and avoiding further discussion.

The initial conception of nominal acknowledgments as expressions of agreement was not completely mistaken. There were several instances when teachers responded positively and either integrated the input immediately into their classroom instruction or discussed their agreement with the coach at greater length during follow-up interviews. Mahogany's responses in two different coaching conversations demonstrated those dynamics and emphasized the role of multiple data sources in exploring this category. In her first observed conversation, Mahogany responded nonverbally by taking notes and nodding in agreement as Rose shared her suggestion and rationale for adding a video of

Jay-Z and Oprah discussing “the n-word” to an upcoming lesson as an alternative form of text. Mahogany went on to integrate that video along with two others she selected to illustrate the same central message. In her post-instruction interview, Mahogany credited Rose’s input with providing the spark that she then added to and integrated into her instruction.

While I was watching the video she suggested, I just remembered that Oprah went to Forsyth and thought it would be a great connection. Then, the Maya Angelou video was one that my co-teacher found.

That process showed a clear flow of input, acknowledgment, integration, and reflection. Mahogany’s addition of her own ideas along with Rose’s input highlighted a pattern common across nominal acknowledgments. Rather than implementing suggestions verbatim and crediting the coach’s input directly, teachers often integrated the core idea of the suggestion and reflected on what they did to integrate it into their instruction.

The teachers universally used positive verbiage to express nominal acknowledgments, but they did not always intend to indicate agreement. At times, they served a more social purpose of indicating that the teacher was actively listening to the coach’s input. This was particularly evident in Susanna’s responses to KP. While Mahogany indicated her engagement by taking notes, Susanna did not. Instead, she periodically responded to KP’s input with the nominal acknowledgments “Right” and “Mm-hmm.” In her explanation of qualitative research dynamics, Given (2008) described how “neutral encouraging noises, such as ‘Mm-hmm,’ all serve to enhance communication” (p. 8) by demonstrating active listening. Examining the related data revealed some connections between those responses and Susanna’s attempts to integrate the input. Each time she responded with only those nominal acknowledgments, she did

not attempt to integrate the content into her classroom instruction. However, she did attempt to integrate the content of instances when she paired nominal acknowledgment with another response. For example, she nominally acknowledged KP's suggestion for reducing wait time at the end of class, then added on a qualifying statement showing agreement.

KP: Well, we can put some things in place. Some strategies we can look at to keep the kids engaged during the entire class. And when you plan, overly plan. Plan more for them to do, they start to stop looking at the clock--

SUSANNA: Right.

KP: --or watching the time because, "Oh, I have to get this done" or "We're doing this" or "She wants me to have this done or I'll get a low grade."

SUSANNA: That would be awesome!

She subsequently attempted to integrate that suggestion into her existing pedagogy, along with another suggestion that she responded to by pairing nominal acknowledgment with constructive pushback.

In the previous examples, the teachers responded with nominal acknowledgments to either express their agreement with the coach's idea or show that they were engaged in the conversation. One instance with Susanna illuminated a third function. She used nominal acknowledgments to avoid further discussion of input she did not intend to integrate. Within a single conversation transcript, her responses could be read as either agreeing or actively listening. However, as shown in the following data thread, the teacher actively used nominal acknowledgments to avoid discussing a topic that she knew the coach valued but she did not.

Susanna mentioned her and KP's differing opinions on pop quizzes while talking about the value of coaching during her first post-conversation interview.

I feel like I can always turn and go talk to [KP] and get legitimate feedback about what I need to change or what maybe--just things I could try in my class. And again I know there are some differences between me and her. She likes to give pop quizzes. I do not like that. They're a little stressful for me. And so, sometimes we go back and forth about things like that, but it's just nice because I feel like she can help me be a better teacher.

Pop quizzes had not come up in the preceding coaching conversation, but Susanna explained during member checking that they had discussed them as a possibility during the previous school year. KP did bring them up repeatedly in their second observed conversation.

KP: So, chunking the content, splitting up their content and giving them an assessment--breaking it up in the middle, you know--I think will make a difference. Yeah, and also being able to get that instant feedback if you give them more pop quizzes. I think that will help you determine how to move and how to drive instruction. Because if you see that they weren't able to answer these DOK level 1 and 2 questions somewhere, we've missed the mark.

SUSANNA: Well that's--I mean that's theoretically what the closers are for. I've had compliance issues with them doing the closers.

KP: I don't think they like the closers.

SUSANNA: I think the closers are also--I've talked to [my PLC chair] about this--we built them for our honors course.

Based on Susanna's constructive pushback, the focus of their conversation shifted from pop quizzes to the appropriateness of the CP resources for her students. KP returned to pop quizzes later in the conversation and referred back to the same colleague whom Susanna referenced in her initial response.

KP: He also agreed with pop quizzes to give them, too. To help boost their grade where you-- Giving a quiz, maybe one or two questions that pretty much cover what you just discussed in class.

SUSANNA: That's a good point.

KP: Questions that you know your students will be able to answer with just a little bit-- Maybe more extension, maybe towards the last question.

SUSANNA: Yeah, I like that.

KP: You build up their confidence, up their grades.

SUSANNA: Definitely like that.

KP: He said that will be okay. Yeah. So, I did get his permission before I came down. I think that would help out in this class, too, because, like you said, they are now feeding off your energy, but you do want to build up their confidence.

Having initially suggested an alternative idea, Susanna responded to KP's continued input about pop quizzes with a series of nominal acknowledgments. Her responses ended their discussion of that strategy, although KP did include it her recapping of suggestions at the end of the conversation. The increasingly positive wording of Susanna's nominal acknowledgments potentially meant that she now agreed with implementing the strategy. However, as Susanna explained in her next post-conversation interview, that was not the case. Susanna returned to the pop quizzes as an example of their collaboration.

NIK: Shifting gears, how do you feel like this conversation--you mentioned beginning this semester--how do you feel like these current conversations will connect to your continuing work with KP?

SUSANNA: I mean, just having her in my classroom because--I mean, you're in your classroom all the time, and you don't know what happens in other classrooms. And so, I like having her come in and just see. And so, whenever I have a problem, I always come to her. Sometimes her suggestions have worked really well and I attempt to implement them. And sometimes they're just a different style. Like, I know she loves pop quizzes. I'm not a fan of pop quizzes. It's--for me to come up with something off the top of my head, it doesn't work as well for me as it does for her. Because I've seen her do it. It's impressive. But she definitely gives me a lot of options that I can implement, or if it doesn't work, then I can try a different one. Or maybe, if it doesn't mesh well with my style, I can try to figure out something else. So, she is definitely who I go to if I have issues--her or my PLC chair.

Having noticed the misalignment of their views during the conversation, I probed Susanna further.

NIK: How do you guys handle when there's something you just don't like? Like the pop quiz type thing?

SUSANNA: I mean--I remember--I don't know. She has talked to me about the pop quizzes multiple times, and I just haven't done it. And she--when she has substituted in my class before, she has given them, so I've been able to see her actually implemented it in my class. We haven't really talked about it. I haven't said, "I don't particularly like that." I mean--I usually present the fact that--I'm like, "I don't know if that would work." But she gave me an option, but I can just pick something else.

NIK: I think that's a key word - options.

SUSANNA: Yes, she gives me options. I know she likes that one. Yeah, but I don't do it. That being said though, I haven't tried it.

Susanna reflected on the misalignment between their views on KP's input and the fact that she did not explicitly express her disagreement with the strategy during the conversation. The teacher viewed the strategy as an option she was free to choose or ignore. Instead of articulating her choice directly, though, she used nominal acknowledgment to avoid further discussion of the topic once the coach's advocacy continued past her initial pushback.

Nominal acknowledgments were characterized by their brevity, positive wording, and open-ended purpose in response to the coaches' input. Their open-endedness often required analyzing multiple sources of data to uncover what purpose they served in a given conversation. Likeminded discussions shared the aspect of positive wording but differed on the other two traits. They involved longer exchanges between the teacher and coach, and the teacher consistently used them to communicate agreement with the coach's input.

Likeminded discussion. Likeminded discussion resembled nominal acknowledgment in that the responses often began with similar wording. Table 9

includes an example of a response that started with a common nominal acknowledgment, “Yeah,” then continued with a positive transitional phrase, “I know and--.” The alignment of viewpoints and the resulting insertion of the teacher’s own understanding defined this category’s form and function.

Exchange of similar ideas. Compared to nominal acknowledgment, these responses were much easier to categorize. *Discussion* arose as an initial code and remained consistent throughout further data analysis because it reflected the lengthier form and informative function of these exchanges. Rather than providing a one-way acknowledgment or challenging the coach’s input, these responses served to explain or add to a common understanding of the content. *Likeminded* arose later in iterative coding. It replaced *agreeing* and *understanding* as earlier options because it captured the fact that the teacher and coach shared similar perspectives on the coach’s input.

While likeminded discussions were longer exchanges than nominal acknowledgments, they were also less uniform in their length. The example response from Table 9 led to a short discussion that ended Hannah and KP’s first observed conversation.

KP: So, just stay positive, happy, supportive, and continue doing the openers. Because you just truly facilitate taking the discussion or showing that's something that's happening in the world to get the conversation started. You know, continue doing that. That's the easiest part that of the lesson.

HANNAH: Yeah, I know, and I like-- They apply what they know. And you're like, "Well, that's not...but we'll go with it!" And they're like, "I see, kind of." And then, some kids, you're like, "Well, you just ruined the whole phenomenon!" [both laughing]

KP: And that motivates them, too, you know!

In addition to agreeing with the coach's input, the teacher briefly provided specific details from her own experience which led the coach to reply with a quick celebratory statement.

Other examples of likeminded discussion involved more back and forth between the teacher and coach.

KP: All right, so, I have a couple of recommendations for you moving forward. I did speak with [your PLC chair] about chunking the content. He said it is OK. Continue to do that. And he also says you can give them a test--you can chunk the test. You can give them a test every two weeks, where you're splitting up the content if you feel like that will help them. So, maybe after you go over unit one.

SUSANNA: That may be helpful. We're talking about restructuring CP altogether.

KP: Okay! Because it's too much--based on what I'm hearing from you, it sounds like it's too much for them.

SUSANNA: Which means it becomes too much for me. It's really hard to guide them when--

KP: They feel like they can't--

SUSANNA: They feel like they can't do it because they just-- There's no grit. There's no grit--no grit! And so, in physics you have to have grit or you're not going to be able to do it.

Interestingly, this likeminded discussion occurred directly before the earlier example in which Susanna avoided further discussion of pop quizzes. Susanna's initial response to KP's input on chunking--"That might be helpful"--was similar to her nominal acknowledgment of KP's continued input on pop quizzes--"That's a good point." In this case, however, the teacher went on to connect the coach's input to existing plans she had in the same vein. Her response led them to discuss not only the idea of chunking but also their similar views on student needs. In both examples, the teachers went beyond simply agreeing with the coach's input by adding their own ideas to the discussion.

Connecting, reflecting, and accepting. Beyond the differences in length, the previous examples also showed two different connections teachers made through likeminded discussion. Hannah added specific details from her own experience, and Susanna connected the input to her existing plans. Those two connections accounted for the majority of likeminded discussion. As reported earlier, the teachers tended to talk about their current contexts, while the coaches responded with connections to their previous classroom experience. The middle school teachers, in particular, tended to respond to Rose's input by talking through their existing instruction or upcoming lessons. The dynamics at the two schools likely influenced that trend, since working within a single, cohesive curriculum allowed the middle school coaching conversations to be more content- and lesson-specific. Two other functions of likeminded discussion occurred with only one teacher at each site and in opposing pairs. Susanna and Lorelei both layered self-reflection into their discussions, while Hannah and Mahogany used likeminded discussion to indicate their acceptance of the coach's input after engaging in constructive pushback.

As profiled in an earlier section, Susanna responded to KP's input about the importance of student engagement by reflecting on her implementation of stations to make the learning more hands-on and build in movement throughout the lesson. They engaged in likeminded discussion by adding onto one another's ideas rather than simply acknowledging them or offering alternative options. Lorelei and Rose engaged in a similar exchange about opportunities to differentiate a lesson resource.

ROSE: Yes. Yes. That's good, though. I mean, I like that, and I like that the kids, they have several options. There was a bank of options for them to choose from--all reacting to the same video. For the special ed kids, was there--did they all watch the same video?

LORELEI: It was all the same. Hindsight, I would choose a different video for them that could use closed captioning.

ROSE: Smart! Smart.

LORELEI: Because even with our regular babies, you know, they were trying to get quotes from the video but they couldn't see the words yet. And so, there were parts where--it was one of the ones that you sent...

ROSE: Oh, was it the working conditions?

LORELEI: Yes. It was a nine-minute one, yeah. I would find them a video that can have a closed captioning, so they can pause it and copy it from the screen.

ROSE: I was going to suggest that, or I was going to suggest maybe-- It's kind of challenging for a shorter video, but even for a longer video, having, like, the minutes of the video [labeled] and then, stop. Pause it. "Answer this question, so I know that you're paying attention." At 1:15 of the video, pause it again. "Answer this question." Not for everyone, but for select students, especially the ones that you know they're, like, you know wandering around. And that's your way you to check for understanding for those kids. Then, you have some that can get through a whole video and do their whole assignment and they're fine.

LORELEI: I mean, I had some kids watch half the video and do the whole assignment. All right. OK. That wasn't the instruction, but you did it, so great in theory. Not entirely in execution.

ROSE: What would you have done differently?

LORELEI: I would--I would have maybe given a couple of options for videos, not just one. I mean, give them two or three, or even just said, "You can either watch this one long video or you watch these two or three short videos."

ROSE: Same topic, same concept. Okay.

Lorelei's response communicated two messages in terms of likeminded discussion. First, she anticipated that Rose's question was leading to the need for differentiation and shared an idea that preempted that feedback. Second, she responded to Rose's subsequent input by reflecting on her execution of the lesson and immediately sharing a future adjustment. Throughout that exchange, the coach responded to the teacher with questions and

suggestions that kept their likeminded discussion grounded in the teacher's original self-reflection.

Likeminded discussion was not always a teacher's immediate response to the coach's input. There were also instances where the teacher used likeminded discussion to demonstrate accepting the coach's original input after initially responding with constructive pushback. For example, Hannah and KP's final observed conversation centered on Hannah's views on 3D science instruction.

KP: The kids who are not as engaged with 3D as we want them to be--we're gonna have to give them some warm-up questions and make them answer. [Hannah raising eyebrow] Yes! In [another teacher's] class, they have to come up and answer to you. They're getting out of the seat, off the phone. They did pretty well. It's all in how you sell it.

HANNAH: They are not the type to-- We pulled out the higher levels and they are taking the--

KP: That's true.

HANNAH: Yeah. Taking another track that went physics. And then, see, we really have--especially with sped--a low-level group. And I think we failed to realize that their reading levels are not much different than my sped kids and that means we really can't just give them a bunch of reading when they struggle with reading, period.

KP: Yeah. They turn away from it.

HANNAH: And a good student would say, "Okay. Here, let me read this." Even our one kid that does his work and does try to read and probably has an average-- he struggled.

KP: He did. He sat down. He just laughed.

HANNAH: So, even though we have those kids try, I hate when I see kids that's struggling and frustrated. That's when I know that's the day to pull back.

KP: Yeah, it's different. I can go in another teacher's room and get different reactions from the students. It's like you're saying; it's the type of students that we do have. So, we have to support the 3D--give a little bit more to the process, so that the students don't feel like their failing, like, really affects them. And that's what I've started to get. They're like, "Well, they're not teaching us!" And when

they keep saying that, you know that means they need more meat. And it's okay to have an instruction lecture. It's okay for it to be that way when you have students who want it. They're not going to sleep on you. They're asking you to teach them, and if they are asking you to teach them, then teach them. Right? You know there's nothing wrong with that.

