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Instructional Coaches in West Virginia: Who They Are and What They Do

Mary Lynn Westfall

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Instructional Coaches in West Virginia: Who They Are and What They Do

Mary Lynn Westfall

Dissertation submitted
to the College of Education and Human Services
at West Virginia University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in
Educational Leadership Studies

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Morgantown, West Virginia
2016

Keywords: Instructional Coach, Academic Coach, Teacher Leadership
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ABSTRACT

Instructional Coaches in West Virginia: Who They Are and What They Do

Mary Lynn Westfall

Implementing practices and programs into a school and making sure they are successful requires a collaborative effort among all involved in the school. With the expectations of what a school is to provide for students and faculty, school principals have been charged with serving as the building manager and instructional leader of the school. Teacher leadership has flourished as principals seek assistance from other education professionals. Instructional, or academic, coaches are formal teacher leaders who may work with teachers and principals. They can work closely with teachers to improve teaching practices and work to overcome the isolationism that traditionally exists in the profession. They can also work with principals to acquire resources for the teachers and serve as an instructional leader of the school.

This study focused on academic coaches in West Virginia. The purpose of this study was to understand who West Virginia academic coaches are, what types of responsibilities they have, and what challenges they encounter. All academic coaches listed in the state directory were invited to participate in the study. Participation involved completing a survey comprised of 17 demographic questions, 22 questions about their responsibilities as an academic coach and 10 questions about challenges they encounter as an academic coach. The return rate of the surveys was 42.1%.

From the responses, three conclusions were made: (1) academic coaches in West Virginia are generally females between the ages of 51-60 with more than 20 years of teaching experience, certified in elementary education and reading, and have about three years of coaching experience; (2) academic coaches in West Virginia are primarily responsible for assisting teachers with instructional types of tasks; and (3) the academic coaches experience few challenges and feel supported by teachers, school and county administration.

Acknowledgements

I have waited a long time to be to the point of writing this page! Finally, I have reached the end of what has been a very long and educational journey. As is the way with the end of many journeys, this one is bittersweet. What comes next is unknown, but something to look forward to with anticipation. It will be nice to have some time to do what I want and to pursue other areas of interest. It will be nice to smile and say I was successful in reaching this goal.

As I complete this project, I must thank many people who have helped make this possible. First, to Dr. Helen Hazi who has been persistent and patient with me as I completed this project. She has pushed and prodded me when needed and has encouraged me when needed. To Dr. Hazi, thank you. I also want to thank my other committee members who have taken their time to read and provide suggestions and comments to help develop this research study. They are Dr. Neal Shambaugh, Dr. Marjorie Darrah, Dr. Allison Swan Dagen, and Dr. Aimee Morewood. Additionally, I would like to thank Larry White for his assistance with the statistics involved in the project. I would also like to thank cohort members Keith Burdette and Janie DeVaul as well as my colleagues at East Fairmont High School and administrators David Nuzum and Mindy Brown for their many words of encouragement.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

In the last fifteen years the accountability of schools and school systems has reached all-time highs with the initial expectation that all students would attain mastery of content by 2014 (No Child Left Behind, 2001). School principals have been charged with serving as the building manager and instructional leader of the school. Teacher leaders are invaluable assets to a principal as the teacher leaders can assist with some of the responsibilities. As a result teacher leadership has flourished as principals seek assistance from other education professionals. Tapping into the expertise that is within the school and/or school district can provide great assistance for the principal. Teacher leaders may use their expertise in the classroom to improve teaching and learning (Scherer, 2007).

Distributed leadership has become a point of interest in the research of schools as more professionals in the school take on leadership roles. This expanded view of school leadership considers the interactions of the school personnel and their situations (Spillane, 2006). Principals of schools cannot single-handedly manage a complex organization like a school without the assistance of other individuals in the school stepping into leadership roles (Spillane, 2006). The addition of leadership roles in the school adds depth to the leadership and contributes to the direction and focus of the school culture (Wall, 2009).

This research focused specifically on instructional coaches taking on responsibilities to help principals build school capacity. Instructional coaching is a specific, formal type of teacher leadership. The coaches can work closely with teachers to build relationships and create a safe working and learning environment for all. They can work to build morale within the school and overcome some of the isolationism that traditionally exists in the school (Center for Teaching

Quality, 2006). The coaches can serve as critical friends of the principal as they identify needs of the school and find means to fill those needs (Feldman & Tung, 2002).

Feldman and Tung (2002) stated “given the increasing use of coaches in schools, it is surprising that little is known about just what coaches do and how they do it” (p. 1). The researcher found this statement intriguing and identified a need for research to better understand what academic coaches do in West Virginia.

Definitions

For clarification purposes, the following definitions were used within this research:

Academic coach (or instructional coach): Professional educator who provides “focused improvement in teaching and learning” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b)(4), 2015) by creating a “comprehensive infrastructure that routinely supports a continuous process” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b), 2015).

Coaching for Learning: West Virginia initiative from 2011-2014 that supported the work of academic coaches and provided professional development opportunities for coaches.

Distributed leadership: Leadership practice taking into consideration the “interactions of school *leaders, followers*, and aspects of their *situation* such as tools and routines” (Spillane, 2006, p. 3).

Instructional practice: Educational practice including lesson preparation and delivery used to transfer content to learners and assess their understanding through data disaggregation.

Administrative practice: Educational practices (e.g., budgets, resource acquisition, scheduling, hiring, evaluation, school management) that would traditionally be the responsibility of the principal. Not typically a teacher responsibility.

Sustainability: The capacity to maintain a practice over time.

Teacher leadership: A teacher who works collaboratively with colleagues, principals, and the educational community to influence and improve instructional practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand who West Virginia academic coaches are, what types of responsibilities they have, and what challenges they encounter.

Rationale. In West Virginia there have been three recent developments that have highlighted the need for a study of academic coaches in the state. The first development was the need for coaches to increase teacher content knowledge to increase the number of schools attaining the adequate yearly progress standard established by No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation. The second development was a revised teacher evaluation system that calls for site-based collaborative professional development by stating the evaluation will

Serve as the basis for providing professional development specifically targeted on the area or areas identified through the evaluation process as needing improvement. If possible, this targeted professional development should be delivered at the school-site using collaborative processes, mentoring or coaching or other approaches that maximize use of the instructional setting. (WV State Code §18A-3C-2(e)(2), 2015)

The third development was the release of goals in October, 2014 by the new state superintendent. In the goals the superintendent called for an organization “that is staffed with a skilled and innovative team...to respond to the increased level of urgency for improving teaching” (Martirano, 2014, p 4).

In 2011 an initiative in West Virginia was started. A group of stakeholders gathered and worked to identify common concerns of working academic coaches in the state. One common concern identified was policy support to determine what coaches are expected to do and how

they are to accomplish the expectations. One part of this study identified what the academic coaches report as their current responsibilities.

Most of the research that has been completed about instructional coaches has been qualitative and has been conducted with case studies and interviews of instructional coaches (e.g., McCollough, 2007; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Wall, 2009). For this study, the entire population of academic coaches identified by the state of West Virginia will be included. The study will follow a postpositive paradigm. A survey will be distributed to the population of 149 academic coaches and data gathered to allow for generalizations about the coaching population.

Research Design

This study focuses on academic coaches in West Virginia. The coaches were identified through state and county employee directories.

After completing the literature review, the following research questions were developed:

1. What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?
2. What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia?
3. What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

In order to answer these questions, a study of academic coaches in West Virginia was designed. To conduct the study, the researcher used a survey and collected quantitative data about the coaches. A survey that would address these questions could not be located, so the researcher developed the survey. The survey was distributed to all academic coaches in West Virginia electronically. After data was collected, it was analyzed to provide a description of an academic coach, and to identify responsibilities and challenges of the coaches.

Significance. The intent of this research was to fill gaps in the literature to better understand academic coaches. Understanding of responsibilities and managing challenges were

common themes in previous studies (Feldman & Tung, 2002; McCollough, 2007; Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005). This study identified the responsibilities most common to academic coaches in West Virginia. It also identified some of the challenges they experience. Having this information from the whole population in West Virginia can be beneficial for policy makers at the state and district levels as they develop job descriptions and utilize coaches to assist principals with building the capacity of the school.

Limitations. As with any study, this research had limitations that must be considered. One limitation was the size of the population of academic coaches in the state. There were 149 identified academic coaches in West Virginia. A second limitation was that the responses provided were self-judgments of the respondents. Though descriptors were provided for each level of the survey response, the respondents used their judgment and understanding of the terminology to answer the prompt. A third limitation was the rate of non-response to the survey. By distributing an electronic survey there was the possibility of individuals not receiving the message, the message getting directed into a spam or trash folder, or the individual making the choice of not participating.

Organization of the Document

This document is organized into five chapters followed by appendices. The first chapter, the introduction, explains the purpose of the study, general research design, definitions of terms, limitations of the study, and the organization of the document.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature. The chapter highlights literature and research about teacher leadership, instructional coaching, and the role of the principal in a school.

The third chapter explains the methodology of the study. It includes the research rationale and research procedures. The development of the survey is also explained. The chapter closes with an explanation of how the data was analyzed.

Chapter 4 contains the data analysis. The chapter addresses the data collection and results for each of the three research questions. The chapter ends with related findings from the data.

The fifth and final chapter provides conclusions, discussions, and recommendations. The chapter begins with a review of the study and conclusions. The following section is a discussion of the non-participants, demographics, responsibilities, and challenges. The chapter closes with recommendations for future policy, practice, and research.

At the end of the document are appendices which include a matrix of survey items and related research, the survey to be used, the form to be used by experts to review the survey, and the letter to be sent to the superintendents explaining the study.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Introduction

Implementing practices and programs into a school and making sure they are successful requires a collaborative effort among all involved in the school. With the expectations of what a school is to provide for students and faculty, the principal needs to seek the assistance of teacher leaders within the school. These teacher leaders can provide assistance to the principal in many ways including decision making and professional development. The principal can collaborate with the teacher leaders and enhance the culture and capacity of the school. Instructional coaches are one type of teacher leader who may work with teachers and principals.

The purpose of this chapter is to review existing research on teacher leadership, instructional coaching, and the role of the principal. The purpose of this study was to identify who the instructional coaches in West Virginia are and what they do. Because instructional coaches are also teacher leaders who work with principals and teachers, literature about teacher leadership, instructional coaching, and the role of the principal was reviewed.

Teacher Leadership

This section addresses issues relating to teacher leadership. First, the definition of teacher leadership used in this research is explained. Then background information on teacher leadership is provided identifying what educational initiatives prompted teachers to take on more roles of leadership. The next section discusses distributed leadership explaining what it is and how it relates to teacher leadership. The fourth section discusses formal roles of teacher leadership including professional development for these teacher leaders, identifying teacher leaders, and impacts on the school culture. The next section includes the benefits of teacher leaders and how they assist the formal leaders of the school, experience an increase in job satisfaction, and

increase school and teacher capacity. The section closes with a discussion of challenges which include sustainability of the role, time limitations, and impacts on an egalitarian profession.