HANNAH: Yeah. I think I am--as I understand more what it's supposed to look like and what student it would work with, you know? I now understand that aspect of it. You are letting them discover and ask questions. But, like I said, you need that type of student. But I do like the way they work together and are able to work with something like the models at their desk. I don't know what that does to them.

KP: Well, they see that as an opportunity--

HANNAH: I mean, I do want to practice, just for the sake of 3D, you know. I would like to work--that would be a goal of mine. To see where it fits in my class and my structure.

KP: So, next school year with you starting 3D as your own classroom, that's where you'll get the opportunity to work in more student-centered activities. Because, yes, you provide the structure. Your classes are very well managed. You don't have issues with classroom management, but you still want to grow the student and grow yourself.

Hannah's initial response to KP's input was to push back by explaining the misalignment between 3D instruction and her students' readiness. KP replied by acknowledging that obstacle and reassuring Hannah that she was making appropriate decisions for her students. Hannah responded to that new point of input by shifting into a likeminded discussion of integrating aspects of 3D instruction into her existing pedagogy. The fact that she embedded, "But, like I said, you need that type of student" within her statements of new understanding demonstrated that she accepted KP's input without abandoning her own beliefs. That blending of new knowledge and practices into existing pedagogy was precisely what this study set out to explore.

Constructive pushback. Hannah's constructive pushback in the previous example illustrated the similarities and differences among the three ways teachers responded to the

coaches' input during coaching conversations. Constructive pushback was least like nominal acknowledgment in that the responses were extended rather than brief, worded as problems rather than positives, and served a clear purpose of expressing misalignment between the coach's input and the teacher's current viewpoint. Interestingly, Hannah initially responded with what could have been a negative nominal acknowledgment by raising her eyebrow at KP's suggestion. However, she went on to elaborate on that initial reaction through constructive pushback. Although constructive pushback was likeminded discussion's opposite in terms of its purpose, the two were similar in length of interaction and clarity of function.

Exploration of different ideas. The defining characteristics of constructive pushback coalesced as a separate category early in data analysis. While reviewing transcripts and field notes from coaching conversations, I noticed that teachers expressed their hesitation or disagreement with the coaches' input in ways that redirected rather than interrupted the flow of the conversation. Early codes for those data included *misalignment* and *declining intervention*. Misalignment described the reason for the response but not the action it involved. Declining intervention became too restrictive in that declining implied a finite response that ended any discussion, and intervention implied that all input was focused on fixing a problem. *Pushback* eventually arose from Susanna's quote about "going back and forth" with KP about ideas that aligned with their different pedagogies. That label for the form of the responses captured the interactive nature of the teachers responding negatively, but in a way that involved continued discussion.

Constructive as a label for the responses' function resulted from a process of discovery and connection. First, comparing multiple transcripts and their associated data sources led to a realization that teachers were not pushing back to justify not implementing a suggestion. They were more likely to respond with nominal acknowledgment if they had already made that decision. Instead, their pushback tended to involve exploring other options and developing deeper understanding for themselves and the coaches. That finding aligned with the social constructivist element of this study's theoretical framework. Applying *constructive* as the function to pushback as the form created a label that communicated the potential the exchange of opposing viewpoints had for leading to new understanding and authentic integration.

Explaining, sharing, and negotiating. Teachers responded with constructive pushback to the coaches' input in three common ways. The most common was explaining how the new knowledge or practice did not align with their current contexts. The contexts ranged from student readiness to timing within the school year. Teachers also shared their differing ideas and alternative plans related to the input. Finally, constructive pushback often involved negotiating toward a partial or adapted integration of the input into the teachers' classroom instruction.

Teachers connected much of their coaching conversations to their current students, and this was particularly true when responding to input that they did not feel supported their students' needs nor aligned with their abilities. Hannah and KP's example from the last section was a prime example. In response to KP's directive about increasing student participation, Hannah explained that KP's input would be valid for some students but not her current population. She felt that they lacked the skills to

engage in the more rigorous and independent aspects of 3D instruction. Hannah explained her resistance to fully implementing 3D as, “I hate when I see kids that's struggling and frustrated. That's when I know that's the day to pull back.” That was a common theme among teachers’ constructive pushback based on students’ needs. Rather than focus on the difficulty of integrating the strategies from a delivery standpoint, the teachers tended to express concerns about the negative impact integrating the input might have on students who were unprepared for it.

Teachers focused on their own difficulties less frequently and explained them through a situational or personal lens rather than a student lens. For example, Susanna cited the nature of her course load to explain her difficulty implementing KP’s input on building student agency.

KP: So, sometimes they just--they want to lead and they don’t know how to tell you that. Or they don’t--sometimes they don’t want other students to see that they are asking for that. So, if you present them with opportunities, they actually will thrive and come to life in your class.

SUSANNA: Yeah...and I mean, I think that’s the hardest thing for me, too, because with Honors, I have a lot more experience.

KP: You do, you do.

SUSANNA: And so, I don’t have to stretch them as much to make them engaged. They just naturally do it. And in my CP class, it’s harder when I teach five Honors courses and one CP to--

KP: Shift gears.

SUSANNA: To all of the sudden be like, “Wait. These kids aren’t going to do what the other 130 kids I teach do.” And so, definitely just trying to adjust that.

KP: And that can be a fun thing for you. It is the first class of a day.

[at the same time] KP: So, it gives you an opportunity

SUSANNA: And I would like it to go well!

KP: Yeah! It gives you an opportunity to learn how to work with all levels of students.

SUSANNA: Mm-hmm.

KP: So, you can look at it that way, too. “And I get to try these strategies that I wanted to but didn’t have to with Honors.”

Susanna’s resistance to integrating KP’s input grew from two layered situational contexts. She already had less experience teaching CP courses, so implementing anything additional to her instruction would be more difficult. On top of that, the fact that it was her only CP course meant spending more time planning instruction that fewer students would use.

While Lorelei was recounting a recent professional learning experience, Rose interjected with an aspect that Lorelei responded to with constructive pushback by explaining her personal history with handling misbehavior. This example from Lorelei demonstrated that pushback did not necessarily mean resistance.

LORELEI: So, it was really beneficial. I think, even in some ways, more beneficial for me than it will be for my kids.

ROSE: It helps to reflect on something in order to think about how to change it. Because some of it--you might have to change your own behavior in those areas.

LORELEI: And that's hard to do, because I know I'm not always a pleasant person. And sometimes my kids get on my nerves.

ROSE: No! You're always pleasant. What are you talking about?

LORELEI: I am--I have a baby in my first period who would definitely disagree with you today. I had to, like, take him into the hallway and apologize because I was not--I was not nice.

ROSE: That change may not be something that's immediate but you want them to see, like, “She made an error. She's human, and she apologized about it even though I'm a kid.” You know a lot of times teachers may come from, “I'm the teacher. You're the kid. Even if I mess up, you're not good enough to apologize to.” And that's not the case, so that helps building that relationship as well.

LORELEI: I mean, it used to make me crazy. Like, if a kid got in trouble, and then they're like, "But I didn't do it!" and you're like, "Well, sit down anyway." This isn't like that. It's like, "Hey. That's my bad. Just have a seat for me. I apologize." Yeah. And just move on. It's quick. It, like, takes two seconds.

ROSE: And he respects you more because you go out and you apologize.

LORELEI: Yeah. I hope.

The teacher was not resisting the idea of changing her own behavior; rather, she was explaining her difficulty with that change. KP and Rose responded to Susanna and Lorelei's struggles by reframing them into opportunities for growth, which was a common reaction coaches had to receiving constructive pushback.

In addition to explaining their hesitancy or difficulty in terms of their classroom and personal contexts, the teachers also shared their own ideas and plans in response to the coaches' input. This form of constructive pushback resembled likeminded discussion, except that the teachers were sharing alternative ideas and plans that differed from the coaches'. For example, Susanna's reaction to KP's input about pop quizzes began with her response that her existing closers accomplished the same goal. Their exchange was one of the few times that constructive pushback included a coach actively disagreeing with the teacher's existing plans. That may explain why, the next time KP brought it up, Susanna responded with nominal acknowledgment despite knowing she would not implement the suggestion. More frequently, the coach tended to follow the teacher's lead and shift gears into talking through their existing plans. For example, when Mahogany responded to Rose's input on preserving class time for discussion rather than reading a long text.

ROSE: Now, the only downside of it is they don't have their books to take home. So, what I would typically do is I'll sign a couple of chapters, or I'll say, "Hey, by this time, you should have read this chapter because on this day we're doing this.

Because every day we don't have time to read. We'll just read little snippets." Things that I want to kind of emphasize.

MAHOGANY: Well, what I did with *Inside Out and Back Again* is I put the PDF in Classroom. And then I also, like-- I was doing reading session videos of me--

ROSE: Nice. Okay!

MAHOGANY: --reading the books to them.

ROSE: So, they have access to internet, the majority of your kids?

MAHOGANY: Sure, they can do it on their phones.

ROSE: OK. Because with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, that's 31 chapters. You're not gonna be able to read that whole class. So, you'll need to break that up and assign little chunks for homework.

MAHOGANY: Right, and how we got through the last little bit of *Inside Out and Back Again* is we did a jigsaw. I assigned the groups, like a certain amount of pages. They had to summarize and then they had to get up and present it to the class.

ROSE: And that's fine, too.

MAHOGANY: And then, you know, we just kind of reiterated, "Okay. I also have these pages in Google Classroom. Go back and listen to the audio." And then, their homework was kind of, like, you know, a refresher. "Go back and answer some questions."

ROSE: Correct. Because they can get the gist of the book without reading cover to cover, and we want to use our class time to dig deeper.

In this example, Rose made two different suggestions and Mahogany responded to both by sharing her existing plans. Rose replied to that constructive pushback by asking guiding questions and confirming the validity of Mahogany's ideas. In this case, the coach's role in constructive pushback was building her own understanding of the teacher's existing plans, rather than trying to convince her to change them.

Constructive pushback through negotiation involved elements of both understanding and persuasion and occurred in two ways. In some cases, the teachers

referenced one of the previously discussed contexts as a source of difficulty, then stated that they would follow through on the input once those circumstances changed. During a coaching conversation in late November, Susanna acknowledged the value of KP's input but not the timing.

KP: You've been focusing so much on the delivery, of just making sure you get it out there. But you want to focus on giving them opportunities to show you what they know, too.

SUSANNA: Right, and the closers are not--

KP: So, when I say chunk it, cut it down. Take one concept from unit one and two that you feel that the students need in order to be successful. Take that one specific area. Focus on that. Give them an opportunity to practice and assess them on it. It can be two questions at the end of the day.

SUSANNA: I think for next semester, like, I definitely want to do that. I don't think I can do it this one. There's just not enough--we have seven days left.

KP: You do. Just keep in mind you don't have a high stakes test. So, you could realistically do what you want with units one and two. We all know that that's all that you're going to be able to cover. And that's okay because you came in in October. We're fine. You will be able to catch them up to where they need to be to be successful at the next level. So, you might want to--

SUSANNA: But at this point all they know is unit one.

KP: That's OK. That's OK. The key word is they know it. So, now they can be successful with building upon it. You don't want your students to leave feeling as if they're not doing anything and feel like they failed.

SUSANNA: So, for now I'm going back over stuff that I've already taught them. "Remember when you did this? Remember when we did that?" So, when I start chunking unit two in January, now I know that they foundationally at least have some math skills because I taught it to them.

KP: I love that you say that. You were in the PLC meeting and you said, "Well they don't know it, so I'm re-teaching it. I can't move on."

Susanna's concern for the students' lack of foundational readiness and the timing of their conversation prevented her from readily agreeing with KP's input. Through constructive

pushback, they negotiated integrating the focused chunking strategy when the time was right.

Teachers also negotiated through constructive pushback to arrive at an adaptation of coaching input that they had initially opposed. For instance, Lorelei pushed back on Rose's suggestion to add an element of parent communication to the social contracts Lorelei started after professional learning.

LORELEI: There was a little caveat at the bottom for repeat offenders. People who you think may not stick to that. Well, what happens is you're going to work if you break our social contract. So, then you have your--we don't have enough yet, but there are your consequences. So, the first time is verbal warning. The second time is the lunch detention. The third time is lunch detention and a phone call. Whatever.

ROSE: Have you thought about having parents sign the social contract? "Hey, first period parents--this is what we agreed upon."

LORELEI: I haven't. I think that starting out of the school year, that maybe something. Yeah. I think so. But for this point in the year, I don't know. I'm not saying it would be a bad thing. I don't think there's any negative effect of it. I'm not sure that there would be positive effect of it, either.

ROSE: I'm just wondering if, like, you're going down the list of consequences and one of them is a phone call home and then, they're like, "What are you talking about they didn't follow the social contract?" I mean, so, they might change the verbiage when you call or if it has been a situation where you haven't called this parent at all. You know, it's just something to consider.

LORELEI: I think I could probably put them on my Google Classroom pages. That's good. That's out there. And even just, "Hey, take a look at our classroom."

ROSE: Exactly. And they're there. I think that covers you.

LORELEI: Yeah. No. That's a good idea.

After Lorelei initially pushed back with an intention to implement Rose's suggestion in the next school year, Rose provided additional rationale which led to an adaptation of her original input. The coach's specific example of a possible negative outcome and her use

of “I’m just wondering--” and “Something to consider--” guided the teacher’s thinking but empowered her to make the decision. The negotiated outcome reflected the coach’s original input through a lens with which the teacher was more comfortable.

All three types of responses involved the teachers responding to their coaches’ input in the way that made the most sense for them at that time. Nominal acknowledgment was the least interactive and most open-ended. Likeminded discussion and constructive pushback were more extended interactions based on how the content of the input was aligned or misaligned with the teachers’ current practices and contexts. Coaches maintained the teacher-centered safe space of the coaching conversations by replying to the teachers’ responses in ways that allowed the teachers to begin deciding whether and how to integrate the input into their existing pedagogy. The next section details some findings related to that decision-making process.

Integration Continues through Teacher-Driven Decision Making

Responding to input was the first step in the decision-making process of integrating the content of coaching conversations into the teachers’ existing pedagogy. As shown in Table 10, there were some notable trends among the integration outcomes related to each type of response to input. Constructive pushback occurred the most often and showed the most diverse relationship to integration outcomes. That was partially due to the fact that teachers sometimes began with constructive pushback and followed up with a different response based on the coaches’ reply. For example, Susanna’s initial constructive pushback about pop quizzes led to nominal acknowledgment of the idea. Overall, teachers were least likely to begin integrating input that they responded to with nominal acknowledgment. Likeminded discussion and constructive pushback showed

similarities and differences that mirrored the relationship between their form and function. On one hand, they showed similar frequencies related to attempting to implement and beginning to integrate some elements of the coaches' input. On the other hand, they showed opposing trends with teachers being more likely to integrate the entirety of likeminded discussion but integrate an adapted version of input that received constructive pushback. Although there were some observable trends among response types related to the next steps of integration, there were no direct correlations with a teacher's response leading invariably to a specific outcome.

Table 10

Frequency of Integration Outcomes by Response Types

<u>Integration outcomes</u>	<u>Nominal acknowledgment</u>	<u>Likeminded discussion</u>	<u>Constructive pushback</u>
Did not attempt	9	1	4
Planned to implement in the future	1	1	2
Attempted to implement	1	2	2
Began to integrate some elements	2	5	4
Began to integrate all elements	2	6	2
Began to integrate adapted version	3	3	6

Note. Integration outcomes for input that received two different response types are reflected in the frequency counts for both types.

Deciding among influential factors. The three most common factors among different integration outcomes were alignment of the input with their existing pedagogy, feasibility of integrating the input within their current classroom contexts, and consistency with other influential voices. Table 11 reflects the decision-making processes involved with the input from one coaching conversation and illustrates

variances among the teacher's response, the integration outcome, and the rationale for the teacher's decision.