Defining teacher leadership. As accountability measures have increased during the past decade “the concept of teacher leadership has become increasingly embedded in the language and practice of educational improvement” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255). Even though teacher leaders are increasingly necessary for the growth of school organizations, “the concept of teacher leadership has not been clearly or consistently defined” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 263). In the realm of education this term, and practice, has taken on multiple meanings, often to fit the circumstances or need. Points addressed by Spillane (2006) and York-Barr and Duke (2004) were used to develop a definition for this research. Spillane (2006) provides a general statement that leadership “is defined as a relationship of social influence” (p. 10). After an extensive literature review, York-Barr and Duke (2004) provide a definition of teacher leadership as “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (pp. 287-288). Blending these, a definition of a teacher leader has been developed for this study: A teacher leader is a teacher who works collaboratively with colleagues, principals, and the educational community to influence and improve instructional practices.

Background on teacher leadership. While educational reform efforts have existed in American education since the 1800s, “the most recent emphasis on teacher leadership has its roots in the education reform initiatives of the 1980s” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255) that resulted from *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). With a focus on the quality of teaching and learning, some of the recommendations for teaching that

came out of this report included having experienced teachers work with newer teachers and developing a career ladder so there would be levels of distinction among teachers of different levels. At the time of this report, these levels were called beginning, experienced, and master teachers. *A Nation at Risk* called for more teachers' active participation in decision-making and leadership in schools.

Just six years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the Task Force on Teaching of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy issued *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986). Through its research the Carnegie Forum aspired to influence leaders in education to increase the standards for teachers. In addition to accountability, the document identified that teachers should be more involved in decision-making practices in education. It also called for the teaching profession to include lead teachers and mentors for those less experienced. This document continued to provide momentum for the development of teacher leaders in schools.

During the years since *A Nation at Risk* and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* reports were released, some of the recommendations for reform have occurred while others have not. The concept of teacher leadership is one that has evolved as a result of the recommendations from those reports. There are recognized mentoring programs for teachers as well as some leadership roles teachers can fulfill. As teachers have assumed more expanded roles, their interactions with formal school leaders have been a point of interest for research (Danielson, 2006; Knight, 2007; Leithwood, 1997; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium developed *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (2011) which

Are designed to encourage professional discussion about what constitutes the full range of competencies that teacher leaders possess and how this form of leadership can be distinguished from, but work in tandem with, formal administrative leadership roles to support good teaching and promote student learning. (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011, p. 3)

The standards consist of seven domains of teacher leadership which are:

1. Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.
2. Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning.
3. Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.
4. Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.
5. Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement.
6. Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community.
7. Advocating for student learning and the profession. (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011, p. 9)

These standards provide a guideline as teacher leaders work in a variety of different leadership roles.

Distributed leadership. Spillane (2006) explains that distributed leadership is about leadership practice taking into consideration the “interactions of school *leaders, followers*, and aspects of their *situation* such as tools and routines” (p. 3). The fact that distributed leadership takes a combined look at the interactions of these three dynamics results in an expanded view of the leadership of a school. It builds depth in the leadership component of a school as multiple people are involved in multiple interactions. Spillane goes on to explain that the principal and

teacher leaders cannot be examined through separate lenses because the interactions between them must also be considered.

Expanded systems of practice such as distributed leadership are necessary because “individuals who single-handedly try to lead complex organizations like schools set themselves up for failure” (Spillane, 2006, pp. 87-88). Greater success has been found by identifying teachers who have leadership potential and providing them with professional development opportunities to develop into stronger leaders. Simply appointing teachers to leadership positions and expecting success has not worked (Spillane, 2006). Though it does require some training to develop, Wall found that “distributing leadership within an organization contributed to a culture and learning community with direction and focus” (2009, p. 92).

Most of the educational literature on distributed leadership has been written in the past two decades. Leithwood (1997) conducted a study of distributed leadership in secondary schools during the 1990s. The study focused on the perceptions of teacher leadership and the factors that influenced those perceptions. Leithwood utilized the multiple focus discussed by Spillane (2006) as teacher leadership was examined from the points of their personal traits, the leadership practices they used, and the capacity of their leadership with their followers.

The teacher leaders of Leithwood’s (1997) study were formal and informal teacher leaders. Some of the leaders identified were individuals who had formal titles such as department or committee chairs while others were viewed as leaders by their peers because of the roles they assumed in the school. They were identified as leaders by their peers because of their knowledge, relationships with staff and students, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities. The individuals identified were perceived as ones who were active participants in the school and supported the work of others. This study provides an explanation of how teacher leaders are

perceived by their peers as well as how teacher leadership is typically distributive in nature because it involves people and their interactions. As evidence of the importance of the role, Leithwood found that the influence of teacher leaders was greater than that of the principal with respect to school planning and organization. This study will be referenced more throughout this review.

Expanding roles of teachers. As expectations increase for students, the expectations also increase for teachers. With respect to the management structure of the school, teachers are assuming roles that expand their purpose in the school. Their work with colleagues, administrators, and parents is expanding. The job of the teacher is becoming more complex and requires skills and knowledge beyond curriculum and instruction to assist administrators with decision-making tasks (Burke, 2009; Corcoran, 1995). Cosenza's (2010) research suggests that "teachers no longer view site administrators as the sole source for decision making" (p. 71).

Informally, teachers may volunteer for projects or take the lead with a new program. Teachers may be informal leaders by engaging in or leading professional development opportunities (Leithwood, 1997) or working collegially as resources for curriculum or instructional practices (Rutledge, 2009). The separation of formal leaders from informal leaders is created by the frequency of their influence with formal leaders having greater frequency (Rutherford, 2006). Also, formal leaders typically have a recognized position whereas informal leaders conduct the work in addition to their regular teaching assignment without designated time for the work. This research project focused on teacher leaders who are in formal leadership roles as instructional coaches.

Need for professional development. Though an individual is effective in the classroom with students, the same person is not necessarily going to have the proficiency needed to work in

a leadership role with other professional educators. In order to fulfill the responsibilities of this new role, the teacher leader requires professional development. This leadership role requires a different skill-set than teachers are traditionally prepared to fill, and professional development is necessary to help these individuals develop leadership skills (McCollough, 2007). Noonan and Hanson (1999) identified that new initiatives, such as teacher leadership, are sustainable only if someone accepts responsibility for their development. This would mean, with respect to professional development and teacher leadership, that someone ensures teachers assuming leadership roles receive leadership training and the professional development necessary to be successful in the new role.

Noonan and Hanson (1999) identified “three conditions [support] teacher leadership in systematic curriculum implementation: positive human relationships, financial responsibility, and professional support services” (p. 3). These conditions are beyond a classroom teacher’s responsibility and would require additional training of the teacher in order to understand sustaining adult professional relationships, managing finances, and providing support services.

Identification of teacher leaders. Leithwood (1997) discussed characteristics identified by colleagues that result in viewing a teacher as a leader. The research identified the traits, capacities, and practices of the teachers that influence this identification. Some of the traits of these teacher leaders included being unassuming, committed to the profession, fair, respectful and appreciative of others. These people were also viewed as being intelligent, humble, and energetic. The capacities identified by the teachers of Leithwood’s study included having procedural knowledge of leadership tasks as well as professional knowledge about education policy and curriculum. The teachers of Leithwood’s study also identified having the ability to work well with colleagues and having the ability to relate to students as important characteristics

for teacher leaders. Practices of teacher leaders that were identified included the teacher performing administrative tasks, confronting issues as necessary, sharing professional knowledge and serving as a good model.

As teacher leaders are identified, personality and professional traits have to be considered. Donaldson (2007) explains leadership as a relationship “that mobilizes other people to improve practice” (p. 27). This requires individuals who can build relationships with others and motivate them to build instructional capacity.

Impacts on school culture. School culture includes the social and intellectual climate of the school. The culture encompasses traditions, policies, and relationships that develop within the school (Character Education Partnership, n.d.). Teacher leadership impacts school culture as the teachers work together to build traditions of cooperation and collaboration, build relationships across the profession, and develop the intellectual climate of the school.

Teacher leaders can open classrooms and encourage teachers to work together in new ways. As school-based management expands, teachers need to have access to and be accessible to their colleagues. The closed-door instruction that was the norm for decades is evolving to a point where teachers need to be able to share, discuss, and reflect on their practice (Corcoran, 1995).

Commitment to teacher leadership is vital for it to be successful and impact the culture of the school. Teachers must be able to work together in an environment that supports such work and emphasizes the sustaining of curriculum implementation (Noonan & Hanson, 1999). Higher levels of collaboration within a school result in more shared leadership throughout the organization and typically “higher levels of trust and job satisfaction” (MetLife, 2009, p. 3). This can have positive results on the culture of the school.

In his study, Leithwood (1997) examined the strength of relationships between teacher leadership influence and school characteristics. Schools with influential teachers were perceived, by the teachers, as more effective and innovative. This study also indicated that the influence of teacher leadership was significantly related to stronger culture. From this study, Leithwood also identified that though the principal's leadership was more influential than teachers' leadership, the teacher leadership had a significant independent influence on the school. Though different people were involved in the leadership of the schools, the staffs did have different expectations as to the form of leadership the principal exercised as compared to what the teacher leaders did.

Benefits. Teacher leadership can be beneficial to the school environment, to the individual taking on the expanded role, and to the teachers within the building. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) reviewed articles, projects, and research studies to compile 17 strategies to enhance teacher leadership. In this document several benefits of teacher leadership are identified, and they include providing assistance to the principal and professional enrichment for the teachers. Another benefit of teacher leadership is maximizing the capacity of the school and teachers. "Teachers want to work in schools that are designed for them to be successful and in which they have influence on key decisions that affect instruction and student success" (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007, p. 3).

Assisting the principal. Formal leaders of a school can become inundated with tasks as these individuals are required to fulfill the role of school manager and instructional leader. To equitably balance the responsibilities of this role, principals look to teacher leaders within the school to provide additional human resources to help create a successful organization. Teacher leaders within a school or school system have a vested interest in the success of the organization and have proven to be a source of reliable, professional assistance for the principal (National

Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007). While teacher leaders can be a benefit for the formal leaders of the school, the principals have to be supportive of teachers having such empowerment (Noonan & Hanson, 1999).

Professional enrichment for the teacher. With limited availability for job advancement, becoming engaged in teacher leadership is an avenue teachers can pursue that may enrich their career experience. “When teachers actively pursue leadership opportunities, their lives are enriched and energized, and their knowledge and skills in teaching increase dramatically, leading to increased confidence and a stronger commitment to teaching” (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007, p. 7). This increase in professional efficacy and collaboration can result in greater job satisfaction. Teacher leaders have an opportunity to participate in the school organization in a more expanded role (Killion, 2011).

Increased school and teacher capacity. Capacity refers to the maximum production of a school or the education system at a point in time with the product being high quality instruction (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995). As a school strives to increase the production of high quality instruction, it must utilize its resources efficiently. Pulling from existing personnel who have leadership talents can improve the capacity of the school and the teachers. Providing teachers with additional responsibilities and leadership roles has shown promise for improved classroom performance. Cosenza (2010) found that teacher leadership provides opportunities to collaborate and teachers feel empowered when they collaborate. Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, and Cobb (1995) explain that designated teacher leaders become more professionally engaged and knowledgeable and that “teacher learning and teacher leadership are inseparable” (p. 91).

Challenges. In a profession wrought with an egalitarian persona, developing teacher leaders who can help promote school reform and be accepted by both administration and fellow

teachers is a challenging, but necessary, task (Lord & Miller, 2000). Challenges that are often experienced include sustainability of the roles, time for individuals to work, and overcoming the egalitarian facet of the profession.

Sustainability. Sustainability of teacher leadership roles is challenging. One hindrance is reliable funding in many educational systems. As it becomes more difficult to balance budgets, paying teachers for roles other than teaching are often targeted as areas to be eliminated. Also finding certified teachers to instruct the students in fields such as math, science, and special education is challenging enough without filling teacher leadership positions with certified teachers in those areas (Lord & Miller, 2000; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

Time. Finding the time necessary for teachers to collaborate can also be challenging. Teachers have a demanding schedule when students are present and have limited time to meet when students are not present. As identified by Noonan and Hanson (1999), “the basic commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers for their students is a large part of the answer to the complex issue” (p. 3). This commitment often leads to teachers devoting many hours to increasing their skills and strategies. Teachers are often left to try to plan for professional development and collaboration efforts on their own time which poses a challenge to successful teacher leadership. This also imposes the issues of uncompensated expectations and time limitations that all individuals encounter.

Egalitarian profession. Teaching is a profession that traditionally has offered limited opportunity to discuss strategies and share ideas. Historically, it has had minimal opportunity for professional advancement while remaining in the classroom. With changes toward teacher leadership, there are challenges that are incurred. “The relationship among colleagues when some have assumed a supervisory role is complex” (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher

Quality, 2007, p. 3). To identify a leader in a profession with limited advancement opportunities can create animosity and discomfort among the teachers and teacher leaders (Lord & Miller, 2000). Teacher leaders may support a change initiative and encourage other teachers to support it too, but if teachers resist, it can become frustrating for teacher leaders (Burke, 2009).

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is a formal leadership role and a subset of teacher leadership that has gained credibility in recent years. This section begins by discussing the origins of coaching. Following that, the purpose of instructional coaching is explained. Next, characteristics of an instructional coach are addressed. Information related to coaching as professional development follows. Specific research about instructional coaching is the next topic addressed. The subsequent topics of the section address benefits and challenges of instructional coaching. Information about instructional coaching in West Virginia, including a historical context, recent developments, support for academic coaches in West Virginia, and academic coaching in West Virginia statute, is provided as the next topic of the section. The final section discusses coaching and teacher evaluation.

Figure 1

Teacher Leadership and Instructional Coaching

Origin and theory of coaching. Working with individuals to develop and improve skills started in Ancient Greece with athletes. The people who worked with the athletes were referred to as trainers. Trainers worked with the athletes in sessions to help them improve strength and endurance for competitions (Dorde, Theodoros, & Marija, 2008). This role of trainer eventually evolved into a coach. As athletics increased in popularity through the twentieth century, the role of the coach became more prominent.

Now most all professional athletes utilize a coach, or coaches, to improve performance and attain greater results (Killion & Harrison, 2006). The idea of coaches in education stemmed from observing athletic coaches work with athletes to improve their performance. Any athlete striving to advance employs the assistance of a coach. The coach can watch what the athlete does and make suggestions to improve performance. An instructional coach does the same for educators as they are in the classroom with the teachers, collaboratively planning instructional activities, observing teaching and learning, modeling new practices, and making suggestions to improve instructional performance. Instructional coaching is becoming a more popular form of professional development as educators strive to improve practice, just as athletes strive to improve performance.

Theoretically, instructional coaching is described by the transformational leadership theory. Characteristics of transformational leadership include: working productively with people who want to be involved in decision making, maintaining the trust of others, respecting those one works with, and inspiring others. These leaders are visible and committed to their work. Transformational leaders motivate others through acceptance and consideration of their work (Straker, 2009).

Instructional coaching purpose. Coaches in the educational setting typically come from the ranks of practicing teachers or administrators. There are different types of coaches, such as literacy or math coaches, to work with different groups of educators. In the literature, the title is most often referred to as an instructional coach, though in West Virginia the title used is academic coach.

Instructional coaching provides a strong link to teacher leadership and is the topic addressed through this research. Instructional coaches focus on instructional improvement in the classrooms. These individuals work to help teachers develop a deep understanding of the content being taught (Cornett & Knight, 2008). Instructional coaches are individuals who help teachers implement research-based instructional practices and conduct demonstrations for teachers as needed. Peer coaching is a form of instructional coaching depicted by teachers working with colleagues in the building to observe, assist, and often develop a learning community. Showers (1982) started examining coaching practices through peer coaching studies. With budget restraints and the recent popularity of professional learning communities, some schools and school districts are implementing more peer coaching as a means to provide professional development by using internal expertise.

Characteristics of an instructional coach. Throughout the literature there are many descriptions of personal characteristics necessary for a coach. Knight (2007) states a “good coach has high expectations and provides the affirmative *and* honest feedback that helps people to realize those expectations” (pp. 15-16). As Guiney (2001) discussed coaches she said

To do it well requires a calm disposition and the trust-building skills of a mediator combined with the steely determination and perseverance of an innovator. Add to this mix the ability to know when to push and when to stand back and regroup in the long-

term process of adopting new approaches to galvanize a school to function differently. To succeed, a coach must be a leader who is willing not to be recognized as such and, at the same time, who is able to foster leadership among teachers who rarely regard themselves as leaders. (p. 741)

Certainly one important attribute is to build the trust of the individuals the coach is working with regularly (Guiney, 2001; Kowal & Steiner, 2007). Though there are few legal requirements guiding who can work in the position of coach, there are attributes of pedagogy, content knowledge, and interpersonal skills identified that make some individuals more adept to the position (Kowal & Steiner, 2007).

Coaching as professional development. Teachers are required to know extensive content and understand the pedagogy necessary to teach a diverse and continually changing population of students. To have the ability to accomplish these tasks, teachers need to continually update their skill sets through professional development. School improvement must begin by improving instruction and “traditional professional development is not up to this significant challenge” (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 8). “District leaders know that the traditional workshops, conferences, and courses do not provide the ongoing, context-sensitive support that teachers and principals need to improve teaching and learning substantially” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. iii). Professional development offered by those means provides minimal training time and lacks opportunity to practice and reflect. Instructional coaching provides sustained training and collaboration. Learning Forward (2010), formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, has modified their definition of professional development to include “provides job-embedded coaching” (p. 17) and has requested this be included in the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind.

Coaching as a form of professional development for teachers became a pre-cursor topic to No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was the predecessor of No Child Left Behind legislation. The Eisenhower Professional Development Program, or Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provides funding for the professional development of teachers. In October 1999, prior to the reauthorization of the program, the American Institutes for Research released *Designing Effective Professional Development: Lessons from the Eisenhower Program*. The purpose of the report was “to provide information about how the program [was] operating and how it might be strengthened to inform policymakers as they [considered] changes to the program during its reauthorization” (Garet, Birman, Porter, Desimone, & Herman, 1999, p. 1.1).

Objectives of this program included improving classroom instruction through effective professional development and providing professional development that “is sustained, intensive, and high quality and has a lasting impact on classroom instruction” (Garet et al., 1999, p. 1.10). In a later publication, Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) reported on research about effective professional development and stated

Our results indicate that sustained and intensive professional development is more likely to have an impact, as reported by teachers, than is shorter professional development. Our results also indicate that professional development that focuses on academic subject matter (content), gives teachers opportunities for “hands-on” work (active learning), and is integrated into the daily life of the school (coherence), is more likely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills. (p. 935)

In a publication about effective professional development, The Center for Public Education stated five principles of effective professional development which included significant duration,

support for teachers, active participation by teachers, modeling, and specific content (Gulamhussein, 2013).

As an instructional coach works with teachers for a sustained period of time, there are different levels of intensity for the coaches and teachers. Bean (2004) identifies three levels of intensity. Level 1 activities are informal activities that work toward developing relationships such as developing lessons with teachers and talking with teachers. Level 2 activities are more formal and intense as they look at a teacher's need such as interpreting data and discussing teaching practices. Level 3 activities are formal, intense activities such as co-teaching and analyzing lessons.

Research completed. Research most relevant to instructional coaching started in the 1980s with Showers (1982) and has continued for several years with publications by Joyce and Showers (2002). Their seminal research examined forms of professional development and rates of implementation by teachers for different forms of professional development. They identified coaching, particularly peer coaching, as a highly effective form of professional development and made positive connections between peer coaching, implementation of new practices, and student achievement.

Research has continued on the practice of instructional coaching. Some studies have worked to identify what professional development may result in increased student achievement, but the multiple variables that could contribute to this increase makes it difficult to identify what gains resulted from what intervention (Wenglinsky, 2000). In October, 2000 Wenglinsky completed a study for the Educational Testing Service. The study compared teacher quality to student performance using a multivariate analysis. This study used student assessment data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and results of questionnaires sent to the

participating students and their teachers and principals. Findings included that “teachers who receive rich and sustained professional development...are more likely to engage in effective classroom practices” (Wenglinsky, 2000, p. 32). This particular study went on to say professional development should extend over time rather than be a limited experience and that the experience should relate to classroom practice.

In preparation for additional research, Cornett and Knight (2008) conducted an extensive review of research on the topic of instructional coaching and found that limited rigorous research has been conducted on the topic. In the review, they stated “although we have uncovered more than 200 publications describing some form of research relevant to coaching, most of those studies are preliminary, ..., and do not meet the standards of rigorous research” (2008, p. 192). One reason they cite is that “many forms of coaching are newly developed approaches” (Cornett & Knight, 2008, p. 192). Much information provided about coaching, the concept of teachers working with other teachers to improve instructional performance, is simply in the form of articles.

After conducting this review, Knight and Cornett (n.d.) completed an experimental study of the impact of instructional coaching. The mixed methods study was to explore the effects of instructional coaching at increasing the quality of instruction. In their conclusion, they determined that although their study did have limitations, they could conclude that coached teachers are more likely to implement new teaching practices and do so with higher quality instruction (Knight & Cornett, n.d.).