Table 11

Example of a Teacher's Decision-Making Processes

<u>Coach's input</u>	<u>Teacher's response</u>	<u>Integration outcome</u>	<u>Rationale for decision</u>	<u>Source of rationale</u>
Over-plan to reduce wait time	Nominal	Attempted to implement	Aligned to pedagogy	Researcher interpretation
Positive environment	Constructive > Nominal	Planned to implement in the future	Restricted by context (students)	Discussed during conversation
Student-led closure	Nominal	Did not attempt	Misaligned to pedagogy	Researcher interpretation
Differentiate pacing	Constructive > Nominal	Began to integrate	Multiple voices with same idea	Discussed during conversation
Eliminate back row seating	Constructive	Attempted to implement	Misaligned to pedagogy	Stated during interview
Flexible seating arrangement	Nominal	Did not attempt	Restricted by classroom design	Discussed during conversation
Stations	Likeminded	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy	Discussed during conversation

Note. Nominal indicates nominal acknowledgment, Constructive indicates constructive pushback, and Likeminded indicates likeminded discussion. > indicates one response type leading to another.

The decision-making processes in Table 11 varied in three ways with regard to how Susanna responded to the coach's input, whether they decided to integrate it into their instruction, and what factor influenced that decision. For one thing, similar responses led to different integration outcomes depending on the factor the teacher considered most influential. For example, the teacher's responses to prioritizing positive environment over academic content and differentiating the pacing followed a similar

pattern of constructive pushback leading to nominal acknowledgment. However, she made different integration decisions based on different factors. The teacher expressed that her current classroom context prevented her from prioritizing environment over content, but she appreciated that having the coach share similar input as other colleagues helped with the decision to differentiate the pacing of her classes. Second, even similar integration outcomes arose from different rationales. For example, the teacher responded with nominal acknowledgment and decided not to implement student-led closure or flexible seating arrangement. While one did not align with her existing pedagogy, the other was not feasible within the physical context of her classroom. The final difference had to do with whether and when the teacher shared the rationale for her decision. If the teacher did not specify her reasons during the coaching conversation or a follow-up interview, I interpreted the rationale based on other data sources.

Figure 12 summarizes qualitative findings related to the rationale and source of rationale for the different integration decisions each teacher made during this study and to the thought process behind the teachers' decision about integration. The teachers' typical responses constituted a continuum of rationale from contextual to pedagogical. The following examples provide more detail on how alignment with existing pedagogy, feasibility within current context, and consistency with other influential voices factored into teachers' next steps in the decision-making process around integration.

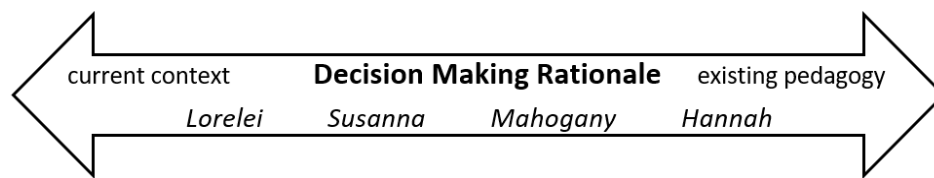


Figure 12. Continuum of integration decision-making rationale.

Alignment with existing pedagogy. The teachers' existing pedagogy played a major role in deciding whether and how to integrate content from their coaching conversations into their classroom instruction. The majority of teachers' decisions related to whether or not the coaches' input aligned with their existing pedagogy. Across all eight observed coaching conversations, the teachers found the coaches' input to be aligned or misaligned with their pedagogy in equal measure. Within-case and cross-case findings within those overall trends included the degree of reliance on pedagogy as a rationale and how the participants navigated the perceived alignment or misalignment.

Hannah was unique in that all of her decisions about integration were based on the input's alignment to her existing pedagogy. Her conversations with KP consistently focused on the teacher's ongoing challenge of meshing the inquiry nature of 3D science instruction with her more traditional existing pedagogy. Hannah tended to respond to KP's questions and suggestions by pointing out the misalignment between what she saw as valuable for students and what she felt she was being asked to do. KP acknowledged that dynamic during a coaching conversation.

It's a major transition. I am just like you. I like everyone to listen. Take notes. You know, I don't like to give up that freedom to them either. But that's why it is such a shift, you know, and it's going to take time to train the students. You're doing an excellent job of training them. So, that is wonderful.

In addition to reassuring Hannah about her productive struggle, KP's comment also revealed that her own pedagogy was similar to Hannah's. In other words, KP's input about 3D instruction was an effort to support the teacher with a transition that she understood because she had experienced it herself.

Although Hannah spent the majority of her coaching conversations working through the misalignment of 3D instruction with her existing pedagogy, there were

elements that aligned as well. In one case, the alignment of KP's input with her own pedagogy surmounted Hannah's context-based concerns.

KP: And I tell you all the time you don't have a high stakes test. Slow down.

HANNAH: So, yeah, I agree and I did. But now I'm worried because I'm--

KP: Behind so far.

HANNAH: Well, not so far, but probably, like, a week or two behind everybody. And I don't know if I'm going to be able to--is it OK if I don't get--

KP: You are OK. I keep everything open in the grading platform for you all the way up until May. I know you need that time, and while everyone else is talking about their data, you know, you can learn from listening to them. And when it's time for you to share, you can just share how your ESOL students are doing.

The coach's reassurance in this case came from being sympathetic to Hannah's desires rather than empathizing about a shared perspective. After KP's encouragement, Hannah began to integrate the differentiated pacing they discussed.

The previous examples were both indicative of Hannah's tendency to discuss all of her responses to KP's input openly during their conversations. That tendency was one difference between Hannah and Susanna's reliance on existing pedagogy in their integration decisions. As shown in Figure 10, Susanna considered alignment and misalignment in roughly the same ratio to one another as Hannah. However, Susanna discussed that factor more in follow-up interviews than in her coaching conversations. In an earlier example, Susanna responded to KP's input about pop quizzes by offering an existing alternative, then capitulating through nominal acknowledgment. She did not discuss the misalignment with her pedagogical beliefs until a follow-up interview. A similar dynamic played out in response to KP's input on the need to use discipline referrals more consistently.

KP: And unfortunately, Susanna, if they're not compliant, then you are going to have to write a referral.

SUSANNA: Which I guess I need to do at this point. It's like I don't have the energy or the time really to commit to arguing with them when I have kids sitting who are trying to work, who are asking me questions about physics. But also, that doesn't make any sense, because keeping them there is also distracting. So, it's, like, picking my battles.

KP: Well, consistency is key with students. So, if you didn't put that referral--if they think they got away with it--then that just motivates them even more to be off task.

SUSANNA: I know.

Although their conversation moved on to other content without further discussion, Susanna returned to the issue in her post-instruction interview. As part of the Clean Language interview, I noted her battle metaphor and asked about its connection to an exchange she had with a student during her observed instruction.

I know if I just approach her and tell her to move because I said so, she will want to--not physically fight me, but she'll get--she'll go there. She's like, "Write me up then!" So, I have to decide, when I go to take that battle on with her, I'm leaving the other 28 students because I'm now only on her. And depending on how they're working or what they're doing, sometimes that's okay. Sometimes it's not. So, picking the battle I choose, whether to deal with it myself or just write her up. And ideally, I would pick it every time so that she would understand every single time I'm going to be there driving her crazy, not just sending her out. That being said, typically if a student tells me to just write them up, I usually pretty much figure it's not going to be effective. She's one who does, and so I tried to approach a couple of avenues and have her actually talk.

Since Susanna's reflection touched on input from her previous coaching conversation, I probed further on how those two elements were connected.

KP recommended [that for] some things that I do, like, write her up, because typically that's a write-up. And that gives me the idea. I still have not written this up, even with the difficulties that we have, mainly because I have a hard time writing students up when I feel like it is not going to be super effective. Yeah, and I feel like that's a normal thing that they experience. So, I like to give them an opportunity to show me that they can correct themselves in different ways than writing them up.

Susanna's response alluded back to KP's discipline referral input and provided more detail about her own beliefs about handling disciplinary issues. In this case, the teacher made a clear decision to not integrate the coach's input because it did not align with her own pedagogy.

Teachers at the middle school site noted more alignments between the coach's input and their own pedagogy than misalignments. One reason for that may have been the different focuses between the two sites. Both high school teachers were navigating unique situations that challenged their existing pedagogy, whereas the middle school teachers' conversations centered on exploring implementation of a new curriculum. The misalignments they did note tended to be based on a desire to follow through with existing plans more so than an ideological difference in pedagogy. For example, Lorelei and Mahogany both chose to continue their own plans for covering an entire novel in a given time frame rather than switch to Rose's suggestion of assigning chunks of text to the whole class for homework.

With regard to alignment between Rose's input and the teachers' existing pedagogy, Lorelei tended to engage in likeminded discussion during the conversation, while Mahogany more frequently engaged in nominal acknowledgment. For instance, Lorelei responded to Rose's input on keeping student discussions concrete and clear by sharing examples from the classroom and adding an additional idea that aligned with the input.

LORELEI: We had some kids who were like, "Well, what if it could be all of them depending on this situation or that situation?" So, they were throwing those out, but then you had kids who just didn't understand it. I think one of the ones that was hardest for them was they didn't understand what minimum wage was. So, we had to talk about that.

ROSE: Good! Adding some background.

LORELEI: Or a man is fired when he tries to meet with his fellow employees outside of work to talk about how much time off or vacation they're given. So, they were like, "I don't--"

ROSE: They don't get the problem with that, right? So, maybe going through it and even eliminating some of the ones that may be a little confusing or that you weren't able to provide concrete examples for. Like you say, minimum wages here. But with that question you'd have to go into the backstory about HR and like privacy rights and all that kind of stuff.

SUSANNA: We were eventually able to get there. It just took a lot more digging to get there. So, for this I would go back in and definitely chop it down. Or even just give, like--maybe even in groups-- "Here, you do one and two. You do three and four." And break it down that way.

ROSE: Or even, like, have a more robust classroom discussion. Do they agree or disagree? And then talk about, maybe, the top five ones that you know that they will be able to understand them. If you want to really explain, like, minimum wage, that's a quick explanation. And they probably are aware--I mean, they're seventh graders, so they might have older siblings that get a Zaxby's or a Chick fil A paycheck.

LORELEI: Yeah, and with things they know more about, like, I can use questioning to get them to think about it instead of me just saying, "Here's the right answer or argument."

The teacher's final statement in that discussion demonstrated more than just agreement with the coach's input; she was also actively making connections to her existing pedagogy in an effort to integrate the input into her instruction.

Feasibility within current contexts. Another difference between Lorelei and Mahogany's decision-making process toward integration involved the degree to which they referred to current classroom contexts in their rationale. Those contexts included student dynamics, timing during the school year, and physical classroom environment. The findings related to those factors were more evident between specific teachers than within each site.

Lorelei and Susanna based their integration decisions on aspects of their current contexts more often than the other participant at their school. In fact, Lorelei referred to the feasibility of Rose's input within her current context more than any other rationale. The most influential context was the timing of the coaching conversations during the school year. For instance, the earlier example of her constructive pushback to sharing the social contract with parents showed that she agreed with Rose's idea but felt it would be best implemented at the beginning of the school year. Susanna expressed similar opinions about establishing a routine of seating changes for each unit.

KP: Let me give you a recommendation. So, when you're changing seats, you want to make it a part of your program. For example, every unit, "Yes,"--you let them know-- "I change seats. Your new seats will be on the board when you come in." So, giving them preparation or making sure they are aware of your routine.

SUSANNA: And I love that idea, because then, it's not you arguing with them. That they know that it's going to happen, so they just don't--

KP: They don't fight it.

SUSANNA: When they know it's coming.

Although Susanna's response during the coaching conversation indicated that KP's input aligned with her existing pedagogy, she ultimately decided not to integrate it into her current practices. She explained her reasoning during member checking.

NIK: At the end of first semester, you and KP talked about establishing a routine of a new seating chart every unit. I didn't see that during our time together, but is that something you implemented semester two?

SUSANNA: Somewhat, I guess. Ideally, I would have had their new seats the day of their test or the day after, but it did not happen like that. Sometimes it took me a week into the unit to figure it out. We also only did three units, which meant they would have only had new seats two times in the semester. Instead, if they were getting out of hand or I saw that a change needed to be made, I went ahead and switched their seat.

Not only did Susanna not integrate KP's new input, she also returned to the problematic routine that the change was intended to avoid. Her decision about routine seating changes was a mirror image of Hannah's decision-making process around slowing down her pacing discussed earlier. In this case, the teacher felt that her current contexts kept her from integrating input that otherwise aligned with her own pedagogy.

In addition to timing within the school year, Lorelei and Susanna also based their integration decisions on contexts related to their current students. Susanna consistently cycled back to the difficulties she had integrating anything new with her very first experience teaching a CP course. For example, she responded to KP's input about prioritizing classroom environment over content delivery by bemoaning her current situation as possibly indicative of difficulties specific to the students themselves.

KP: I think that would help out in this class, too, because, like you said, they are now feeding off your energy. So, you do want to build up their confidence.

SUSANNA: My issue now is that they have no motivation and I don't know them well enough to really pull it out of them. I had this issue even last year with my CP class. I have a lot harder time getting to know them than my Honors. They seem to dislike me, just right off the bat. Maybe it's, like, just their view towards school in general.

During the follow-up interview, Susanna shared that, "I would prefer to transfer that [input] to a new set of kids." That statement made it clear that the teacher's decision not to integrate the coach's input about was based on her belief that the effort would not be beneficial within her current student context.

Multiple voices with the same input. One final influential factor involved situations in which the input the teachers received from the coaches' echoed similar input they received from other school leaders. This finding was most evident with Susanna and Mahogany. As discussed in the earlier section on the influence of school leaders,

Susanna and KP both referenced Susanna's PLC chair in their discussion of chunking the content to scaffold student learning. KP also provided coverage so that Susanna could go do a peer observation of another teacher using that strategy. Susanna explained the clarity that follow-up experience brought to their original discussion.

She was chunking differently than--I was thinking something like, "Let's do one problem at a time." She did the same action in all the problems. So, she's like, "Here. I'm doing this step in the first problem. You go do it in the rest the problems." But they did it one at a time. And then she let them go. And so, that seems different than-- I now understand what chunking means a lot better than when we talked about it. But then, seeing it, I understand.

The impact of receiving the same input from multiple voices was evident in that chunking was one of only four pieces of input from their coaching conversations that Susanna began to integrate fully during this study.

In Mahogany's case, Rose's input about modeling writing conventions more explicitly was very similar to input she had received independently from her principal.

ROSE: Maybe modeling for them. Like, "What would you highlight and circle?" I think that'll probably be something-- They see you doing it and then the expectation is, [directive tone] "I need to see a lot of circles. At this point, I need to see a lot of pink at this point." Or whatever, however you want to organize your color coding system.

MAHOGANY: I think that you and [the principal] have some similar ideas, because in our meeting yesterday-- It's several things we're going to be working on with writing, and then he'll introduce it to the PLC.

ROSE: What did y'all discuss about the writing?

MAHOGANY: Because, okay, he came and observed me and my kids were so good, but that was because the day before they got in big trouble. And we got so much done to where I was able to explicitly teach.

ROSE: Okay.

MAHOGANY: And I want to-- I'm going to go back to this. I did a reading support class for school, and there was a fourth grade class. I did writing in there as well. And so, writing an essay--the process is the same.

ROSE: Yeah!

MAHOGANY: And so, um, the kids got it so easily, but because we took it and we broke it down together. And I said, "This is what a good sentence looks like. But this is what a great sentence looks like!"

ROSE: Yes!

In Susanna's case, the multiple voices about chunking had been an open collaboration between her and her coach. Mahogany's input from her coach and principal were independent of one another, but their input was so similar that she questioned the coincidence during her follow-up interview. Regardless, she appreciated their expertise either way.

NIK: So, thinking within this conversation, what do you think was the primary focus of that conversation?

MAHOGANY: Basically, getting ready for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Going ahead and planning and, I guess, becoming a model classroom. I don't know. I--because I met with [the principal] the day before that about coming in my classroom more and then about me modeling in the classroom more. And I thought they were in cahoots. But I don't think--she didn't know what he was talking about and he didn't know what she was talking about. But it seems like they kind of have the same idea.

NIK: Yeah, that's interesting!

MAHOGANY: Right? Sometimes we get tired of the new initiatives and they're always saying, "Well, let's try this!" But, like--with me--I want my kids to write better. And I teach them, like, "What are the best practices to do this?" And both of these people have, like, so much experience with teaching. Writing was his thing. Writing is Rose's thing. Writing is my thing, but teaching writing is so different.

NIK: Yeah, it is.

MAHOGANY: So, I'm kind of nervous about it but excited about it at the same time, because if it's going to make me better, then, heck yeah!

Based on Mahogany's perception, I asked Rose about that situation during her follow-up interview as well.

ROSE: Even when I did the co-observation with [the principal] prior to my observation last week, he noticed a difference. And then he did one without me and, you know--kind of singing her praises. So, that kind of all just worked out. It wasn't part of the initial plan.

NIK: I was actually going to ask about--I'm glad you mentioned [the principal] because Mahogany noticed there was one part when you were saying about modeling more explicitly. I forget what was happening right that second, but she noticed, like, "Oh, it sounded like--you are sounding like [the principal]!" in that moment.

ROSE: Correct.

NIK: So, I was curious if that was just a happenstance or if there was a behind-the-scenes--

ROSE: No, it was happenstance. I didn't know that he had already talked to her about the modeling thing. We didn't talk about that ahead of time. We just talked about, in general, how we can best support her. So, that's cool that that came out of that.

Similar to Susanna, hearing the same input from multiple voices had a direct impact on Mahogany's decision making. Modeling the writing conventions explicitly was one of the six ideas that the teacher began to integrate fully out of the 17 discussed during her coaching conversations. In addition to that quantitative finding, Mahogany stated the value of multiple voices best with her statement that, "I think that three heads are better than one. So, if my kids are growing from this, I'm not in the least offended by the help."

Hearing the same input from multiple voices was just one influential factor teachers considered in relation to the coaches' input. Teachers and coaches also brought their own existing pedagogies and current contexts into their coaching conversations. Those factors became intertwined the moment teachers began responding to the coaches' input. Based on which factors the teachers deemed most influential at that time, they

continued the decision-making process of whether and how to integrate the input into their classroom instruction. The following section profiles different ways that the teachers went about integrating their chosen content from the coaching conversations into subsequent instruction.

Integrating new ideas in different ways. Teachers approached the integration of content from their coaching conversations into their classroom instruction in different ways. Misalignment with their existing pedagogy or restrictions within their current contexts led them not to integrate some of the coach's input at all. They expressed no interest in integrating some of the input (e.g., Susanna and pop quizzes) and planned to integrate other input outside of this study's time frame (e.g., Lorelei and parent social contracts). Within the content the teachers chose to integrate right away, integration took place in three ways. Teachers added to their existing pedagogy, replaced some previous practices, and adapted the original suggestion to fit their pedagogy or contexts.

Adding small components. Teachers chose to integrate some content from the coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy without changing their current practices. They tended to either add small standalone ideas or smaller components of a larger idea. Cross-case examples of small additions included providing more visual aids for concepts, using specific resources the coaches provided, and using more probing questions with students.

As explained in the previous section, teachers made decisions about which small pieces to add based on different factors. During a post-conversation interview, Susanna explained that small additions were more realistic within her overall workload.

A lot of things that we talk about, I want to implement, but I just don't have the time. And so, it becomes really difficult because of that. So, I try to just do little

pieces of it and see how they respond to those little pieces. So, it may be something light, like changing their seats or, like, something else that doesn't take a whole lot of effort.

During a post-instruction Clean Language interview, Hannah focused less on the time factor and more on thinking about the input through the dual lenses of her own pedagogy and her students' needs.

NIK: I noted from the conversations a couple of things that you wanted to take away from coaching. One of them was exploring different ways to teach 3D and another was being able to merge that into the way that you normally teach. What did that look like for you in this lesson?

HANNAH: So, it was, like, taking a small piece and putting it back into the bigger picture. Like, I like the direct instruction. So, for the 3D learning, we gave them the models and they were supposed to kind of work through. What I was doing was going through and making sure they understood and giving that small, direct instruction within the 3D lesson. And following up that lesson, we had a great checkpoint because it was able to have your-- We had them get signed off for understanding and, you know, making sure that we had a checkpoint. So, I think that was good for them as far as, you know, exploring to see where they got, and then following up with what they needed to know. Making sure that happens before they get lost.

NIK: You also said there were key things KP would like them to come away with. What would she like to have happen?

HANNAH: I believe she would like for them to come up with their own takeaways. But for special ed and low kids who are not labeled but still could benefit, just--my philosophy is that following up with what they need to know is important because I think they want a concrete answer. And science is really hard for them, because it's so abstract, so they want to know a definite answer and keep it in mind.

KP commented on Hannah's small additions during a separate post-conversation interview as well.

She's trying to make the classroom more student driven, and that is what 3D is about. But still, you know, she didn't create the phenomena or start the class with the phenomenon--engaging the student with some type of interesting, odd occurrence. That was missing, but I do like how she is starting to ask more questions.

KP's observation situated Hannah's integration of small additions within her own focus on the big picture of 3D instruction. She noted what was missing but also celebrated what was added.

Hannah and KP alluded to three themes that were common among the teachers and coaches with regard to small additions to existing pedagogy. First, the teachers were cognizant of the fact that the coaches had desired outcomes that did not always align with their own. Second, the teachers felt comfortable in adding small components of the coaches' input rather than pressured to integrate every suggestion fully and immediately. Third, the coaches celebrated small additions without either insisting on fidelity or losing sight of a bigger pedagogical picture. Those findings collectively demonstrated that the safe space created within the coaching conversations extended to the attempted integration of their content within the teachers' classrooms.

Changing previous practices. In addition to adding small components to their existing pedagogy, the teachers also replaced some of their previous practices with input from their coaching conversations. Those replacements ranged from small tweaks during instruction to large-scale changes that required a different approach to planning. Susanna discussed one example of a small change that she made based on a peer observation that she and KP planned during a coaching conversation.

Even just, like, the way she printed problems is different than the way I print the problems. It's a simple thing that I wouldn't have thought of, but I'm like, "Oh! Each step is a page." She had them doing a page at a time. They flipped the page together, and did the next page. And, like, that is a simple thing that I think is really helping my kids.

Although the new practice Susanna mentioned did not come directly from her coach, the peer observation opportunity arose during their conversation and KP provided coverage

to facilitate that process. This finding and others like it reinforced the extent to which the conversations and integration process existed within larger contexts. Other examples included Mahogany doing more explicit modeling based on receiving similar input from an administrator and both Lorelei and Hannah changing some ways they worked with their co-teachers based on KP's input.

Much of the content discussed during coaching conversations took the form of small additions or changes to the teachers' current practices. However, the teachers also began integrating some input that required more significant shifts in planning and instruction. Planning small group stations was one example that occurred in multiple cases during this study. Small group stations involved the teacher splitting what would normally have been an extended, teacher-led, whole-group lesson into several shorter, student-led, small-group activities. The stations all focused on the same content as the whole group lesson they replaced but provided more variety and hands-on opportunities for the students. Both coaches suggested stations, and teachers integrated the input to different extents.

Susanna integrated KP's input about stations more fully than any other input she received during this study and completely replaced her typical approach to reviewing content before a test. KP first suggested the strategy in response to Susanna's concern about differentiating for her one CP course.

SUSANNA: Because CP needs--they need a lot more hands on and just a lot more involvement of me.

KP: I'm glad you recognize that, too.

SUSANNA: Yeah, [laughing] definitely!

KP: Moving them or transitioning them every 15 minutes, in my opinion, was a strategy that I thought worked best with my CP students, so that you can increase-
-can knock up that engagement by incorporating hands-on activities.

SUSANNA: So, I haven't really done stations very much, but I am building a review lesson for the next class. So, maybe, taking a look at that and giving me your input on it.

Following that conversation, Susanna redesigned her upcoming review lessons and invited me to observe the work stations in action.

After explaining the concept of small group stations, Susanna provided the students with a guiding organizer that had instructions and workspace for each station on a different page. She later explained to me that she had taken what would have been the study guide for their upcoming test and divided it into nine stations that included online activities, computational practice, and hands-on lab applications. It was clear from the student reactions and questions that it was the first time they had engaged in that type of experience with her. Throughout the period, Susanna supported student understanding by circulating both intentionally and responsively to different stations. She also adjusted the timing of the rotations in response to student feedback and crafted differentiated rotating expectations for individual students. For someone who professed in her first interview that, "It's black and white; I'm very blunt," those responsive changes suggested that Susanna was not only implementing a new strategy, but also beginning to change her actual pedagogy by becoming more flexible in her thinking. During her next observed coaching conversation, Susanna's forward-thinking reflection that "next time, maybe I should do half the stations but still keep them in small groups" also indicated that she planned to integrate the strategy as an ongoing part of her pedagogy.

Other examples of teachers changing previous practices on a larger scale included Mahogany's own integration of small group stations and both Hannah and Susanna differentiating the pacing of their instruction across different courses. In each of those cases, the coaches encouraged the teachers to follow their instincts on responding to their students' needs by adjusting the curriculum and their existing practices. The teachers all reflected positively on the outcome and planned to integrate the change in the future.

Adapting original suggestion. Whether the teachers added small components or made significant changes, the process of integrating the content of the coaching conversations into their instruction often involved adapting the coach's input before implementing the new practice into their classroom instruction. Much like the decision of which content to integrate, the process of adapting the chosen input relied largely on the teachers' current contexts and existing pedagogy. Adaptations based on classroom contexts included Lorelei rotating materials among groups instead of having student groups physically rotate stations and Susanna labeling her desks with numbers for easier redirection rather than names for preemptive seating assignment. Mahogany's integration of small group stations served as a prime example of the teacher adapting the coach's suggestion to fit her own pedagogy.

Rose's suggestions for different stations included specific outcomes such as completing an anticipatory organizer; creating a caption for a picture; and recording "three things you learned, two things you would criticize, and one question you have." Mahogany's instruction and reflection, however, focused more on student interactions than on the resulting outcomes. She frequently had the whole class pause their work so she could share ideas she had heard from one group or pose a question that got the whole

class involved in a discussion related to the overall lesson. Mahogany explained the intent behind her adaptation of Rose's original input in her post-instruction Clean Language interview.

MAHOGANY: Her idea was just getting them used to the process of going through it and answering those types of questions and what, kind of, the process is. Looking at the question, answering the question, using textual evidence. But the way I did it was to get the kids to think about things that they wouldn't normally think about, like, looking at it from a different perspective. So, that's why I had them collaborating in answering the questions. Like, "Answer it on your own first, and then talk to the people at your table." And then, you know, debate or add or subtract or go back to the chapter.

NIK: And when they collaborate, what happens to their understanding?

MAHOGANY: It kind of makes them think about that from a different perspective. Like, maybe even add to their answer or see it in a totally different light. Someone may have had an answer totally different, but then they're able to see how that person used the evidence from the text to back up the same answer.

NIK: And what is the relationship between the different perspectives they encounter and that original goal of the lesson?

MAHOGANY: I'm sure they can take the same--the original goal was they had to discuss the text with a peer. That was one of their learning objectives. I'm trying to teach them to be able to one, discuss literature. With their friends, too. I'm trying to teach them that even if they disagree about something, it can be done in a respectful way.

Mahogany's reflection revealed that she intentionally adapted Rose's suggestion to integrate the academic goals behind the coach's input with the social goals that made up a large part of her own relationship-driven pedagogy.

Examples throughout this section have shown how the decision-making process toward integration became increasingly teacher-driven as the teachers made personal decisions about adding new elements to their existing practices, replacing previous practices with new ones, and adapting suggestions to work within their pedagogy and contexts. From the coaches' perspective, Rose explained that, "I want it to be organic

where they figure it out on their own. I can kind of steer it based on what I know, but it will resonate more that way.” From the teachers’ perspective, Lorelei labeled the process of matching expectations to context as “what a good teacher does.” Overall, the participants’ reflections on their decision-making processes emphasized that the teacher-centered nature of the coaching conversations supported individualized approaches to integration.

Synthesis of Factors Influencing the Role of Coaching Conversations

Figure 13 synthesizes the study’s results by situating the multiple continua related to the attributes and roles of the conversations within descriptions of their internal and external factors. A review of the synthesized results revealed that no single factor led directly to a specific role. Instead, the metaphorical role of each teacher’s coaching conversations represented a cumulative of various influential attributes. For example, Susanna’s concerns were more personal in nature than Hannah’s. However, Hannah’s tendency to engage in more constructive pushback and rely on her existing pedagogy as a decision-making rationale resulted in her coaching conversations playing a more transformative role than Susanna’s. The difference was reflected in the two teachers’ metaphors. Hannah’s winding and narrowing snake skeleton illustrated a back and forth relationship that explicitly positioned the teacher to continue on without the coach. Susanna’s combative battle plan implied an on-going need for support with the coach’s ideas filtered through the teacher’s personal pedagogy and current contexts.

On the other end of the metaphorical spectrum, Mahogany’s programmatic concerns and nominal acknowledgment of Rose’s logical input resulted in their conversations being more informative than transformative in nature. Even though she

prioritized her own pedagogy over her current contexts in decision making, her recipe metaphor revealed a desire to identify replicable practice rather than inherently and incrementally change her instructional mindset. As shown in Figure 13, a holistic analysis of the coaching conversations revealed that conversations comprised primarily of traits on the right of the continua of influential attributes tended to display the most transformative potential. The next chapter discusses this trend and the various factors affecting it in greater detail.

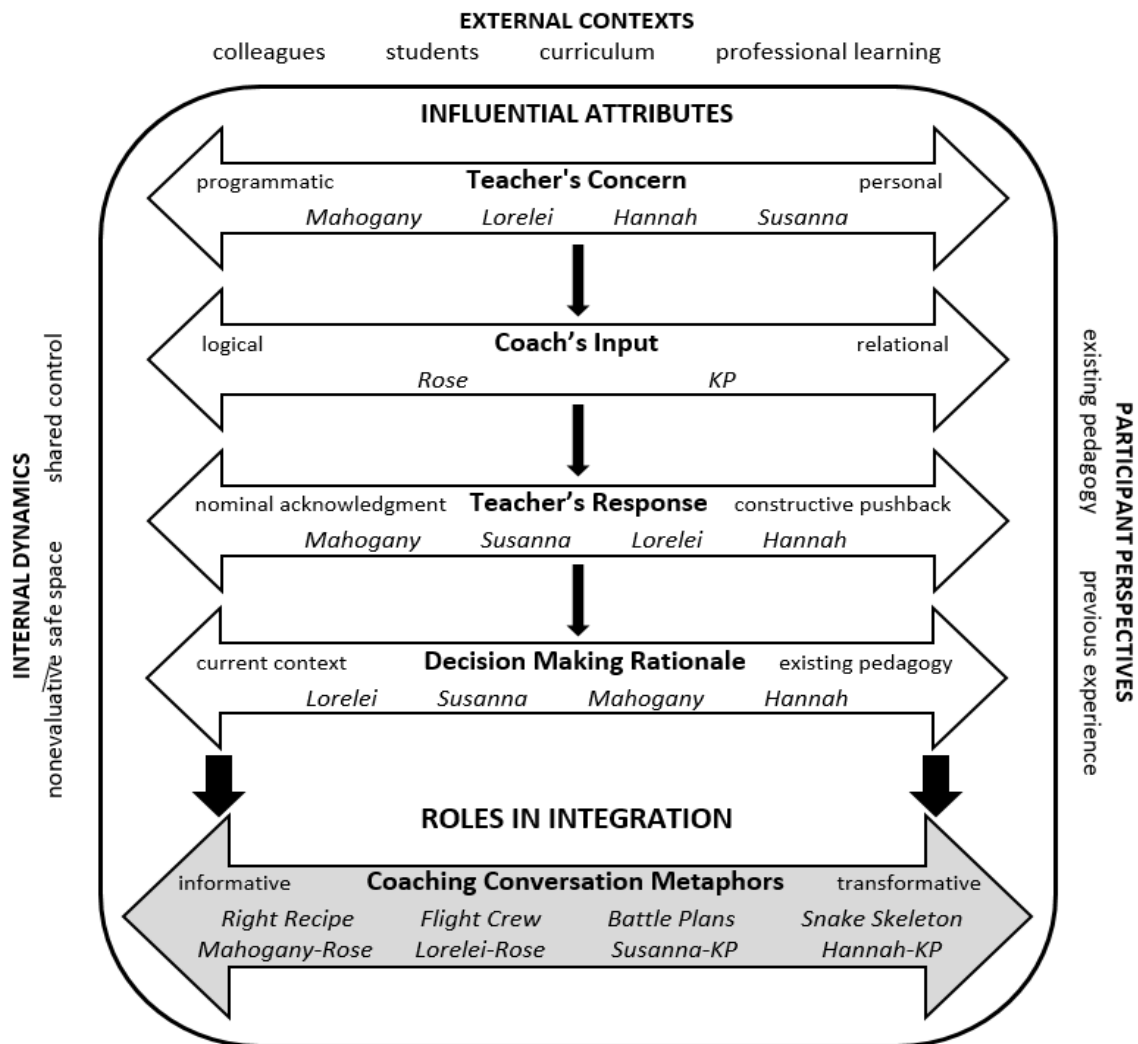


Figure 13. Synthesis of findings within and across coaching dyads.