In 2009 Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney reported on their study which looked at some of the same attributes as Knight and Cornett (n.d.) studied. The study was conducted in San Diego following a 10-year emphasis on professional development. In their report *Professional*

Development and Instructional Practice: Conceptions and Evidence of Effectiveness, they suggest “that teacher professional development should include, to the extent possible, coaching or modeling to support teacher learning, offering opportunities for teachers to practice what they are learning and receive feedback” (Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009, p. 66).

Research studies conducted on instructional coaching have focused on effectiveness of instructional coaching and practices of instructional coaches. Findings indicate that coaching does result in the use of new instructional practices and the quality with which the instruction occurs (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Knight, 2007; Knight & Cornett, n.d.; Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009). Studies have also examined coaching tasks including data analysis and decision making (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Feldman & Tung, 2002; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2009; Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005) and the development of teacher leaders (Wall, 2009). Different types of coaching have also been examined by research with Cornett and Knight (2008) focusing on instructional coaching while other studies (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Showers, 1982; Truesdale, 2003) focus on peer coaching.

While benefits to coaching have been identified through research, so have barriers. One barrier identified in research is defining the coaching role (Feldman & Tung, 2002; McCollough, 2007; Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005). Some studies have spent time focused on actual coaching practices (Feldman & Tung, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2003) and how often they occur to improve definition and clarification about the role. Understanding what a coach does and how often can better clarify the roles and responsibilities of an instructional coach.

Benefits of instructional coaching. Instructional coaching can provide many benefits to the education community. Coaching can help teachers be more effective with their students by improving instructional practices. Coaching also allows a teacher to work one-to-one with

another experienced teacher to improve teaching practices. Increasing the implementation of new teaching practices is another benefit of instructional coaching. It provides sustained professional development by modeling best-practices and sharing reflections of lessons.

In her chapter on Differentiated Coaching in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, Kise (2008) states “coaching is the art of identifying and developing people’s strengths to improve their effectiveness” (p. 144). Thus one benefit to coaching is being able to identify and develop strengths of the teacher to improve instructional practices.

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2010) explain that coaching is a “one-to-one professional relationship with another educator focused on reaching a specified goal” (p. 106). This relationship will benefit both the coach and educator as they work together to meet instructional goals and needs of learners. Working with teachers and/or administrators, coaches can strategically use the strengths, tools, and resources available to capitalize on the instructional potential of the setting.

Increased implementation of new instructional strategies is another significant benefit of instructional coaching. The most common research on coaching has been to identify how it influences the implementation of teaching strategies and professional development activities (Kowal & Steiner, 2007; Truesdale, 2003). Knight and Cornett (n.d.) conducted a mixed methods research study of 50 teachers to examine the effects of instructional coaching on classroom practice. Knight and Cornett expressed there is little research done to this point regarding the impact coaching has on a teacher’s classroom practice so this study was conducted to begin examining the implementation factor to determine if coaching did in fact make a difference. Their research has compared varying levels of professional development and found an increase in implementation rate when coaching is available to support teachers as they work to implement

instructional strategies. The study found that coached teachers were more likely to implement a new teaching strategy than teachers who were not coached.

Allowing access to instructional coaches for the purposes of professional development provides a means for educators to develop their instructional and leadership practices (McCollough, 2007). It provides “ongoing, sustained support to principals and teachers to improve school organization and classroom instruction” (Neufeld & Roper, 2003, p. iii). The teachers in Wall’s (2009) study identified the job-embedded professional development coaches provide as a most valuable form of professional development. The coaches and teachers in Wall’s study found professional value in the collaboration with each other. Coaches provide teachers the assistance needed “to improve, to move from where each currently is to increased efficacy, higher performance, and greater results” (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 7).

Challenges for instructional coaches. As the position of instructional coach continues to evolve over time, there are challenges experienced with the position. According to the literature, the most common challenges include: time to collaborate with teachers, willingness of teachers to collaborate, support structures, lack of professional development, role clarification and funding.

Finding time for coaches and teachers to work together because of instructional schedules (Feldman & Tung, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Noonan & Hanson, 1999) is challenging. As more teachers seek the assistance of the coach, the coach may not have time to assist all those who request the help because of conflicting instructional schedules. This can impact the productiveness of the collaboration. Progress may seem slow, but it takes time to implement changes in instructional practices so teachers, administrators, and coaches have to be patient through the process.

Another challenge is sometimes the lack of interest and willingness on the part of the teacher to collaborate with the coach (Cosenza, 2010; McCollough, 2007; MetLife, 2009; Wall, 2009). Coaches have expressed that seasoned faculty are sometimes resistant to change and do not always welcome coaches into their classrooms (McCollough, 2007). Though this can prove difficult, research has shown that collaboration can lead to higher levels of trust and job satisfaction (MetLife, 2009) and teachers feel empowered as leaders when collaborating (Cosenza, 2010).

Lack of support structures for coaches from county administration, school administration, and other teachers also poses a challenge (Birky, Shelton, & Headley, 2006; Noonan & Hanson, 1999). The support and encouragement of administration can improve the effectiveness of any teacher leader (Birkey et al., 2006). Teacher leadership, including coaching, requires professional support services to be successful (Noonan & Hanson, 1999).

As individuals step into a position as an instructional coach, professional development is needed to prepare them to be successful in the position (McCollough, 2007; Noonan & Hanson, 1999). The leadership and skill set needed to function as a successful coach requires additional training (McCollough, 2007).

Clearly understanding the expectations and responsibilities of an instructional coach is another challenge (Feldman & Tung, 2002). The ambiguity surrounding the position can create a difficult working environment for the person serving as the coach as well as those the coach works with daily. Killion and Harrison (2006) stated “the job is complex. People in the job are part teacher, part leader, part change agent, and part facilitator” (p. 8). This vagueness can result in some teachers resisting to work with the coach. The teachers view the coach as an

administrator while the administrator views the coach as a teacher which results in the coach feeling isolated and teachers resistant (McCollough, 2007).

Another significant challenge involves the finances of school districts. Funds are limited, so the district must make decisions about how many coaches it can afford to sponsor and how to best utilize them as a resource. Paying additional professional employees to work with current teachers and administrators is an added expense that strains district budgets. Often the funding is from short-term grant funds that do not provide sustained monetary sources. Once the funds are gone, the paid position is gone (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007).

Instructional coaching in West Virginia. This section addresses issues specific to instructional coaching developments in West Virginia. In West Virginia the role has had two titles. In 2006 the West Virginia Department of Education distributed a document titled *Collegial Coaching Toolkit* which used the title Instructional Coach. In 2012 the West Virginia Department of Education Coaching for Learning initiative referred to the title as Academic Coach.

This section will explain the history and development of the coaching role in West Virginia. First the historical context of the position is discussed. Second, recent developments in coaching in West Virginia and the Coaching for Learning initiative are explained. Next the support for instructional coaches in West Virginia is discussed. Finally, coaching in WV statute is addressed.

Historical context. Teacher leadership and coaching are newer terms to the research context of education. In searching for a historical context of the role, the most similarly described position in history was that of a supervisor. Supervisors worked in educational systems across the country, including West Virginia. Tasks of the supervisor were described as

mentoring, observing, completing demonstration lessons, and working with teachers to align curriculum with student needs (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). This description of tasks is similar to the tasks completed by an instructional coach.

In the United States during the 1700s supervisors or supervisor committees of community people were responsible for monitoring the quality of instruction in schools. By the mid-1800s there was acknowledgment of a required set of skills for effective teaching to occur and that individuals in supervisory capacity should have some formal training in teaching skills. With this, the supervisor role was passed on to people in positions of leadership in the school community such as a superintendent.

By the early 1900s in West Virginia, county superintendents could no longer provide adequate supervision of instruction in the schools of their area because of the increase in number of schools and students, so district supervisors were widely used by 1910. These supervisors were required to ensure a minimum standard of study and to supervise instructional methodology. This position lost credibility in the mid-1920s because of changes in credential requirements and lack of voter approval for levies which provided salaries for these individuals. Consistent with trends at the time, instructional supervisor positions were re-instituted in the mid-1940s. This position was in addition to superintendents and principals as individuals to supervise classroom practices and to work with the teachers (Ambler, 1951). By the mid-1940s and early 1950s the supervisor was still a separate role from the superintendent and had duties that included meeting individually with teachers, conducting classroom visitations and observations, conducting demonstration lessons, and serving as a resource for teachers. At that point in time there were many other duties such as school committee meetings, teacher recruitment, and completing paperwork that were also included in the job description.

The legal definition of supervisor in §18A-1-1(c)(3) of West Virginia Code (2015) is “a professional educator who is responsible for working primarily in the field with professional and other personnel in instructional and other school improvement. This category includes other appropriate titles or positions with duties that fit within this definition.” The definition of this position is broad. Many school positions, including that of instructional, or academic, coach complete tasks which are described in the definition of a supervisor.

Recent developments in academic coaching in WV. Information about coaching in West Virginia was obtained from L. Bragg, Coordinator in the Office of Title II, Title III, and System Support of the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) (personal communication, November 18, 2011). Bragg gathered information in West Virginia and worked to establish a support network for academic coaches. During the communication, Bragg indicated there was a support network in place in 2005, and she could see the need for such a system again. She could not identify the reason the network came to an end but speculated it was due to funding.

Bragg established a task force of about thirty-five stakeholders that met in the summer of 2011 and discussed academic coaches. At that meeting, the stakeholders included principals, some academic coaches, legislators, county central office staff members, instructional technology specialists, teachers, special education representatives, Title II representatives and a funding representative from the state department. The task force was “to reach consensus about what effective academic coaching practices look like and ways to support that work” (WVDE, 2012a, “Task Force”).

As identified by Bragg, “the group soon realized there was a wide variety of roles of the academic coaches across the state” (personal communication, November 18, 2011). At the time of the meeting, there were 318 individuals in the state identified as academic coaches according

to Bragg. They included elementary coaches, content-specific (primarily math or reading) coaches at multiple levels, autism coaches, and technology coaches. With such a variety of roles and responsibilities it was difficult to categorize their needs and find ways to support such a wide spectrum.

Bragg explained that the task force identified two types of coaching in West Virginia. One was implementation coaching for continuous improvement to build capacity of teachers, provide technical assistance, and assist with professional development. The other type was to provide support for new teachers through mentoring.

The task force also documented barriers to the coaching role according to Bragg. One barrier was identifying reliable sources of funding for the positions. A second barrier was defining the role of the coach to improve consistency and clarity across settings. A third barrier was time restraints of coaches and teachers to meet and collaborate. A fourth barrier was the lack of policy to guide the work of the coaches. A final barrier was an insufficient mentoring program for coaches to work together and learn from the experience of others (WVDE, 2012a, “Task Force”).

The task force also identified four common concerns of coaches. The first was support for the teacher mentorship program to improve teacher retention. A second common concern was policy support to determine what coaches are expected to do and how they are to accomplish the expectations. The third common concern was training coaches to work with collaborative teams of teachers. The final common concern was training for coaches in continuous improvement processes so they could help principals establish goals and action plans for their schools (L. Bragg, personal communication, November 18, 2011).