Summary of Results

The teachers' individual metaphors for their coaching conversations fell along a continuum from the informative role of Mahogany seeking input for a repeatable recipe to the transformative role of Hannah balancing the structure and flexibility of a snake skeleton. Between those two extremes, Lorelei's flight crew metaphor and Susanna's battle metaphor varied in the degree to which they revealed informative, collaborative, and transformative elements of their coaching conversations. While each dyad's interactions were unique, their experiences also consisted of some consistent categories. First, the teachers and coaches shared control of the coaching conversations within a safe space that encouraged risk-taking. Second, the coaching conversations involved an exchange of different perspectives within site-specific contexts. Finally, the teachers engaged in a decision-making process that began with responding to the coaches' input and continued through considering pedagogical and contextual factors relating to integrating the input into their instruction.

The next chapter discusses these results as transferable elements related to the study's theoretical framework and research questions. It also proposes ways in which teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, professional developers, and teacher educators might use these results to maximize their collaboration and support.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This phenomenological multi-case study sought to explore the role of coaching conversations in relation to integration of new knowledge and practices into the teacher's existing pedagogy. Data collection consisted of observing coaching conversations and classroom instruction as well as conducting interviews with four coaching dyads. In order to develop a thick description of the central phenomena, data analysis focused on describing the participants' lived experiences and interpreting the interconnectedness of the central phenomena. The remaining sections of this chapter conceptualize conclusions related to study's research questions into a transferable model of transformative potential and discuss possible implications for current practice and future research.

Conclusions about the Transformative Potential of Coaching Conversations

The previous chapter provided detailed findings related to within-case metaphors that communicated each teacher's experience of the central phenomena and across-case themes that captured the contexts, attributes, and roles of the coaching conversations. Figure 14 displays the roles suggested by the metaphors as an outcome of factors within and surrounding the coaching conversations. Relating the synthesized findings back to the study's combined theoretical framework of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) led to several conclusions about the transformative potential of coaching conversations. The following section offers four of

those conclusions as answers to the study's primary and supporting research questions and provides an explanation for each conclusion based on aspects of the findings and elements of the study's theoretical framework.

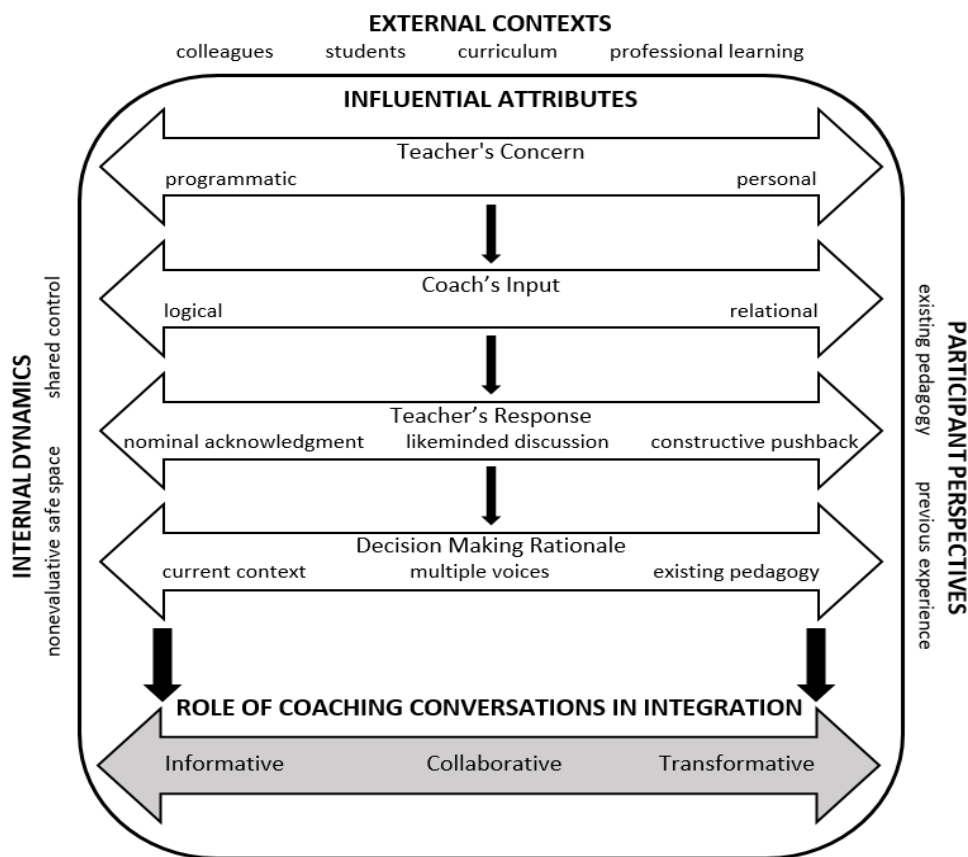


Figure 14. Model of transformative potential based on synthesis of transferable results.

Roles of Coaching Conversations

Primary Research Question: What role do coaching conversations play in second-stage teachers attempting to integrate new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy? Coaching conversations play informative, collaborative, and transformative roles depending on a combination of internal and external factors.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Glaser's (2014) conversational dashboard served as an initial source of viewing and labeling conversations within this study. The resulting continuum of informative, collaborative, and transformative potential aligned closely with Glaser's transactional, positional, and transformational levels of conversation. However, there were some differences in the two continua based on this study's narrowed lens of coaching conversations with teachers. For instance, Glaser focused on trust as the deciding factor in moving from one level to another. This study identified trust as one factor along with others relating to Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning.

Informative coaching conversations involved the instructional coach providing the teacher with resources and input about specific strategies to consider implementing in their classroom instruction. Glaser's (2014) research emphasized the importance of longevity in moving beyond transactional conversations. Likewise, the conversations on the informative end of the continuum represented in Figure 14 occurred in the dyads that were in their first year of working together. This study also identified the programmatic nature of the teacher's concerns, the coach's logical approach to providing input, nominal acknowledgment of that input, and contextual decision making as factors resulting in conversations serving an informative role. None of the dyads in this study demonstrated every one of those extremes. For example, as shown in Figure 7 in Chapter 4, Mahogany focused more on her existing pedagogy than her current contexts when making integration decisions. Still, her subsequent instruction and reflective metaphor revealed the informative role that coaching conversations played within her process of integration.

All of the coaching conversations in this study included two elements from the early stages of transformative learning theory--planning thoughtful actions and reflecting

on the impact and outcome of actions (Mezriow, 1991). However, the focus of planning and reflecting differed among dyads and influenced their transformative potential. In order to fill in gaps in her students' understanding, Mahogany used information gathered during coaching conversations to supplement rather than intrinsically change her existing pedagogy. She tended to focus exclusively on student outcomes rather than pedagogy adjustments when reflecting on her instruction. Lorelei and Susanna displayed similar tendencies, but they also reflected on adjusting their own processes in addition to the content of their lessons. That difference was partly responsible for their conversations being classified as displaying more transformative potential.

Collaboration was a hallmark of the teacher-centered type of coaching conversations (Knight, 2009) that this study was designed to explore. Therefore, the continuum in Figure 14 was not meant to suggest that some conversations served a collaborative role while others did not. The differences related to the degree to which the dyads engaged in what Vygotsky (1962) termed the co-construction of meaning through speech. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of articulating logical thoughts to others and internalizing knowledge through inner speech. Collaborative conversations involved a consistent duality of both processes as the teacher and coach exchanged ideas, shared their perspectives, and arrived at a mutual understanding of the content in context. In dyads displaying more collaborative roles, the teachers' post-conversation interviews tended to reflect their interactions during the conversations more closely. For example, the discrepancy between Mahogany's expressions of transparency despite concealing her reticence about coaching from Rose and Susanna's decision to avoid implementing pop quizzes after acknowledging KP's input on their importance demonstrated limits to the

collaborative role of their conversations. However, Lorelei shared her decision to delay Rose's input on including parents in her social contracts until the next school year and Hannah shared feedback on building in review before moving onto more inquiry during their conversations as well as their reflective interviews. Since the interviews constituted a version of the teacher's inner speech, that difference revealed a greater alignment between articulating thoughts and internalizing knowledge in the more collaborative conversations.

In addition to approaching misalignment between perspectives more openly, collaborative conversations also differed with regard to the teacher's response to input that aligned with their current context or pedagogy. Where informative conversations involved a great deal of nominal acknowledgment, collaborative conversations involved more likeminded discussion. Rather than just agreeing outright, teachers used likeminded discussion to add their own ideas on the coach's input and discuss ways in which they could adapt the strategies to their own pedagogy and context. Instruction related to the more collaborative coaching conversations demonstrated personalized versions of the conversations' content.

Conversational traits associated with a higher degree of transformative potential included the personal nature of the teacher's concerns, the coach's relational approach to providing input, constructive pushback to that input, and a stronger focus on pedagogy than context as a rationale for decision making. Although transformative conversations lay at the heart of this study's theoretical framework, only one dyad engaged in coaching conversations that consistently exhibited Mezirow's (1991) most advanced stage of learning by premise transformation. The consistency with which Hannah responded to

KP's input with constructive pushback separated their conversations from others that served a less transformative role. While Susanna did provide some constructive pushback, it was not as pervasive or sustained in her coaching conversations as it was in Hannah's. For instance, she responded to KP's continued advocacy of pop quizzes by avoiding the topic altogether and making her own decision after the fact.

The difference between her and Susanna's coaching conversations illustrated Mezirow's (1997) explanation of transformative learning.

We have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those ideas as unworthy of consideration—aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken. When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience. (p. 5)

Although Susanna's concerns were more personal in nature than Hannah's, her interactions with KP and prioritization of context in her decision making led her conversations to be more collaborative than transformative. The circumstances within and around Hannah's conversations had the cumulative effect of encouraging her to pursue critical reflection of both her existing pedagogy and potential shifts based on new understanding. Outcomes such as integrating small components in an authentic way and setting future plans for further integration indicated that Hannah had begun transforming not only her practices but also the premise with which she approached instruction.

Similar to Glaser's (2014) highest level of transformational conversations, those transformative conversations involved a great deal of trust and occurred between the dyad who had been working together the longest. In addition, the instructional coach had taught alongside the teacher in the same department before transitioning to her new role.

Both of those factors suggested that the specific lived experiences of each teacher and coach influenced the transformative role of their conversations.

Lived Experiences of Teachers and Coaches

Supporting Question #1: What are the lived experiences of teachers and instructional coaches engaged in coaching conversations? Teachers and instructional coaches experience coaching conversations as a nonevaluative safe space within their larger school-based contexts. Control of the conversations ebbs and flows as each person shares their personal perspectives, current contexts, and previous experiences.

One component of identifying the roles that coaching conversations played involved understanding the lived experience of the teachers and coaches. Figure 14 situates their experiences as nested within three sets of external and internal factors. The teachers and coaches experienced coaching conversation within a variety of school-related contexts. The teachers kept student needs and concerns foremost in their conversations, while coaches maintained a consistent connection to the curriculum. School leaders, teacher colleagues, and other source of professional learning provided content and served as additional lenses for considering outcomes. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the vital role of such contexts.

In the development of higher functions—that is, in the internalization of the processes of knowing—the particulars of human social existence are reflected in human cognition: an individual has the capacity to externalize and share with other members of her social group her understanding of their shared experience. (p. 132)

At some point during the study, each of the participants referenced the influence of site-specific contexts on their coaching conversations and instruction as well as ways to communicate new understanding to their other colleagues.

Two sets of internal factors also influenced the content, tone, and outcome of the coaching conversations. From an operational standpoint, the teachers and coaches relied on their existing pedagogy and previous experiences when exchanging ideas. The degree to which the coaches' input and previous experiences aligned with the teachers' pedagogy and current context influenced the outcome of their conversations. As discussed earlier in relation to the continuum of transformative potential, teachers differed in their tendencies with regard to articulating and internalizing their thoughts during the conversations. From a relational standpoint, the teachers valued the nonevaluative safe space that the coaches created and maintained throughout their conversations. Shared control within the conversations allowed for an open expression of ideas and empowered the teachers to begin authentically connecting the coaches' input to their own instruction. Although every dyad exhibited shared control, the metaphors teachers generated for their coaching conversations revealed different power dynamics. For instance, Mahogany's search for a recipe situated Rose as a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978) from whom she hoped to learn the right answers while Hannah's snake skeleton positioned KP by her side navigating contexts and decisions together. Despite those differences, every teacher and coach expressed appreciation for coaching conversations both pedagogically and personally.

Beginning the Integration Process

Supporting Question #2: How do teachers begin the process of integrating the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy? Teachers begin the process of integration content from coaching conversations into their pedagogy by

responding through nominal acknowledgment, likeminded discussion, and constructive pushback.

The original concept for this study positioned coaching conversations and pedagogy integration as connected but distinct processes. However, examining multiple sources of data to explore that connection revealed that the teachers actually began the process of integration during the conversations themselves. Post-conversation interviews led to a deeper understanding of how the teachers' responses to input during the conversation set the stage for whether and how they would approach integration the content of the conversations into their own pedagogy.

As shown in Figure 14, the responses ranged from nominal acknowledgment of new information to likeminded discussion of similar ideas to constructive pushback that led to small but significant transformation in the teachers' existing pedagogy. In some respects, nominal acknowledgment constituted what Mezirow (1991) described as habitual action and speech. Note-taking and utterances such as yeah and mm-hmm provided enough of a response to allow the conversation to proceed but did not necessarily indicate any thoughtful plans or reflections. Likeminded discussion provided more opportunities for the co-construction of knowledge by articulating logical thoughts that aligned with the teacher's inner speech (Vygotsky, 1962). Adding on to the coach's input or sharing how it might apply to their specific contexts allowed the teachers to enhance or extend components of their existing pedagogy. Constructive pushback allowed the teacher and coach to learn from one another through premise transformation and engage in retroactive critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991). The transformative

potential of those responses depended on the coach's reception and the teacher's willingness to continue pushing.

Defining Success or Failure

Supporting Question #3: How do teachers define success or failure in relation to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy? In general, teachers measure the immediately observable outcomes of informative conversations and define the success of transformative coaching conversations in terms of long-term pedagogical growth.

Teachers defined success or failure with regard to integrating new knowledge and practices into their existing pedagogy in ways that closely aligned with the role of their coaching conversations. On one hand, when teachers approached their conversations as opportunities to obtain new information from their coach and collaborate on instructional ideas, they tended to define success in terms of student outcomes. They discussed improvement or lack thereof related to their students' academic abilities and classroom behavior. Their post-instruction interviews focused on the direct impact of integrating content from the coaching conversations and connected the outcomes to immediate next steps. On the other hand, when teachers used their conversations to co-construct new understanding and debate potential changes to their instructional, they tended to define success in more personal terms. They shared ways in which they incorporated carefully chosen elements from the coaching conversations and reflected on their perceptions of authenticity more than data-based outcomes. Their post-instruction interviews focused on the theoretical impact of coaching conversations on their existing pedagogy and connected their new understanding to future plans for on-going integration.

Answering this study's supporting research questions involved gaining insight into the inner workings and external contexts of coaching conversations, delineating the form and function of different responses to input, and understanding how the teachers defined the success of their integration attempts in ways that mirrored the informative, collaborative, or transformative role of their coaching conversations. The conclusions based on those components led to the overall conclusion that coaching conversations vary in their transformative potential and play different roles based on the situational and personal contexts in which they take place.

Limitations to Trustworthiness and Transferability

Exploring this study's central phenomena through the lens of its guiding research questions led to some transferable elements among the findings, including internal and contextual factors that contributed to the transformative potential of the coaching conversations. However, the transferability and depth of the findings were constrained by certain limitations inherent to the study's design. For one thing, the small number of participants allowed for deeper analysis on the part of the researcher but inevitably resulted in highly contextualized and personalized findings. The personal identities of the participants and the particulars of their school setting played a major role in their experiences and my interpretations. The study also intentionally focused on second-stage teachers and incidentally included instructional coaches who were within their first three years of coaching. A larger sample of participants representing a wider array of experience levels may have revealed more universal or diverse trends among the findings.

The data collection process also included intentional and circumstantial limitations. As discussed in Chapter 1, certain aspects of the study's well-bounded cases acted as delimitations for the study. For example, I only considered information about other coaching interactions and professional learning experiences if and when the participants alluded to them during their conversations or interviews. Those factors may have had a greater impact on the role of coaching conversations than this study was designed to explore. In addition to intentional delimitations, the realities of balancing data collection at multiple sites with my continuing coaching duties presented some circumstantial limitations. For one thing, the periodic nature of my observations meant that I collected data from just a few of the many formal and informal conversations that occurred between the participants as part of their daily interactions. My concurrent roles as researcher and instructional coach at another school also meant having to decline some observation opportunities. Since this study's design included authentically scheduling observations in response to the teachers identifying relevant conversations and instruction, data from those missed opportunities may have impacted the findings in ways I was unable to capture.

Finally, it was not possible to ensure that my assumptions about the research held true or to account for all aspects of my own bias. The findings of this study arose from one instructional coach researching the experiences of two other instructional coaches and four teachers engaging in coaching conversations to augment the teachers' existing pedagogies. The transferable themes and contextualized examples were intended to inform current practices and to add to existing research related to differentiating professional learning to support the pedagogical needs of second-stage teachers.

Implications for Current Practices

The purpose of this study was to provide a rich, contextualized example of second-stage teachers engaged in coaching conversations and working to integrate skills from those conversations into their own pedagogy. Teachers and those who support their professional learning will likely connect with different implications of the study's results depending on their individual contexts. Some implications pertain to the inner workings of coaching conversations, while others apply to the contexts in which they take place. Contextual implications include the importance of delineating nonevaluative conversations from other evaluative interactions and the need to provide differentiated support for second-stage teachers. Within-conversation implications include actively listening for different response types and reframing some resistance as constructive pushback. The following discussion proposes ways in which these implications might influence the transformative potential of coaching conversations.

Delineating Nonevaluative Conversations from Evaluative Interactions

Certain aspects of this study demonstrated the complexity of coaching for pedagogical growth within the larger contexts of instruction and evaluation. On one hand, the data reinforced existing research emphasizing the importance of nonevaluative collaborative conversations in authentically supporting teachers (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016; Mayer, Woulfin, & Warhol, 2015; Netolicky, 2016; WestEd, 2000). Every teacher referred either explicitly or implicitly to the safe space that coaching provided for experimentation and critical reflection. They also contrasted that safe space with either current or previous experiences that were more evaluative or judgmental. On the other hand, aspects of the data also provided additional evidence for existing research on the

grey area that instructional coaches often occupy in relation to classroom instruction and administrative evaluation (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Mette et al., 2017; Woulfin, 2018). Rose's explanation of balancing interactions with the principal, other leaders, and the teachers provided the clearest example of the multiple stakeholders whom coaches must consider in relation to their coaching conversations.

Two implications arose for addressing the need for ensuring coaching conversations remain a safe space within the instructional coach's multi-faceted roles in the school. The first implication showed itself in the repeated reassurance that KP and Rose provided to teachers about their nonevaluative role in the classrooms. Teachers are accustomed to being evaluated on numerous data points involved their students' achievement and their pedagogical proficiency. Coaching conversations should be an opportunity to facilitate the teacher's own reaction to that feedback, not a source of new evaluative feedback from the coach. In this study, the exception to that rule involved times when the teacher directly asked for feedback on something the coach observed. Typically, that feedback involved an aspect of instruction that the teacher and coach decided to focus on during a previous coaching conversation. While Knight's (2009) coaching model explicitly addresses this implication, other coaching models could incorporate similar dynamics by devoting some coaching cycles to teacher-centered concerns and clearly communicating the purpose of each observation and conversation beforehand.

In addition to intentionally establishing and communicating the purpose of coaching conversations in regard to classroom observations, specific situations also highlighted a need for clarity and transparency regarding coaches' communications with

different stakeholders. For example, Rose was aware that her post-observation feedback to the principal could directly or indirectly influence the teachers' evaluations. Her decision to continue with that communication and not include teachers on all of those emails revealed a lack of transparency that could impact the level of trust that Glaser (2014) emphasized as vital for moving conversations to a transformational level. Two possible alterations to Rose's existing communication process served as implications for anyone who supports teacher learning while also interacting with administrators. First, the coach or other observer might commit to communicating all feedback about the teachers to the teachers. That could involve copying the teachers on any emails or addressing that communication during their coaching conversations. Second, the coach or observer could maintain a consistent practice of only providing feedback to administrators if they were also present for the observation. Any individual observations would be discussed only with the teachers, which could empower the teachers to decide for themselves how to include the coach's feedback in their conversations with administrators. While this study focused on instructional coaches, teacher educators who supervise field experiences and school-based mentors who conduct peer observations could benefit from addressing these implications in their practices as well.

Differentiating Support for Second-Stage Teachers

Huberman (1989) described second-stage teachers as having entered a period in their professional life cycle marked by experimentation and reassessment, and Kirkpatrick and Johnson (2014) operationalized that period as spanning a teacher's third to seventh year in the classroom. The results for this study were similar to existing research in which teachers at this stage reported that administrators overestimated their

expertise and therefore underestimated their need for support (Collins & Liang, 2015; Jimerson & Wayman, 2015). Mahogany directly expressed her frustration that “people forget I’m a newer teacher”, and Lorelei and Susanna both alluded to their relative inexperience as a source of needing continued assistance. The teachers in this study also displayed trends similar to other research showing that second-stage teachers approach professional learning differently from novice teachers (e.g., Louws, van Veen, Meirink, & van Driel, 2017). Susanna explicitly contrasted her current pedagogical coaching conversations to the more operational support KP provided in her first two years teaching. At the same time, she also discussed feeling an increased empowerment to pick and choose among KP’s suggestions for herself. While much of the data reinforced current research, the teachers and coaches also served as inferential examples that might assist with addressing the gap Diaz-Maggioli (2004) noted in helping second-stage teacher transfer new ideas into the classroom.

One implication for differentiating support involved adjusting the breadth versus depth of coaching conversations. Teacher candidates and novice teachers receive almost constant input from multiple sources and try out a plethora of ideas as they begin to form their own pedagogy. Comparing within-case data from this study suggested that engaging second-stage teachers in more prolonged discussion about fewer discrete suggestions may lead to more authentic integration of the suggestions into their existing pedagogy. Hannah’s open struggle to merge 3D instruction with her own pedagogy illustrated how teachers during this stage need additional time to critically reflect on their own practices while considering how to integrate new input. Instructional coaches and administrators could facilitate that process by coordinating their support for second-stage

teachers to provide multiple learning opportunities and voices of support around one or two discrete aspects of pedagogical growth at a time. In addition to pedagogical differences from their novice colleagues, second-career teachers are also connected to multiple school contexts in ways that differ from their more novice peers. Mahogany spoke about her principal's desire to have her serve as a model classroom for elements of the new curriculum, and KP spoke to Hannah about how more veteran teachers actually learned from her approach to direct instruction. Instructional coaches and administrators should be cognizant of making suggestions in a way that honors those roles and connections without overwhelming second-stage teachers who do not yet view themselves as experts.

Exploring the Meaning behind Initial Responses

The coaches in this study provided input and navigated teacher responses in some similar ways that aligned with existing research on roles and stances within coaching conversations. For example, Rose's desire to lead by questioning and KP's commitment to help Hannah transfer theory into practice demonstrated two of Kintz et al.'s (2015) conditions necessary for critical collegiality. Both coaches also balanced maintained a balance between providing directive input based on best practices and responsive input based on the teachers' needs (Ippolito, 2010). Some differences in the tone and content of their input also aligned with existing research. For instance, KP spending extended time discussing fewer suggestions in more detail reflected Lofthouse and Hall's (2014) finding that more experienced coaches tended to engage in deeper discussions than newer coaches.

This study's exploration into the specific form and function of teachers' responses to input provided additional understanding of existing notions in coaching literature. For instance, Kim and Silver (2016) reported how coaches attending to nonverbal cues led teachers to embrace new ideas more readily. However, I could not find existing research on coaches pushing teachers beyond brief responses that seem to indicate agreement. This study categorized both nonverbal and brief responses as nominal acknowledgment and reported on the multiple functions they might serve. Although likeminded discussion was not explicitly evident in any of the research I reviewed, researchers did report on similar concepts such as shared vision and common understanding (e.g., Filippi & Hackman, 2019). However, those studies tended to focus on those concepts as end goals of coaching rather than responses to input. One implication of that finding could be the need for coaches and teachers to dig more deeply into teacher responses regardless of their perceived positivity. Classroom teachers are trained to have students explain their reasoning regardless of an answer's accuracy in order to ensure complete understanding. Coaches, administrators, and teacher educators could establish the same routine with teachers by responding to a teacher's acknowledgment or agreement with the same level of exploratory follow-up that they tend to devote to resistance or disagreement.

Reframing Resistance as Constructive Pushback

Resistance in response to coaching input was a common theme within existing research on instructional coaching and coaching conversations. Researchers most often discussed it using negative terms such as noncompliance (e.g., Jacobs, Boardman, Potvin, & Wang, 2018; Jay, 2009). Examples of negative resistance also arose within this study. For instance, Susanna's refusal to integrate pop quizzes and Lorelei's decision to not

engage in Rose's offer of coteaching to explore new practices did not lead to pedagogical growth. However, there were instances where constructive pushback indicated a teacher's earnest attempts to integrate new input that contrasted with her existing pedagogy. Hannah's coaching conversations with KP offered the clearest example of a teacher using her coaching conversations as a place to work through that struggle. Her experience led the implication of the potential for reframing what coaches typically perceive as negative resistance into a transformative opportunity provided by constructive pushback.

Every teacher in this study experienced resistance to their coach's input in their own way at some point, but most of them expressed it afterward to the researcher rather than directly to the coach. Teachers who shared their uncertainty during the actual conversation and negotiated possible changes to their instruction through constructive pushback went on to integrate small additions or changes into their pedagogy on a more authentic level. Sharing personal objections can be risky and uncomfortable, so one implication for teachers could be approaching those conversations in the same way coaches and administrators do. Instructional coaches and school leaders use resources such as *Better Conversations* (Knight, 2015) and *Having Hard Conversations* (Abrams, 2009) to develop their skills in providing constructive feedback. Teachers could benefit from using similar resources to develop their confidence and prowess in responding to input that does not align with their existing pedagogy or current contexts with constructive pushback.

In order for constructive pushback to be productive, the person with whom the teacher is collaborating must react in a way that furthers rather than stifles the

conversation. That reality leads to implications for instructional coaches, administrators, and teacher educators as well. On one hand, it involves reframing pushback from a negative connotation of resolutely resisting change to a more positive indicator of working toward authentic integration rather than passive implementation. On the other hand, authentic integration might also involve working toward pushback rather than working to avoid or diminish it. Existing professional learning practices such as the Change-Based Adoption Model (Min, 2017) and Senge's (1990) Change Puzzle acknowledged that resistance has deeper roots and provided suggestions for either preventing or overcoming pushback. This study's results led to an implication that coaches should also use the safe space of their coaching conversations to encourage rather than discourage constructive pushback as a way to explore a teacher's level of understanding related to new ideas and facilitate merging them into the teacher's existing pedagogy in an authentic way. After all, every situation of perceived resistance is based on some internal decision-making process and understanding that process can only further the goal of supporting a teacher's pedagogical growth.

The implications involving constructive pushback bring together each of the previous implications. First, conversations involving constructive pushback are particularly relevant to supporting second-stage teachers, who have moved beyond the preservice and novice stages of teaching but do not yet consider themselves content experts or experienced veterans. Engaging in constructive pushback during conversations with these teachers aligns with Huberman's (1989) finding that they have achieved a level of stabilization that allows them to pursue experimentation and reassessment of their pedagogy. Second, experimentation and negotiation require

personal risk-taking that can lead to lasting transformation, but only if nonevaluative conversations focused on authentic integration are kept distinct from evaluative interactions concerning fidelity of implementation. Finally, this study identified three types of teacher response during coaching conversations. Although constructive pushback demonstrated the most transformative potential, it is important for coaches and other professional learning providers to listen closely and follow up on every response in order to support authentic pedagogical growth.

Considerations for Future Research

The research design and results of this study led to several considerations for future research. The considerations arose from the delimitations stated at the outset of the study, the limitations that arose during the study, and the relation of the results to the existing body of research. With regard to intentional delimitations, future researchers might pursue deeper or broader understandings by changing elements of the study's research design. For instance, focusing on one coaching dyad rather than multiple dyads could allow the researcher to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of one teacher's process. Conversely, including more dyads in a similar multi-case study could lead to more universal transferable trends that reflect a wider array of experiences and contexts. Future researchers might also broaden or shift the focus of the study when defining the well-bounded case. For example, professional learning and the development of one's pedagogy are both expansive, multifaceted topics. This study positioned the coaching conversations as the unit of analysis and only considered those aspects of the multiple data sources that directly related to the conversations. Broadening the study's focus would involve more time and require greater access to the participants, but it could

also result in an even more contextualized understanding of their experiences with the central phenomena. Even within a similar research design, shifting the unit of analysis to focus on the teacher, the coach, or the resulting classroom instruction would yield different results based on the chosen lens.

In addition to delimiting the study in different ways, future researchers might also address limitations that arose more circumstantially during the study. My history and role with the school district led to selecting middle and high school teachers and coaches as a way of reducing researcher bias. A similar study conducted by a secondary level educator or outside researcher would allow for including primary and elementary level participants. Conducting the research concurrent with my own instructional duties also limited the amount of contact I had with the participants and prevented collecting data on all of their coaching conversations. Future research conducted by an outside researcher or an embedded researcher who has less involvement with the central phenomena could allow for more responsive data collection. Collecting more data could yield findings that capture a single dyad's experiences more fully or lead to themes among the dyads that are more transferable to the contexts of the researchers and practitioners who consult the results.