Supporting academic coaches in WV. To address some of the concerns of coaches and barriers to the coaching position, the Coaching for Learning initiative was developed to “define, advocate and support the work of coaches” (WVDE, 2012a, “What Will Coaching for Learning Do?”). The vision statement of Coaching for Learning says

Though coaches are quite knowledgeable in many areas, continuous school improvement is an area in which they may not have had training. Fortunately, coaches are eager learners and are skilled in reflective practice and action research that are foundational components of coaching for school growth. In an effort to provide coaches with the knowledge and skills to facilitate and support continuous improvement, Coaching for Learning leadership will provide a year-long professional development and networking experience guided by the six (6) levers of the West Virginia Continuous Improvement Process. (WVDE, 2012a, “Coaching for Learning Vision”)

The six levers of the continuous improvement process were identified as creating community, establishing focus and coherence, supporting change, building a collaborative culture, maximizing capacity, and growing professionally (WVDE, 2012a, “The Six Levers of Continuous Improvement”).

One action step taken was establishing teams of coaches across the state to share ideas, experiences, and concerns. The teams were composed such that individuals with common responsibilities were grouped together so their experiences would be similar. Bragg stated that “team composition may change some in the near future so the teams will become more geographically centered” (personal communication, January 28, 2013).

Another action step was the offering of courses with a leadership and school improvement focus. In May 2012 the West Virginia Department of Education established the

first training for academic coaches when it launched an institute that was followed by three on-line courses and monthly meetings. This training was voluntary and not required for those coaches employed at that time. The first Coaching for Learning Institute was held at Stonewall Resort for three days. The sessions were focused on professional development for coaches, continuous school improvement, collaboration with teachers, networking, and support for personalized learning. The institute served as a springboard for additional on-line monthly meetings (WVDE, 2012a, “Coaching for School Growth”). The Coaching for Learning initiative provided a year-long experience in professional development and networking.

In West Virginia there is not a certification required to work as an academic coach in the schools. Individuals serving in these positions are certified in a teaching field and have to bid on a coaching position. Counties may require a certification in a particular content area or grade level depending on the focus for the coach being hired. The county may also prefer an individual have a certain number of years experience in the classroom or experience providing professional development to adult learners.

With the Coaching for Learning initiative, the coaches had an opportunity to take three courses offered by the West Virginia Department of Education. The courses were delivered using a blended method meaning some work and communication was completed on-line, and some was completed face to face. Once finished with the coursework, the coaches were eligible to earn a state-issued advanced credential titled Teacher Leadership for Student Learning (L. Bragg, personal communication, January 28, 2013). The credential would not be for any type of state sanctioned certification.

Unfortunately, by Fall, 2014 the Coaching for Learning initiative was no longer funded by the West Virginia Department of Education (L. Bragg, personal communication, December

15, 2014). The role of academic coaches in West Virginia is explained under Federal Programs, Title II, Employment (WVDE, 2015, “Federal Programs”).

Academic coaching in West Virginia statute. Academic coaching is addressed in state code and its importance acknowledged as a means of providing data-driven professional development in the state’s newly developed evaluation system. In Chapter 18A of West Virginia Code, the West Virginia Legislature has included expectations for increasing teacher support. Section 18A-3 was added during the 2012 legislative session. The bill was requested by Governor Tomblin and was sponsored by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. The legislation was requested during the 2012 legislative session as West Virginia was in the process of submitting a waiver from the No Child Left Behind (2001) requirements of all students meeting the proficiency levels by 2014. The focus of this piece of West Virginia legislation was to change the teacher evaluation system in the state. The waiver letter of intent identified that the new evaluation system “not only evaluates the performance of teachers but also provides meaningful results to inform data-driven professional development” (WVDE, 2012b). A means of providing data-driven professional development is through academic coaching.

West Virginia State Code §18A-3C is titled “Improving Teaching and Learning” and includes reference to academic coaches. This section of code was added to “provide for the professional growth of teachers” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(a)(2), 2015). The article’s purpose is “to create a comprehensive infrastructure that routinely supports a continuous process for improving teaching and learning” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b), 2015) and identifies that this will be accomplished through high-quality teacher education programs, mentorship induction, school leadership and teacher evaluation. As required by §18A-3C-3(b) the State Board was to

“publish guidelines on the design and implementation of a comprehensive system of support for improving professional practice” by July 1, 2012. They produced the document *Comprehensive System of Support for Improving Professional Practice Implementation Guidelines*. This document identifies academic coaching as means of professional development to help teachers improve in areas as identified by evaluations (WVDE, 2012a, “Comprehensive System of Support Guidelines”). The code states that the evaluation data will be used to provide “focused improvement in teaching and learning” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b)(4), 2015) so that teachers may perform at the accomplished level.

Coaching and teacher evaluation. Though West Virginia has included academic coaching as a focused professional development option in the evaluation system, making connections between academic coaching and professional evaluation is a link that is a highly uncommon practice. Teachers need to feel safe in having open discussions with the coach about instructional practices. Because of the level of trust needed between an academic coach and a teacher, the literature recommends the coach is not involved in evaluation. The teachers need to be able to use the coach as a resource to improve teaching. Killion and Harrison (2006) list evaluation and supervision in the troubleshooting chapter of their book with a reminder that coaches are “to support teachers, not ...judge their performance” (p. 147).

While the coach should not have a part of the evaluation, the principal may strategically use the coach to assist teachers in areas of need. Knight (2007) addresses the issue of a principal referral to an instructional coach and recommends that the principal suggest to the teacher to seek the help of the coach, not have the coach approach the teacher. In the study conducted by McCollough (2007) the coaches expressed frustration having responsibility to help improve teacher and school performance without any authority.

Role of the Principal

The principal is ultimately the leader responsible for “creating the conditions under which [individual variables combine to reach critical mass]” (Wallace Foundation, 2012, p. 2). These individual variables may be in the form of resources, such as instructional coaches, reaching out to help the teachers, the critical mass. This portion of the chapter addresses the evolution of the role of the principal in the last two decades. Specifically, the duties and responsibilities of principals in WV are discussed. Next, the principal as an instructional leader is discussed. The following sections address how the principal can build school capacity, relationships, and school morale. The final sections discuss how principals can develop and support teacher leaders and more specifically work with instructional coaches.

Evolution of the role. As accountability has increased in the last 15 years, the role of the principal has evolved combining a building and people manager with an instructional leader. When reflecting on changes, The Wallace Foundation (2012) identifies school leadership as one great change over the past decade and says that “improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reform” (p. 3).

A quick Google search of ‘manager’ or ‘leader’ reveals this is a topic of great interest in the business world as well as in education. “Top talent in today's workplace knows that both management and leadership skills are necessary for success” according to Hering (2011). ChangingMinds.org (2012) identifies leadership and management as two ends of a spectrum and explains that individuals in the roles must constantly move along different degrees of leadership and management as different situations arise. The expectations and responsibilities of leaders are changing in business just as they are in education. Training programs are now more focused on the leadership aspect of the job than that of building manager.

Principal duties and responsibilities in WV. Since this research project examined the work of academic coaches with administrators in West Virginia, it is important to understand the duties and responsibilities of the principals. In §18A-1-1(c)(2) of West Virginia Code (2015), a principal is defined as “a professional educator who...has responsibility for the supervision, management and control of a school.” In §18A-2-9 of West Virginia Code (2015) the duties and responsibilities of principals and assistant principals states that “the principal shall assume administrative and instructional supervisory responsibility for the planning, management, operation and evaluation of the total educational program of the school...to which he is assigned.”

As instructional leader. In the last decade the primary role of administrator has been identified as an instructional leader. Danielson (2007) references this as an individual who is “coaching teachers in the nuances of classroom practice” (p. 15) but cannot be an expert in all areas of instruction. Though administrators are obviously still engaged in multiple management aspects of a building, they must also juggle the need to guide instruction in their buildings. Birky, Shelton, and Headley (2006) state “principals who functioned more as managers than instructional leaders [had] less successful schools than those who [worked] closely with teachers in their roles” (p. 89), thus emphasizing the importance for the principal to be involved in the instructional practices of the school.

Building school capacity. In a study to identify necessary components of school capacity, school capacity is defined as “the presence of characteristics needed to support the development of a thriving learning community” (Appalachia Educational Laboratory at Edvantia, 2005, “Components of School Capacity”, para. 1). Undoubtedly the principal, being the instructional leader, is primarily responsible for identifying the characteristics that are needed

for such development. Working with teacher leaders within the school is one resource a principal can access and mold into a support structure to enhance the learning community.

Principals with the luxury of having additional instructional leadership, such as that of a coach, have the presence of support to help them improve the capacity of the school. By working together with common goals for school improvement, this team has the tools necessary to improve the instructional practices and to monitor progress toward the goals of the schools. The coach is close to classroom issues, can identify needs, and find means to fill those needs.

Relationships. Relationships are essential for the teachers to feel they are working in a safe environment designed for them to succeed. Opening classroom doors to other adults is a reasonably new concept in education. The teachers have to trust the principal and support staff and know their primary interest is in helping the teacher be as successful as possible and working toward full capacity for the school. Noonan and Hanson (1999) identify positive relationships as one of three necessary components for supporting teacher leadership with the other two components being financial responsibilities and professional support. Development of trusting relationships allows for principals and teacher leaders to work with classroom teachers without fear of repercussions.

Morale. According to the Center for Teaching Quality website (2006), “isolating teachers in classrooms with closed doors, denying them basic materials to do their jobs, inundating them with non-essential duties, providing them with little input into the design and organization of schools, and offering little opportunity for career advancement” lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale. This site goes on to state that facilities and resources, professional development, and teacher empowerment can be correlated to a school securing Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Sam Houston State University Professor David L. Henderson has conducted biennial studies of state teachers in Texas since 1980. Information acquired through these studies indicates that teacher morale is not a new topic, is not isolated to one geographic region, and unfortunately is not something that has seen a lot of change in the last 30 years. Henderson's study used the percentage of teachers who have considered leaving the profession as an indicator of teacher morale; he has found this indicator to be as high as 45% in 1990 and only as low as 38% in 1980. The 2000 survey indicated 43% have considered leaving their position as a teacher. Henderson indicated that working conditions, not money, was the prime reason for such consideration. As the Henderson study was reported by Hays (2000), the teachers also identified paperwork and stress as reasons they might leave the profession.

There are links between the school leadership and teachers in the school that can lead to better job satisfaction and improved school culture. In a report released by the universities of Minnesota and Toronto, it was identified that "good leadership...improves both teacher motivation and work settings" (Wallace Foundation, 2012, p.7). Lumsden (1998) identifies that "a healthy school environment and high teacher morale tend to be related. A principal's ability to create a positive school climate and culture can affect teacher morale." (p. 2). The resource goes on to discuss the fact that teachers often work in isolation from other adults and can become dissatisfied with their job due to lack of interaction.