Finally, this study addressed a specific intersection of elements within the larger body of existing research on professional learning. As shown in Figure 1 in Chapter 2, the review of literature for this study steadily narrowed the focus from an initial interest in differentiating professional learning to the final decision to target second-stage teachers engaged in coaching conversations to integrate new elements into their existing pedagogy. The results of this phenomenological multi-case study related to the literature

at each stage of that review in ways that offered new opportunities for future research. With regard to research design, this study added to the somewhat underrepresented field of qualitative case studies on coaching conversations and positioned the teachers rather than the coaches or students as the central figures. Within the qualitative field, future research could explore the types of teachers' responses to input more deeply and attend to how coaches navigate different responses based on their own existing pedagogy and andragogy. Future quantitative or mixed-methods studies might continue the process described within this study's results to include whether the indications of constructive pushback leading to lasting transformation hold true and, if they do, what impacts that has on student achievement and teacher evaluations.

Researcher Reflection

Many of this study's results reinforced established assumptions about professional learning in general and coaching conversations in particular. For example, professional learning exists within multiple interrelated contexts and teachers value the safe space of conversations with nonevaluative instructional coaches. However, the nature and role of constructive pushback represented an unexpected aspect of the results. Constructive pushback involved a unique combination of trust and resistance. The teachers resisted the coaches' input based on their existing pedagogy or current contexts and trusted the coaches enough to openly push back against their suggestions.

Unfortunately, trust and resistance are often spoken of as opposing concepts. A teacher who resists implementing a new initiative or pushes back against negative feedback in the form of suggestions might be told to "trust the process" or worse "fake it 'til you make it." Both of those clichés communicate that the initiative or suggestion is

inherently more valuable than the teacher's existing pedagogy. At best, that message may lead to teachers implementing the initiative on a surface level or avoiding future conversations about that input. At worst, it possibly contributes to the attrition rate among teachers who feel devalued as professionals. Those negative outcomes might be avoided by ensuring that trust within those conversations runs both ways. Encouraging teachers to trust in the value of the input they receive and the sincerity of those offering it is important. Equally important is encouraging coaches, administrators, and teacher educators to trust in the validity of the teachers' pedagogy and the authenticity of their responses.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MERCER IRB APPROVAL



*Institutional Review Board
For Research Involving Human Subjects*

Thursday, July 19, 2018

James N. Philmon
Tift College of Education - Atlanta
Atlanta, GA 30345

RE: How Teachers Experience Attempts to Integrate the Content of Coaching Conversations into Their Existing Pedagogy (H1807172)

Dear Philmon:

On behalf of Mercer University's Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, your application submitted on 16-Jul-2018 for the above referenced protocol was reviewed in accordance with Federal Regulations [21 CFR 56.110\(b\)](#) and [45 CFR 46.110\(b\)](#) (for expedited review) and was approved under category(ies) 06, 07 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 19-Jul-2018. The protocol expires on 18-Jul-2019. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:

A student application for a phenomenological case study design using observations and interviews to explore how teachers experience the process of integrating new skills and strategies discussed during instructional coaching conversations into their own instructional and planning practices.

NOTE: You **MUST** report to the committee when the protocol is initiated. Report to the Committee immediately any changes in the protocol or consent form and **ALL** accidents, injuries, and serious or unexpected adverse events that occur to your subjects as a result of this study.

We at the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance are dedicated to providing the best service to our research community. As one of our investigators, we value your feedback and ask that you please take a moment to complete our [Satisfaction Survey](#) and help us to improve the quality of our service.

It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you much success with your project! If you need any further assistance, please feel free to contact our office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ava Chambliss-Richardson".

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, Ph.D., CIP, CIM.
Director of Research Compliance
Member
Institutional Review Board

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization's (ICH) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone: 478-301-4101 | Email: ORC_Mercer@Mercer_Edu | Fax: 478-301-2329
1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, Georgia 31207-0001

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESEARCH APPROVAL

The approval document has been redacted to anonymize the sites and participants.

[Redacted]

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
IN THE [Redacted] SCHOOL SYSTEM

DISPOSITION

Researcher: James Nicholas Philmon

Title of Proposed Research Study: How Teachers Experience Attempts to Integrate the Content of Coaching Conversations into Their Existing Pedagogy: A Phenomenological Case Study

Date Considered by the Administration and/or [Redacted] Board of Education: 7/18/2018

Administratively or Board approved:

Yes - please review additional information below

Yes - pending documentation listed below

No - please review additional information below

Research proposal may be resubmitted for further consideration with the following criteria: N/A

Additional Documentation:

- N/A

Additional Information:

- It is not permissible to reference the name of the school or school district in any documents related to this study.
- Please submit an electronic copy of your study to the district upon completion.
- School/teacher participation is completely voluntary.

District Contact: [Redacted], Deputy Superintendent

[Redacted]

Signature, Reviewer #1

[Redacted]

Signature, Reviewer #2

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT RECRUITING SCRIPTS

Instructional Coach Recruiting Script

As a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Mercer University, I am conducting research on how teachers conceptualize their process of integrating the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy. Several colleagues offered your name as a potential collaborator in this study based on your authentic use of coaching conversations in your work with teachers.

Participation in this research includes audio and video recording of at least six coaching conversations between you and two teachers. I will be present to observe and take notes, but the content and length of the coaching conversations will depend on your work with each teacher. After each observed coaching conversation, we will engage in a reflective interview using questions I provide. Each interview will be audio recorded for transcription and should take approximately 25 minutes. Your total time commitment will be approximately six hours, spread over several months, for the interviews in addition to whatever time you would normally spend meeting with the teachers for the coaching conversations.

If you are interested in learning more about the study and discussing how this opportunity might fit into your overall workload, I would like to schedule a meeting within the next week at a time and place that is most convenient for you. Please email me at james.n.philmon@live.mercer.edu if you would like to set up a time for that conversation.

Teacher Recruiting Script

As a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Mercer University, I am conducting research on how teachers attempt to integrate the content of coaching conversations into their existing pedagogy. I am inviting you to collaborate with me as a participant in the study because you currently include coaching conversations as part of your professional learning.

Participation in this research includes audio and video recording of at least six coaching conversations between you and an instructional coach and at least three instructional segments in your classroom. I will be present to observe and take notes, but the content and length of the coaching conversations and instructional segments will depend on your work with the coach and students. After each observation, we will engage in a reflective interview using questions I provide or develop based on your interactions. You will also provide copies or electronic access to any lesson plans you create for the instructional segments I observe.

Each interview will be audio recorded for transcription and should take approximately 25 minutes. If you agree to participate, your total time commitment will be approximately six hours for the interviews in addition to whatever time you would normally spend planning and delivering the instruction and meeting with the instructional coach.

If you would like to participate, you can review and sign the Informed Consent Form now. If you would like to take some time before deciding, you can reach me at (229) 591-1273 or james.n.philmon@live.mercer.edu with any questions or decision. Thank you.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT



Tift College of Education

How Teachers Experience Attempts to Integrate the Content of Coaching Conversations into Their Existing Pedagogy

Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators

James Nicholas Philmon, Ph.D. Candidate, Mercer University, Curriculum and Instruction
3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, GA 30341, (229) 591-1273

Jane West, Ed.D., Mercer University, Director of Ph.D. Programs in Education
3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, GA 30341, (678) 547-6385

Purpose of the Research

This research study is designed to explore how teachers experience the process of integrating new skills and strategies discussed during instructional coaching conversations into their own instructional and planning practices.

The data from this research will be used to develop a deeper understanding of that integration process including themes that are common between the teachers and unique to each teacher.

The completed study will constitute the culmination of the researcher's scholarly work toward earning a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to allow the researcher to observe, record, and analyze a series of coaching conversations and instructional segments. You will be asked to engage in follow-up interviews with the researcher after each observation. Teachers will also be asked to share with the researcher any lesson plans that relate to the coaching conversations.

Your participation will take approximately three hours outside of normal workflow for the instructional coach and six hours outside of normal workflow for the teachers. This additional time will be distributed throughout the school year rather than within an isolated timeframe. All observations and interviews will be collaboratively scheduled with the emphasis being on reducing interruptions to your normal routine.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

Beyond any inconvenience caused by the scheduled interviews, opening up your conversations and instruction to the researcher involve a certain amount of personal, emotional risk-taking. This study has an underlying growth-mindset and intentionally avoids elements of formal evaluation. The researcher will make a concerted effort throughout the study to ensure that your experiences and thoughts are recorded and reported with authenticity and anonymity.

The researcher will be available throughout the study to answer any questions and address any concerns you have about these risks. In addition, you reserve the right to disengage from the study either temporarily or permanently if the research process or the risks become too burdensome.

Mercer IRB
Approval Date _____
Protocol
Expiration Date _____

Potential Benefits of the Research

Personal benefits of this study include a deeper understanding of your own instructional or coaching practices and an increase in the authenticity and personalization within your coaching partnership. Additionally, teachers may develop a better understanding of your personal learning process that can inform future professional learning experiences.

Professional learning should advance a teacher's understanding and abilities in ways that ultimately improve student achievement. However, research suggests that teachers often lack the support they need to authentically integrate the new learning into their existing pedagogy. This study will contribute to the limited body of research on how teachers experience that process of integration that teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and teacher educators may consider in relation to their own professional learning practices and programming.

Confidentiality and Data Storage

The participants will maintain anonymity by collaboratively choosing a pseudonym that the researcher will use throughout the processes of data collection, data analysis, and publication of findings.

All written data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher has access. All audio/video recordings will be uploaded and maintained in the researcher's password-protected qualitative data analysis software account. On-going and final data analysis results will be stored in the researcher's password-protected Google Drive. Targeted portions of data may be examined by the researcher's Mercer doctoral committee and research colleagues on a limited scale for peer checking. Electronic versions of all data will be backed up on the researcher's password-protected external hard drive. Audio and video recordings will be maintained throughout the dissertation process and permanently deleted after the dissertation is approved for publication. Electronic versions of anonymized raw data and data analysis will be maintained for three years following the study's completion as an audit trail.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. As a participant, you may refuse to participate at any time. To withdraw from the study please contact James Philmon.

Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about the research, please speak with James Philmon, james.n.philmon@live.mercer.edu, (229) 591-1273 or Dr. Jane West, west_j@mercerc.edu, (678) 547-6385.

Audio or Video Taping

No images or names will be publicized or used outside the scope of this study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Mercer University's IRB. If you believe there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Chair, at (478) 301-4101.

You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.

Research Participant Name (Print)

Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Print)

Research Participant Signature

Person Obtaining Consent Signature

Date

Date

Mercer IRB
Approval Date _____
Protocol
Expiration Date _____

APPENDIX E

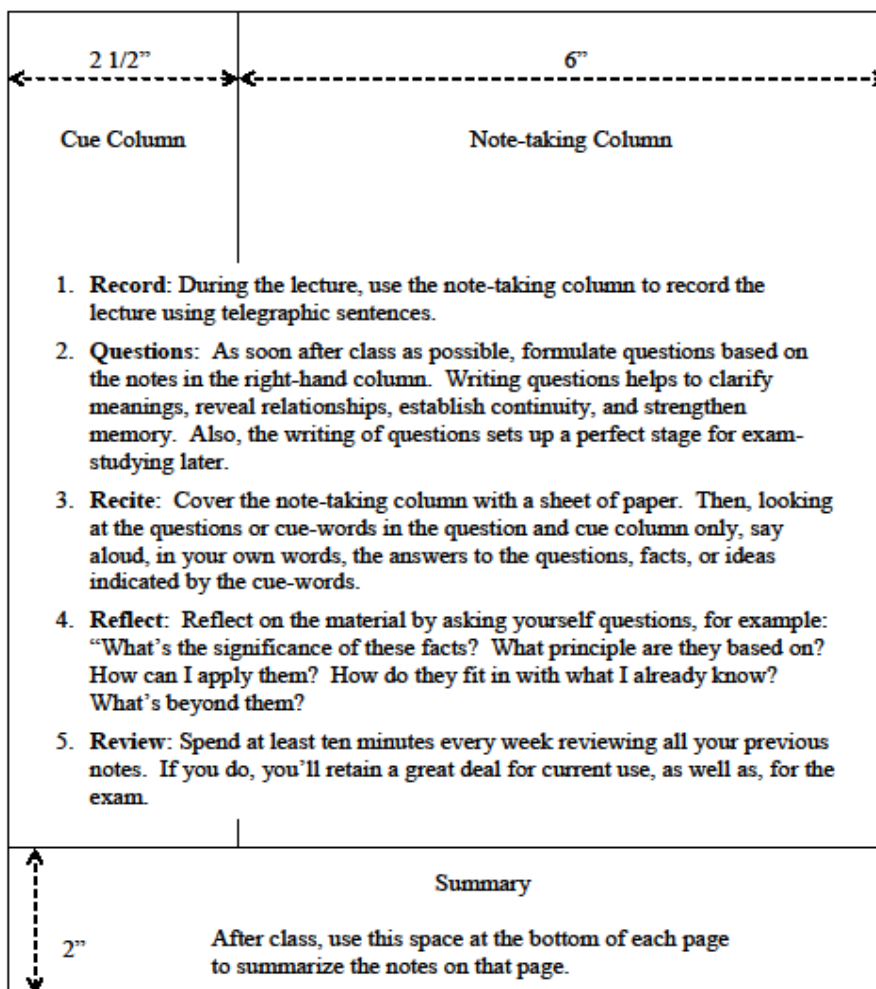
ORIGINAL CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM BY WALKER (2001)



Cornell University
Learning Strategies Center

420 CCC
Garden Ave Extension
Ithaca, New York 14853-4203
t. 607.255.6310
f. 607.255.1562
www.lsc.cornell.edu

The Cornell Note-taking System



Adapted from *How to Study in College 7/e* by Walter Pauk, 2001 Houghton Mifflin Company

APPENDIX F

BASIC CLEAN LANGUAGE QUESTIONS

The basic clean language questions (established by David Grove)

In these questions, X and Y represent the person's words (or non-verbals)

Developing Questions

"(And) what kind of X (is that X)?"

"(And) is there anything else about X?"

"(And) where is X? or (And) whereabouts is X?"

"(And) that's X like what?" (this gets you the metaphor that you can then explore)

"(And) is there a relationship between X and Y?"

"(And) when X, what happens to Y?"

Sequence and Source Questions

"(And) then what happens? or (And) what happens next?" "

(And) what happens just before X?"

"(And) where could X come from?"

Intention Questions

"(And) what would X like to have happen?"

"(And) what needs to happen for X?"

"(And) can X (happen)?"

The first two questions: "What kind of X (is that X)?" and "Is there anything else about X?" are the most commonly used.

For example someone may say "I need to be more assertive" and you respond "What kind of assertive is more assertive? They may say "less of a doormat" and you say "What kind of doormat? Is there anything else about less of a doormat?"

As a general guide, these two questions account for around 50% of the questions asked in a typical Clean Language session.

You can also simply use these questions when you want to gather more information from someone – it ensures you don't lead or project any of your own issues onto the client.

APPENDIX G

PERMISSION TO INCLUDE COPYRIGHTED VISUALS

Use of explanatory images

0 1 v



p.tosey@surrey.ac.uk

Tue 5/22, 5:44 AM

james@cleanlanguage.co.uk; James N. Philmon v



Reply all | v

Dear James,
thanks for your query, I'm also happy for you to reprint and adapt as requested (with appropriate acknowledgements).
Your study sounds very interesting and I wish you all the best for completing your doctorate successfully.
Paul Tosey

...

From: James Lawley <james@cleanlanguage.co.uk>

Sent: 19 May 2018 21:55:02

To: James N. Philmon

Cc: Tosey PC Dr (Surrey Business Schl)

Subject: Re: Use of explanatory images

Dear James

Many thanks for your interest in our work.

For my part, I am happy for you to reprint and adapt excerpts from the publications you mention.

I would be interested in seeing a copy of your final thesis.

I also attach a copy of a Chapter I have written related to teacher education using Clean Language Interviewing which you may or may not be aware of.