Reasons for low teacher morale have been identified and there are some solutions school administrators need to consider. As Lumsden (1998) states

Although teachers can take steps individually to preserve their professional satisfaction and morale, they must also be nurtured, supported, and valued by the broader school

community. When teachers are provided with what they need to remain inspired and enthusiastic in the classroom, students as well as teachers will be the beneficiaries. (p. 5)

Providing a safe and supportive environment for teachers can result in improved classroom performance. When the teachers are inspired and enthusiastic they are going to work toward their capacity to teach and be creative with what they do.

Developing and supporting teacher leaders. Through interviewing twenty second-stage teachers (individuals with 4 to 10 years of experience), Johnson and Donaldson (2007) determined “to reap the full benefits of teacher leadership, school administrators need to provide formal support structures and build leadership roles into the structure of the school” (p. 9). Johnson and Donaldson (2007) stated from their interviews that though the principal alone could not ensure success, it was “clear that the principal can make or break the role of the teacher leader” (p. 13). In her research, Burke (2009) found that “the principal plays a critical role in shaping a school culture supportive of teacher leadership” (p. 128). Similarly, through reviews of research studies, Birky, Shelton, and Headley (2012) determined that “although the importance of teacher leaders is recognized, teacher leaders are seldom effective in their roles without the support and encouragement of their administrator” (p. 89). While teacher leadership is needed for continued improvement in education, the support of the principal for such work is vital for the roles to thrive and succeed. Teacher leaders require the support of the principal and need to work collaboratively for greater success.

Working with instructional coaches. While being an instructional leader is a vital role for the leader of the building, it is also a role with which the leader can seek assistance. The role of instructional coaches has been developed for exactly this purpose. Once removed from the classroom it is difficult to keep abreast of new strategies and teaching techniques while still

attending to building duties, evaluations, extra-curricular events, meetings, parents, and discipline. Administrators do not always have the time necessary to consistently monitor the instructional practices of their staff and to coach them into more effective teaching by modeling and assisting.

Instructional coaches can develop “strong one-on-one relationships with administrators” (Feldman & Tung, 2002, p. 12) and serve as “critical friends” (Feldman & Tung, 2002, p. 12) to the administrator. This can be a bit of a balancing act for the coach because this person must have positive working relationships with the teachers in the classroom as well as the administrator. The coach cannot be viewed as a person evaluating the classroom performance. This individual is working as a resource and must be trusted by the teachers and administration to have no ulterior motives than to see the instructional practices be as effective as possible.

Instructional coaches are individuals who can tailor professional development for the teachers. The coaches have the opportunity to regularly observe classrooms, assist teachers, discuss lesson effectiveness, offer suggestions, analyze data, model lessons, and provide feedback (Wall, 2009). Principals, especially those at the secondary level, are often responsible for many teachers working in several different content areas. Instructional coaches are teacher leaders and have exhibited a level of expertise in content, pedagogy, and professional development delivery.

Petti (2010) describes a partnership that was developed in an Oregon district in which coaches and principals worked collaboratively to assist teachers as needed. Petti explains that this partnership was developed because of the complexity and demanding role of the principal. She said the “principals viewed their coach as an ally, and all saw the coach as essential for site-based learning” (p. 56).

Von Frank (2010) conducted an interview of a principal-coach team. The team identified clarity, communication, and collaboration as elements essential to their successful work. The team identified the importance of understanding the role of each one. In this team the coach emphasized the importance of the principal's support and efforts to define the roles of the coach. The team also elaborated on being able to communicate school goals allowed them to use their time and resources better.

The principal-coach relationship can be beneficial toward building school capacity. It is a resource for principals in their role as instructional leader that can bring ideas to the school and time to work with the teachers individually to identify means to meet the needs of the students. As the responsibilities of principals and accountability of schools continue to increase, having strong teacher leaders and instructional coaches can be a great benefit to education.

Summary

Instructional coaching encompasses the dynamics of teachers, teacher leaders, and school administrators working together to improve the teaching and learning practices that occur in a school. As the expectations of education and educators expand, so does the need for additional people in leadership roles to specialize in different areas of education. Principals have been placed in formal leadership roles and are expected to manage the business aspect of schools as well as supervise and help improve instructional practices. Teachers are regularly trained in new instructional techniques and become great sources of information and expertise. Principals can benefit greatly by tapping into this resource within schools to collaboratively work toward improving the teaching and learning within a school. "Unlike the movement in the early 1990s toward site-based management, the emphasis on teacher leadership today is less about involving

teachers in managerial and administrative duties and more about playing to the strength of their classroom expertise” (Scherer, 2007, p. 7).

In athletics, trainers and coaches have worked with athletes for centuries to help them maximize their physical abilities. Instructional coaches are now being employed to help educators maximize their pedagogical abilities. Instructional coaching is a form of formal teacher leadership that has gained popularity in recent years with increased focus on school accountability. Coaches work “to increase awareness, broaden perspectives, and clarify issues” (Lipton & Wellman, 2007, p. 32) in order to increase teachers’ awareness of choices and potential of their instruction. While there are many benefits of instructional coaching, such as sustained assistance for teachers implementing new instructional strategies, there are also challenges for instructional coaching that include lack of support networks, willingness of teachers to collaborate, and limited time to work with teachers. While West Virginia does not require any additional certification beyond a standard teaching certificate, there are personality attributes such as positive interpersonal skills that have proven beneficial to people serving in the role. Coaches work as a facilitator of change to empower “teachers to make their own decisions about improving their own instructional practice” (Feldman & Tung, 2002, p. 6).

In this chapter teacher leadership was defined, and the historical context of such leadership was discussed. This chapter also addressed distributed leadership within the school, benefits of teacher leadership and challenges for teacher leadership. Instructional coaching was also discussed. Benefits, such as implementing new strategies, and challenges, such as limited time and support for the role, were discussed. Since this research project focused on academic coaching in West Virginia, developments in coaching in the state were addressed. Finally, the integration of the role of the principal with teacher leadership was addressed.

Principals have many responsibilities in a school as the days of just managing a building are in the past. Principals must carve time into each day to work with teachers to develop strong instructional practices and work as an instructional leader in the school. The principals must build relationships with the people in the school and communicate school goals to build school capacity. Teacher leaders can assist principals with some of the instructional leadership aspects of the job, but they do require the support of the principal to do so. Ultimately, “practitioners and researchers agree ...that the role of the principal is significant in establishing a collaborative, productive school culture that promotes learning for students and adults” (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 153).

The next chapter discusses the methods this research project followed. The primary goal of this study was to understand the responsibilities and challenges of an academic coach in West Virginia. Chapter 3 explains the survey instrument used and data collected.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology that was implemented to understand who West Virginia academic coaches are, what they do, and what challenges they encounter in their work. This chapter identifies the research questions, explains the research rationale and procedures, and delineates the methods for the data collection and analysis for this study.

After completing an extensive review of literature, it was determined that there are aspects of academic coaching that warrant further research. One aspect is that the position lacks clear definition of the responsibilities of the coach. The literature review also revealed that coaches experience challenges in the work they do. Three research questions were generated that focus the intent of this study. The research questions for this study are:

1. What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?
2. What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia?
3. What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

Through the review of literature it was determined that an instrument did not exist to address these questions. A survey was developed by the researcher. The survey was examined by a panel of experts to confirm validity of the contents, and it was administered to a pilot group to statistically determine its reliability. Once that was complete, it was electronically disseminated to the 149 academic coaches currently working in West Virginia.

Research Rationale

Practical rationale. In West Virginia there are three fairly recent developments that highlight the need for a study of the academic coaches in the state. The first development was schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress as identified by No Child Left Behind legislation.

Coaches can help increase teacher content knowledge, provide professional development for teachers, and improve teaching practices.

The second development was the recently revised teacher evaluation system. The teacher evaluation system requires annual evaluations of all teachers by school administration (WV State Code §18A-3C-1, 2015). This evaluation system reviews a teacher's skills and needs for professional development. The use of academic coaches is included in the state code which addresses performance evaluations of professionals by stating the evaluation will

Serve as the basis for providing professional development specifically targeted on the area or areas identified through the evaluation process as needing improvement. If possible, this targeted professional development should be delivered at the school-site using collaborative processes, mentoring or coaching or other approaches that maximize use of the instructional setting. (WV State Code §18A-3C-2(e)(2), 2015)

Academic coaches can be of assistance once these needs are identified because the teachers can confide in the coaches without concern of an administrator viewing needs as weaknesses or their skills as deficient. The coaches can also provide continued assistance for school administrators who are challenged to find the necessary time to provide individualized instructional leadership and professional development for teachers.

The third recent development was State Superintendent Martirano's goals and pillars which were released in October, 2014. In Goal 2, Superintendent Martirano indicated a need to "create a robust "Listening and Learning" communication opportunity to engage our stakeholders to build relationships and trust" (Martirano, 2014, p. 4) and in Goal 3 he discussed an initiative to develop an organizational structure "that is staffed with a skilled and innovative team that is aligned to respond to the increased level of urgency for improving teaching and

learning” (Martirano, 2014, p. 4). Academic coaches could make strong contributions toward meeting both of these goals.

Theoretical rationale. In considering the type of study to be conducted, three frameworks were considered: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. According to Creswell (2003), three elements need to be considered when deciding on a framework for the study. First the "knowledge claims" (Creswell, 2003, p. 6) need to be evaluated and are categorized as postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, or pragmatic. In the category of postpositive knowledge claims, problems or causes that influence outcomes are examined (Creswell, 2003). In the category of constructivism, broad, open-ended questions are posed to allow participants to “construct the meaning of a situation” (Creswell, 2003, p. 8) which usually comes from interaction and discussion. In the category of advocacy/participatory, the belief is that “inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda” (Creswell, 2003, p. 9). In the category of pragmatic knowledge claims, researchers use a variety of methods to study different world views and assumptions (Creswell, 2003).

Second, the general procedures or strategies of inquiry need to be determined. In general, the procedures could be to complete surveys or experimental work for quantitative research; narrative research involving case studies or ethnographies for qualitative research; or to converge the methods for a mixed methods approach.

The third, and final, consideration Creswell (2003) identifies is to consider the procedures of data collection. Creswell provides descriptions of quantitative methods as instrument-based data with statistical analysis. He describes qualitative methods using open-ended questions to be analyzed by the researcher. In Creswell's description of mixed methods research, he explains that methods from qualitative and quantitative frameworks would be used with quantitative methods

used for gathering the data and qualitative methods being used to describe/explain the data more clearly.

After reviewing the criteria identified by Creswell (2003) for each framework, the researcher has determined that the theoretical perspective of this study follows the postpositive paradigm. Thus, quantitative strategies and methods were used to complete the study.

Quantitative research allowed the researcher to examine a large population and better understand it to develop a profile of a West Virginia academic coach. "Survey research determines and reports the way things are; it involves collecting numerical data to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current status of the subject of study" (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2009, p. 9).

Most studies examined in the literature review were qualitative as small groups were interviewed and observed to better understand their role as an academic coach. The roles, responsibilities, and challenges were isolated to a few schools or districts. The literature review revealed that few broad studies of academic coaches have been conducted. With this study, the researcher examined a larger population to get a perspective of who the academic coaches are and what they do as a coach in order to answer the research questions posed.

Research Procedures

Several steps are involved in designing a research study and establishing the procedures to follow. After examining the research on academic coaching and determining what this study contributes to the body of literature, the research questions were formulated. A survey was developed by the researcher to answer the research questions. The population of the study was defined. Finally, prior to distributing the survey as a final instrument, it was reviewed for validity and reliability.

After completing the literature review, three research questions were composed to focus this study. The questions are:

1. What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?
2. What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia?
3. What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

Survey instrument. These three questions were answered using a survey the researcher developed after review of previous research. After completing an extensive review of literature, it was determined that a survey does not exist that is applicable to this study. To answer these research questions, a survey (Appendix B) was developed by the researcher. In preparation to design the survey, a matrix was constructed (Appendix A) to organize and document what has been found through previous research about academic coaching.

As the survey items were constructed, guidelines for question development by Suskie (1988) and Fowler (2009) were used. The items were kept as short as possible (Suskie, 1988) while making sure the items' wording was clear (Fowler, 2009). Each survey question is specific, clearly written and addresses only one point. The questions ask about behaviors/actions of the respondents, not their feelings or opinions. The questions are not leading and do not contain sensitive information. The items are written so they should be quick and simple for the respondents to answer.

During the literature review, the researcher found most studies that have been completed about academic coaching are qualitative in nature (McCollough, 2007; Neufeld and Roper, 2003; Wall, 2009). The researchers who have done studies have completed an in-depth study of small groups of academic coaches in a few schools. They have conducted interviews and observations of the classrooms to generate a concept of what these individuals do and the challenges they face

in their work. The studies have identified some demographic components of the participants. Neufeld and Roper (2003) completed a longitudinal qualitative study over six years interviewing coaches, teachers, principals, and central office personnel about coaching in four urban areas. The findings of prior research were considered (Appendix A) as the survey items were developed.

As the order of items was determined, Suskie (1988) suggested to place intriguing, impersonal, easy to answer questions first. Planning a survey to serve the purpose of the study makes the efforts of the work pay off (Suskie, 1988), and such is the rationale for the means used to design the survey for this study. Consistent with that, the responsibility questions are the first ones in the survey. These questions are designed to understand the responsibilities of an academic coach. In the survey there are responsibilities that are considered teaching or instructional and others that are more administrative. Instructional responsibilities are defined as those related to the classroom practices of a teacher such as planning and implementing lessons. Administrative responsibilities are defined as practices which are not directly related to classroom instruction such as planning a school schedule or budget. As the survey was designed, a continuum was developed to determine what responsibilities are more focused on instructional practices and which ones are more administrative in nature.

The next set of questions address the challenges of the coaches. After inquiring about what they do, this provided a natural flow of question order. The challenges occurred for several reasons such as location, placement of the coach, and funding to support the position. There were ten common challenges that were identified in the literature review. The summary of literature findings can be found in Appendix A. To identify what the challenges are and to what degree

they impact the academic coaches in West Virginia, the findings from the literature review were compiled and the challenges section of the survey was developed.

The final questions are the demographics. Suskie's (1988) recommendation was to put these at the end because they are often considered boring questions by respondents. These responses were used to define and better understand the population of academic coaches. A general profile of an academic coach in West Virginia was developed to answer the first research question.

Validity and reliability. Before being used, a survey needs to be evaluated to make sure the questions are asking/measuring what is intended to ensure the survey is valid and that the questions are stated in a manner that is clear and allows for consistent responses to ensure reliability (Fowler, 2009; Suskie, 1988). To evaluate the validity of the survey, a panel of experts was consulted. The experts selected for this included Linda Bragg, Stacie McCollough, Bruce Joyce, and Diane Yendol-Hoppey. These individuals were selected because of their expertise in the field of academic coaching and/or familiarity with academic coaching in West Virginia.

Linda Bragg has worked in education in West Virginia as a secondary English teacher, instructor in post-secondary education, a coordinator at the central office level, and a project director at the state level. Most pertinent to this research was her position as the project director of the Coaching for Learning professional development initiative (L. Bragg, personal communication, November 2, 2015) .

Stacie McCollough completed her dissertation in May of 2007 titled *Teacher Leadership in Standards-Based Reform: School Standards Coaches' Reflections* at the University of North Florida. In her qualitative study she focused on understanding the roles and responsibilities of coaches (McCollough, 2007).

Bruce Joyce has had many phases to his career in education. Initially he worked at the University of Chicago and Columbia University researching instruction and teaching as well as learning styles and teacher education. The second phase of his career was with school district partnerships participating in renewal projects. The third phase of his career has been authoring and co-authoring books and articles about school improvement, teaching, and staff development (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

Diane Yendol-Hoppey is currently a Professor at the University of South Florida and serves as the Chair of the Childhood and Literacy Studies Department at the university. Her research interests have focused on job-embedded teacher professional development and teacher leadership. Yendol-Hoppey has co-authored four books and published in excess of 50 studies (University of South Florida, 2015).

The panel of experts were contacted, provided a brief description of the study, and asked if they would be willing to review the survey for validity. These four individuals were provided with the survey and response form (Appendix C). In their responses, the experts were asked to provide feedback about the following with respect to the survey questions (Ramirez, 2002):

- Are the instructions clear?
- Is the item clear and easily understood?
- Is the item directly related to the study and research questions?
- Is the item concise?
- Do the choices listed allow for appropriate response?
- Should any items be omitted? If so, please identify.
- Should any items be modified? If so, please identify.

- Are there items that should be added to the survey? If so, please provide description and rationale.

Their feedback and suggestions were incorporated into the survey. Most notable was the suggestion from Joyce to make sure the survey was up-to-date by including prompts about core content standards. As a result, a responsibility item was added about assisting teachers with implementation of Next Generation Standards in West Virginia. Also, Bragg believed that an item should be included that addressed teaming within the school so a responsibility item was added about teaming. Overall, the experts felt the content was relevant to the study and did not identify anything that should be eliminated.

A subset of approximately ten coaches were contacted and asked to take the survey and assist with determining if the instrument is reliable. Chronbach's alpha was applied to the results to determine the level of reliability of the survey. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) explain that "if items can have more than two scores, ...then Chronbach's alpha should be used" (p. 161) and "if numbers are used to represent the response choices, analysis for internal consistency can be accomplished using Chronbach's alpha" (p. 161). The formula for Chronbach's alpha is

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

where N is the number of items, c-bar is the average inter-item covariance among the items and v-bar is the average variance. If the computed value is 0.7 or higher, then the survey is considered a reliable instrument (Institute for Digital Research and Education, 2015). The results from the pilot group were 0.848 for the responsibility items and 0.679 for the challenge items. Since the lower value was close to the accepted value of 0.7 and the pilot group only consisted of 10 individuals, the survey was sent. The values were re-calculated after the surveys were completed by the academic coaches in the study. With the larger population, the 22 responsibility

items had a calculated reliability value of 0.844 and the 10 challenge items had a reliability value of 0.834.

Data collection. Once the survey was finalized, the data collection from the academic coaches in West Virginia started. The first step to data collection was to identify who would be surveyed. The survey was sent to all individuals in West Virginia public schools who have worked in the capacity of an academic coach in the past year as identified through county and state job title lists. Suskie (1988) indicates it is rare to have a complete and accurate list of individuals. The researcher has made all attempts to have a complete and accurate list of all academic coaches. The list of coaches was acquired from the state and confirmed by checking the on-line county directories. The email addresses of individuals identified as academic coaches were collected. Prior to disseminating the survey to the coaches, as a professional courtesy, the superintendents of the 31 counties who had academic coaches were contacted via email to make them aware of the study (Appendix D). Responses to the superintendent notification were received from Monongalia County, Hardy County, and Berkeley County. The Hardy County contact clarified there were no coaches in that county. The Monongalia County contact reviewed and approved the survey to be distributed to coaches in that county. The Berkeley County contact asked for the list of coaches from that county then submitted an updated list of coaches from that county to be included in the study.

Table 1

Counties using Coaches in each West Virginia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)

RESA	Number of Counties in RESA	Number of Counties in RESA with Coaches	Percentage of Counties with Coaches	Total Number of Coaches in RESA
1	6	2	33.3	11
2	6	5	83.3	29
3	4	1	25.0	3
4	6	3	50.0	19
5	8	3	37.5	22
6	5	1	20.0	2
7	12	10	83.3	43
8	8	6	75.0	20
Total	55	31	56.3	149

The survey items were entered into Qualtrics, a web-based survey instrument. An electronic means of data collection was chosen because of its low cost, possibility of quick return rate, and provision for the respondents to provide thoughtful answers (Fowler, 2009). One factor needing consideration was the response rate of the survey. Fowler (2009) states “there is no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate” (p. 51) for a survey. Fowler goes on to explain that academic surveys sometimes achieve a 70% response rate, and though electronic surveys do result in a lower response rate, follow-up reminders can be sent to increase the rate. For this survey the goal was to achieve a 66% response rate. To encourage participation, respondents who provided their email address were eligible for one of five \$50 Amazon gift cards.

A few days after notification was sent to the superintendents, an email cover letter was sent to the identified coaches explaining the study and asking the individual to respond if no longer involved in education as an academic coach or if they are unable to participate in the study. The cover letter included an invitation to access the survey through a web link. The

information was sent to the prospective participants on Thursday, September 10, 2015. The initial email let them know that the survey would be available in two days. The survey was set to open on Saturday, September 12. The advance notice was provided because the completion incentives included a gift card to the first respondent. The survey was scheduled to be available for three weeks and to close on Saturday, October 3. During the time, reminders were sent to individuals a response had not been received from on September 18, September 25, October 1, and October 3. After examining the number of responses, the survey was re-opened and another invitation was sent to the prospective respondents who had not yet completed the survey. It was re-opened on October 13 and closed October 17.

For the measurements, the demographic questions included drop-down menus when possible to make response time quicker for those taking the survey and more consistent for the researcher to analyze. The responsibilities section consisted of Likert scale questions with five answer choices: never, yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily. The challenges section also consisted of Likert scale questions with five choices: no challenge, slight challenge, moderate challenge, great challenge, and extreme challenge. This type of question was chosen for each group of questions because they are familiar to people, efficient to answer, and can be analyzed in many possible ways (Suskie, 1988). According to Suskie it is best to offer four to five options for respondents to choose.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected, each section of the survey was examined independently. The appropriate data was applied to each respective question.

The demographic section was used to answer question one: What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia. For each element in the demographic portion of the survey,

descriptive statistics were used. The frequency of each answer was calculated and displayed in a table.