Kind regards

James

Re: Use of document in dissertation



Hugh Russell <hugh@e-russell.com>

Today, 3:37 AM

James N. Philmon ✓



Reply all |

Inbox

Yes that is acceptable.

Sent from my iPhone

On 19 Feb 2019, at 00:45, James N. Philmon <James.N.Philmon@live.mercer.edu> wrote:

Good evening Mr. Russell,

I found the linked document below while searching for a concise way to guide the reflective interviews within my dissertation study on coaching conversations. I subsequently studied Clean Language Interviewing and decided to implement it as part of my research design. The explanations and layout of the questions in this document has been very helpful. Would it be acceptable to include this document in the Appendix of my dissertation as part of the audit trail for my data collection? http://e-russell.com/images/The_basic_clean_language_questions1.pdf

Thank you in advance,
J. Nicholas Philmon

PhD Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Mercer University

APPENDIX H

CODES GENERATED DURING FIRST CYCLE CODING

Categorical Code

specific subcodes (quotation marks indicate in vivo codes)

Acknowledging Weakness

coach/teacher of curriculum/self/students

Anticipating Outcomes

coach/teacher anticipating negativity/success

Celebrating Growth

coach/teacher of dyad/self/students/teacher

Coach's Role

adding on; asking questions to seek clarification/focus on student/focus on teacher; “authenticity”; “availability”; bridging to administrators/ colleagues/ curriculum/pedagogy; co-teaching; “delicate”; “empowering”; holistic; jargon; observing teacher; “looking for trends”; “organic”; personality; prioritizing support; reassuring; referencing previous suggestion; reflecting; relationships; resources; role-playing student/teacher voice; visualizing; “want to get her thinking”; words of wisdom

Focus of Conversation

assessment; coaching process; compliance; continued growth; future collaboration/intervention/modelling; general instruction: adapting curriculum, co-teaching, background knowledge, differentiation, generalizing, providing options, structured environment, “thinking on her feet”, within curriculum; interpersonal connections; model classroom; observation; pacing within lesson/curriculum; professional development; physical space; specific strategies: chunking, grouping, help box, seating, stations; specific student/class period; student engagement

Implementing Suggestions

adding; attempting; not implementing due to teaching style/student needs; planning to implement; prioritizing based on time; replacing

Source of Ideas

coach’s knowledge/experience; colleague; curriculum; previous success; same idea; teacher “hindsight” prompted/self-motivated

Source of Success/Failure

situation; students; teacher; “this is on me”

Teacher's Role

asking questions; authenticity; considering input: adding on to suggestion, choice within suggestion, declining intervention, “going back and forth”; describing existing plans; existing pedagogy; “full disclosure”; open to support; reacting to students’ academic needs/behaviour; recalling instruction: generalizing, “great in theory”, implementing coaching, taking notes; seeking input from coach: “I don’t know”, “looking for recipe”, prioritizing support, worried about pacing

APPENDIX I

FIELD NOTES FROM CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

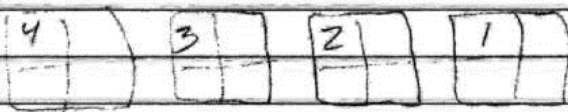
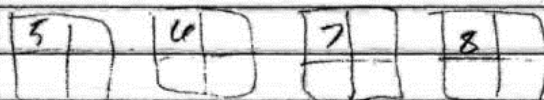
The following field notes were generated during Hannah's classroom instruction as discussed in Chapter 4 and are representative of field notes generated during each classroom instruction. The main body of text and images represent direct observations shorthand for some elements: T for the teacher participant; S# for students; Co-T for the participant's co-teacher; Gr # for student small groups. The squares represent student desks arranged in small groups. Marginal notes on the left represent the researcher's reactions and questions along with time stamps for what the researcher considered significant shifts in instruction. Grey highlighting indicates portions that were coded in NVivo.

Hannah Instruction re 2-15

3/16

1:10 T cheating on completed assignments S wondering about grades
 "Debra even you are on time!" S "4 seconds" T "Not how it works"
 You get a T. "Grabs a computer and this assignment"
 you get a T "What! Don't do that... headphones out"

usually handle T "Finishing side call" Co-T noting correct finished
 because of the copying Co-T



(5)...

10:17 Gr 4 engaged w/1 student (personal teasing), Gr 7 engaged, not Lit
 Gr 4 dropping in to partner work conversation "Yeah, what is that?!"
 *replying to S? "Look at my example on board" "You have to ask yourself...
 which one is it?"

Is it? How do you know?

wait time CoT questions about grading & another S? T This says... now tell me...
 I'll come back ^{so you} mediate!

CoT clarifying directions

redirecting	Gr 3 S asking another S T "what's the change...?" "Wanna bet on it?"
balancing talking + asking	Another S "you need to..." S 7th, beside S, highlighting + breaking down cookie recipe metaphor → right problem? "what's the difference? I'm sitting here looking at it"
	S terminology "That's big picture, now zoom in" S T into A T "Yes! We're in DNA + you're throwing out other terms literally what do you see?"
frustrated?	Gr 4 S ask of paper T walk through paper + paper back to board T → 1 student ↔ group
	Gr 3 T → S "you're missing a major part." S "you know what I mean" T "you have to tell me" S "Give me a hint" T "B" S "buses"
	S 1:1 assistance Gr 8 → while T "not asking for definitions"
	Gr 3 T → S "It's asking... instead of... it's..." "I'm not just giving it to you (like co-T)" T → S "you're right"
1:42	Gr 2 personal conversation about makeup clear in on no new submissions

	Gr 2 "Instagram isn't helping. Neither is copying. I'll just sit here"
	Gr 3 "What cell is it in?" T "Think about that question!"
More concerned? higher expectations	CoT "Pointing out ready group T "wonder some not understanding" "only misunderstood..."
traditional pedagogy vs casual interactions	Gr 2 chewing over work SI explaining using cookie metaphor Gr 3 "It worries me when you work things like this?" Gr 4 responding to joke Gr 5 checking "yes! Great job! That gives me good vibes!"
1:50	CoT "At about 3/4, so if you want to go over it"
1:52	T Specific names + those who are struggling, need your faces where recitation occurring? wrong wrong it's wronging me It occurs in DNA, what are they? det. mix sub Made up these examples codon I can't talk over y'all. listen or at least let others learn "When you're tested..."
CoT providing more scaffold	
specific vocab	
visual examples	Tag teams w/in game metaphor What's the outcome? What's the reason?

T diagramming demo of changes
 what we were trying to get you to do... y'all were confused
 Looking over to human mutations

Gr 2 personal touch base w/ 1 student

1:58

Gr 1 presenting phenomenon using Smart Board
 T monitoring behavior → Gr 2 personal touch base
 video on phenomenon

black/white
 w/ notes

Gr 6 Discussing/debating tardy w/ 1 student

T setting expectations for graded assignment

Gr 3 Amount of work, understanding deadlines

T monitoring from afar

→ S "you know this, just have to do the work"

S "what's frame shift?" T "what locus steering you on board?"

S "see how..." "Exactly!"

Gr 3 "you need to know from brain" S aha comment

you know things, but don't ~~know~~ you know you want me to tell you ~~you~~ "you gotta admit I've
 been along way"

fun + work don't go together

Gr3 S "Is it..." T "How did you get..."

Gr6 Behavior discussion using student cards

Gr4/5 Great job Gr3 ^{TOS} CPT task → I'm monitoring

Gr2 attendance discussion

S1 talking through current work

Gr3 TOS "You're trying to do a lot of guessing"
I want you to be correct. I'm not gonna say oh good
you're almost right

T-CoT consultation about a student/teacher
needs a 1:1 meeting

2:23 T Computers up S Homework? T Yes

CoT Assessment in Scholastic

^{Tot} Gr4 personal conversation

T Computers up reminder

1:1 conversations w/ students

APPENDIX J

RESPONSES TO INPUT DURING COACHING CONVERSATIONS

The following tables are organized by chronological order within each coaching dyad. Chapter 4 features additional within-case and across-case findings related to these interactions. Table abbreviations correlate to the descriptions in Chapter 4: NA for nominal acknowledgments; LD for likeminded discussions; CP for constructive pushback. Directional arrows indicate continued interaction about one suggestion where the teacher or coach responded to one another in a new way. Implementation indicates that the teacher included the suggestion in classroom instruction as a stand-alone component of one lesson with no expression or indication of an intent to integrate in the future. Integration indicates that the teacher included the suggestion within classroom instruction on multiple occasions, as an integrated part of existing plans, and/or expressed an intent to integrate in the future.

Table J1

Hannah's Responses to KP's Input

Date	Coach's input	Form of input	Teacher's response	Coach's reply	Outcome	Teacher's rationale
Nov. 30	3D instruction	Question "Did you feel like"	CP Student needs	Framed as opportunity for growth	Integrated some elements	Misaligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Provide independent resources	Directive "So continue to"	NA "Yeah"	Shared additional rationale	Did not attempt	Misaligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Differentiate pacing	Directive "I tell you all the time"	CP Worried about finishing	Reassured	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Lesson openers	Directive "You just"	LD "Yeah. I know and..."	Celebrated success	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
Feb. 15	3D instruction	Directive "We're gonna have to"	CP → Student needs; LD ← "as I understand more"	Acknowledged obstacle; Appealed to existing pedagogy	Integrated some elements	Misaligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Student work packet	Question "Do you feel comfortable"	CP → Student needs; CP → Shared alternative	Shared additional rationale; Supported decision	Integrated some elements	Misaligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation

Table J2

Susanna's Responses to KP's Input

Date	Coach's input	Form of input	Teacher's response	Coach's reply	Outcome	Teacher's rationale
Oct. 25	Over-plan to reduce ending wait time	Suggestive "We can"	NA "Right... Awesome"	Anticipated positive outcome	Attempted to implement	Aligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Positive environment	Directive "We do want to"	CP → Cycled back to obstacle; NA ← "Right..Mm-hmm"	Acknowledged obstacle; Role-played integration	Planned to implement in the future	Current context (timing); stated during conversation
	Student-led closure	Suggestive "You can"	NA "Mm-hmm... Hmm?"	Shared additional rationale	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Differentiate pacing	Directive "Gives you an opportunity to"	CP → Cycled back to obstacle NA ← "Sure, yeah"	Reframed as a positive; Framed as opportunity for growth	Began to integrate	Multiple voices; stated in future conversation
	Eliminate back row seating	Directive "You've got to sell it"	CP "Not my strong point"	Offered on-going support	Attempted to implement	Misaligned with pedagogy; stated during interview
	Flexible seating arrangement	Suggestive "We talked about"	NA "Right"	Redirected to new topic	Did not attempt	Current context (physical); stated during conversation

Table J2 (continued)

	Stations	Suggestive “They can”	LD Shared existing plan	Added details	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
Nov. 26	Enforce seating routine	Directive “Let me give you a recommendation”	CP Cycled back to obstacle	Role played more specific response	Integrated some elements	Current context (student); stated during interview
	Stations	Reflective “A good trial and error”	LD Self-reflected	Added details	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Chunking	Directive “I have a couple of recommendations”	LP Shared existing plan	Shared additional rationale	Began to integrate	Multiple voices; stated during conversation
	Pop quizzes	Directive “[Team leader] agreed with trying”	CP → Shared alternative; NA → “That’s a good point”	Shared additional rationale; Added details	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; stated in interview
	Names on desks	Suggestive “May have to”	CP Shared past experience	Referenced student needs	Integrated adaptation	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Strategic seating	Directive “Definitely want you to”	CP Cycled back to obstacle	Offered support; redirected to new topic	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Enforcing discipline referrals	Directive “If they... then you”	CP Cycled back to obstacle	Shared additional rationale	Did not attempt	Misaligned to pedagogy; stated in interview

Table J3

Lorelei's Responses to Rose's Input

Date	Coach's input	Form of input	Teacher's response	Coach's reply	Outcome	Teacher's rationale
Dec. 12	Stations	Question "Do you guys ever"	CP Shared previous experience	Probed further; Acknowledged obstacle	Attempted to implement	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Provide visual steps to lesson	Suggestive "A way to combat that is maybe"	LD Added details	Added options	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Differentiate video	Question "Did they all"	LD Self-reflected	Added options	Did not attempt	Current context (timing); researcher observation
	Incorporate movement	Question "Were they engaged"	LD Shared previous experience	Added options	Implemented adaptation	Current context (student); stated during conversation
	Make abstract content more concrete	Suggestive "And maybe"	LD Added details	Added options	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Specific EngageNY lesson	Directive "I kind of want you to"	LD Added details	Added details	Did not attempt	Current context (timing); stated in interview
	Offered to model a lesson	Suggestive "So I would love to"	NA "Sounds good"	Left open-ended	Did not attempt	Current context (timing); stated in interview

Table J3 (continued)

Mar. 12	Average rather than replace grades	Suggestive “Or you could”	NA “Yeah”	Probed further; redirected to new topic	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Provide visual steps via co-teacher	Suggestive “While you...he could”	LD Shared existing alternative	Acknowledged; Redirected to new topic	Implemented adaptation	Aligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Assign as homework	Suggestive “Maybe”	CP Shared existing alternative	Acknowledged; Redirected to new topic	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Use provided resources	Question “Did you get”	CP “I’m not sure”	Acknowledged obstacles	Did not attempt	Current context (student); stated during conversation
	Share social contract with parents	Question “Have you thought about”	CP Referenced current context	Probed further; acknowledged obstacles	Did not attempt	Current context (timing); stated during conversation

Table J4

Mahogany's Responses to Rose's Input

Date	Coach's input	Form of input	Teacher's response	Coach's reply	Outcome	Teacher's rationale
Nov. 16	Annotate while reading	Question "Do they ever"	LD Added details	Probed further; added options	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Model explicitly	Suggestive "Maybe"	NA Took notes	Added details	Began to integrate	Multiple voices; stated during conversation
	More probing questions	Directive "It's you asking"	NA Took notes	Redirected to new topic	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Various sources for resources	Question "Are you familiar with"	NA "Yeah!"	Added details	Implemented adaptation	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Task-specific lighting	Question "How has that been going"	CP → Shared obstacles; NA ← Took notes	Acknowledged obstacles; Added options	Implemented adaptation	Current context (physical); stated during conversation
	Use provided resources	Suggestive "So this might go"	NA "That's fine"	Added details	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Provide variety of texts	Directive "I have the media center pulling"	LD Shared existing plan	Celebrated success; added options	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation

Table J4 (continued)

	Offered to co-teach with provided resources	Suggestive “Maybe we can”	NA “Mm-hmm”	Added details	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Tighten pacing within lesson	Directive “If you... they will”	LD Added details	Celebrated success; added details	Attempted to implement	Misalignment with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
	Use specific video for perspective	Directive “I think that’ll be interesting”	NA Took notes	Added details	Integrated adaptation	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Collaborate on rubric and share with PLC	Suggestive “Maybe we could”	NA Took notes “Yeah”	Linked to curriculum; anticipated positive outcome	Did not attempt	Misaligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
	Differentiate for enhanced	Direct “I’d venture to say”	LD Shared existing plan	Celebrated success	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; stated during conversation
	Chunking book	Directive “What I did”	CP Shared existing alternative	Acknowledged	Did not attempt	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
Jan. 14	Address misconceptions	Question “What in the text”	CP Referenced student behavior AD Acknowledged student needs	Probed further; offered resources	Integrated adaptation	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation

Table J4 (continued)

Offered to co-teach to model lesson	Question “When do you”	LD Shared alternative plan	Followed teacher’s lead	Implemented adaptation	Aligned to pedagogy; stated in interview
Review standard by note-taking	Suggestive “My suggestion for that is”	LD Added details	Offered resource	Implemented adaptation	Misaligned with pedagogy; researcher interpretation
Stations	Suggestive “You could”	NA Took notes; “I hear you”	Added options	Began to integrate	Aligned to pedagogy; researcher interpretation