The responsibility section was used to answer question two: What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia. For each of the twenty-two items, the frequency of each response was calculated. Also, the mean scores and standard deviation were calculated and displayed in a table. The responses and findings were discussed.

The challenges section of the survey was used to answer question three: What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work. To identify the most prominent challenges, each set of scores provided for the challenges were averaged, the standard deviations were calculated, and the results displayed in a table. The table also includes the frequency of each answer. Challenges with the highest average were identified as the most prominent challenges.

As the data was studied after the survey results were received, some additional examination was completed through the use of t-tests and ANOVAs to explore ideas for further research. The researcher and chair selected the demographics to run further analyses. Items that were more closely examined included:

1. Do more experienced coaches do more or less administrative tasks?
2. Are the challenges different for the different grade levels coached?
3. Do primary responsibilities differ from coaches in RESAs with more coaches?
4. Is there a significant difference in the responsibilities of coaches at different programmatic levels?

These are reported in Chapter 4 as related findings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand who West Virginia academic coaches are, what types of responsibilities they have, and what challenges they encounter. By completing this research project, grounded in the postpositivism paradigm, the three research questions were answered by conducting a survey. After extensive literature review, the researcher determined a survey did not exist to address the specific questions of this study. A survey and process were developed to ensure the survey was a valid, reliable instrument. Once approval was granted, the survey was disseminated via electronic means over a period of three weeks. Once the survey closed, the data was analyzed to determine answers to the three research questions.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia as well as the responsibilities and challenges they face. This chapter explains the return rate of the survey and the reliability of the survey. The findings that address each of the three research questions are included next. Demographics are presented to address research question one and are found in Tables 2 – 17 and Figure 2. The responsibilities results are presented to address research question two and are in Table 18. The results of the challenges research question are presented to address research question three and are displayed in Table 19. Related findings from the data are presented in the next section of the chapter. The chapter closes with a summary of the data analysis.

Return Rate

The survey Academic Coaching in West Virginia was originally sent to 149 individuals. There were ten individuals who accessed the survey but did not complete any part of it. Sixteen individuals requested to be removed from the list. Of those sixteen, two individuals indicated they were no longer coaching but did not indicate when they left the position. One individual did not give a reason for asking to be removed. Four individuals indicated they have not served as an academic coach. Four individuals indicated they have retired but did not state the date they retired. Five individuals indicated they left the role of coach over a year ago; two of those five stated they moved into other positions of supervision. Of the remaining 133 prospective respondents, 56 coaches returned complete or mostly complete surveys for a 42.1% return rate. This was deemed acceptable. Survey Monkey (2011) identified that email surveys average a 40% return rate and online surveys average a 30% return rate.

Reliability of Survey Instrument

Since this survey instrument was developed by the researcher, its validity and reliability needed to be established. The survey was distributed to a panel of experts in the field of academic coaching to review and provide feedback and suggestions. The validity of the survey was established by this means.

Chronbach's alpha was used to establish the reliability. This formula is used to establish the internal consistency of survey items. The formula for Chronbach's alpha is

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

where N is the number of items, c-bar is the average inter-item covariance among the items and v-bar is the average variance. A value of 0.7 or higher indicates an acceptable level of reliability for a survey (Institute for Digital Research and Education, 2015). When the survey data were applied to the formula, the 22 responsibility items were determined reliable with a value of 0.844. The 10 challenges that were addressed were also determined reliable as the calculation resulted in a value of 0.834.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?

The responses to the 17 questions included in the demographics section of the survey were used to provide a response to this question. The questions included prompts about the job characteristics as well as the characteristics of the individuals. Tables 2 through 17 are displayed to summarize the data from each of these questions.

The first item in the demographic section asked the respondent to identify what regional education service agency (RESA) he/she worked in as an academic coach. Table 2 presents the data.

Table 2

Respondents from each RESA (N=54)

RESA	No. of Respondents from each RESA (%)
1	3 (5.5)
2	10 (18.5)
3	1 (1.9)
4	6 (11.1)
5	6 (11.1)
6	1 (1.9)
7	17 (31.5)
8	10 (18.5)
Total	54 (100.0)

In looking at this response data, the most number of responses came from RESAs 2, 7, and 8 (for a total of 37 responses), meaning 68.5% of the responses came from those three regions of West Virginia. Only one coach from RESA 3 and one coach from RESA 6 responded to the survey.

The second demographic item asked the coach to identify in what content area(s) he/she was certified. Table 3 presents this data. The table is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 3

Area of Certification of Academic Coaches (N=54)

Certification Area	No. of Coaches (%)
Multiple Certifications	39 (72.2)
Elementary and at least one other area	30*
Math, Science	1
Math, Elective	1
English, Administration	1
Special Education, Science	1
Special Education, Administration	1
Special Education, English, Administration	1
Special Education, English, Elective	1
Science, Reading, English	1
Reading, English, Social Studies, Elective	1
Single Certification	15 (27.8)
Elementary	9
Reading	1
Special Education	1
Science	1
English	1
Elective	1
Administration	1
Total	54 (100.0)

*Note. The most common combinations included elementary with reading (7 coaches), elementary with special education (5 coaches), elementary with reading and math (3 coaches), and elementary with administration (2 coaches).

Of the responses received, 39 of the coaches indicated they were certified in multiple areas and 15 indicated they were certified in only one content area. Of the coaches who were certified in multiple content areas, 30 were certified in elementary education and at least one other content area. Nine of the coaches who had only a single certification field were certified in elementary education. A majority of coaches (30 with multiple certification plus 9 with single certification) had elementary certification.

As shown in Figure 1, the third demographic question asked the coach to identify in what grade levels he/she was certified as a teacher.

Figure 2

Grade Level Certification of Academic Coaches (N=54)

The range of grades the academic coaches were certified was from pre-kindergarten through 12. Most of the coaches were certified in grades 2 through 9 with the highest number being certified in grade 6. The least common grade level certifications were at the very low and very high grade levels with pre-kindergarten (19 coaches certified) followed by grade 11 (29 coaches certified), grade 10 (30 coaches certified) and grade 12 (31 coaches certified).

The next demographic question asked the coaches what their highest degree level was. They were provided with four choices: Bachelor, Masters, Masters with additional credit hours, and Doctorate. Table 4 is organized from highest to lowest frequency and represents this data.

Table 4

Degree Level of Academic Coaches (N=54)

Degree Level	No. of Coaches (%)
Masters Degree with Additional Credit Hours	48 (88.8)
Bachelors Degree	3 (5.6)
Masters Degree	3 (5.6)
Doctorate	0 (0.0)
Total	54 (100.0)

Forty-eight (88.8%) of the academic coaches had a Masters degree with additional credit hours.

None of the coaches had a doctorate degree.

The fifth demographic question asked if the coach was a National Board Certified Teacher. Table 5 shows the number of academic coaches who were National Board Certified Teachers.

Table 5

Academic Coaches with National Board Certification (NBCT) (N=54)

National Board Certified Teacher	No. of Coaches (%)
No	45 (83.3)
Yes	9 (16.7)
Total	54 (100.0)

This question was of interest since National Board Certification is a point of consideration when hiring teachers (WVDE Policy 5000, 2013). Even though there are monetary incentives to acquire this certification, and it is in the hiring policy, 45 (83.3%) of the academic coaches indicated they did not have that certification. National Board Certification is intended to reflect a high-level of professionalism and accomplishment for teachers.

The next demographic question asked if the coach still had classes assigned to him/her to teach. Table 6 represents this data.

Table 6

Academic Coaches Still a Classroom Teacher (N=54)

Classroom Teacher and Coach	No. of Coaches (%)
No	48 (88.9)
Yes	6 (11.1)
Total	54 (100.0)

Of the 54 coaches 48 (88.9 %) no longer had classroom teaching responsibilities.

The following demographic question asked the coaches to identify what grade levels they worked with as a coach. The data is represented in Table 7 which is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 7

Grade Levels Coached (N=54)

Grade Levels Coached	No. of Coaches (%)
K-8	19 (35.2)
K-4	13 (24.1)
K-12	12 (22.2)
5-12	6 (11.1)
9-12	4 (7.4)
5-8	0 (0.0)
Total	54 (100.0)

The responses indicated an overlapping of grade levels coached because the coaches worked at multiple levels. The most common grade level span that coaches worked with was K-8 (19 coaches). Thirteen coaches reported working only in K-4 and 12 reported working in the K-12 grade levels. Only 4 of the individuals coached in the 9-12 grade level. None of the coaches indicated they worked solely in the 5-8 grade levels.

The eighth demographic question asked the coaches how their position was funded. The data is represented in Table 8.

Table 8

Funding Sources for Coaching Positions (N=54)

Funding Source	No. of Coaches (%)
Single Funding Source	44 (81.5)
Title I	20 (37.1)
County	8 (14.8)
Title II	5 (9.2)
Unknown	5 (9.2)
Grant	4 (7.4)
Federal Programs	1 (1.9)
Social Security	1 (1.9)
Multiple Funding Sources	10 (18.5)
County and Title I	5 (9.2)
County and Grant	2 (3.6)
Title I and Federal Funds	1 (1.9)
Title I and Title II	1 (1.9)
County, Title I, and Special Education	1 (1.9)
Total	54 (100.0)

A single funding source was used to fund 44 of the coaching positions. The most common funding source for the coaching positions was through Title I resources (20 coaches). Eight of the coaches were funded solely by county funds. Ten of the coaching positions were funded by pooling funds from multiple sources to provide financial resources for the position. Funds combined included county and Title I funds (5 coaches), county and grant funds (2 coaches), Title I and federal funds (1 coach), Title I and Title II (1 coach), and county funds with Title I and Special Education funds (1 coach).

The next demographic item asked the coaches to identify their gender. Table 9 presents the data for this item.

Table 9

Gender of Coaches (N=54)

Gender	No. of Coaches (%)
Female	51 (94.4)
Male	3 (5.6)
Total	54 (100.0)

The coaching positions were predominately (94.4%) filled by females.

The tenth demographic item asked for the age range of the coaches. The data is presented in Table 10. The table is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 10

Age Range of Coaches (N=54)

Age Range	No. of Coaches (%)
51-60	17 (31.5)
31-40	15 (27.7)
41-50	13 (24.1)
Over 60	8 (14.8)
Under 30	1 (1.9)
Total	54 (100.0)

The most frequently selected age range for the coaches was 51-60 (17 coaches). The highest age of over 60 and lowest age of under 30 represented the smallest numbers of coaches with 8 and 1 respectively.

The next demographic asked the coaches how many years they have been a teacher. The response data is organized from highest to lowest frequency and is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Years of Experience as a Teacher (N=54)

Years of Teaching Experience	No. of Coaches (%)
More than 20	28 (51.9)
11-20	21 (38.9)
5-10	5 (9.2)
Less than 5	0 (0.0)
Total	54 (100.0)

The most frequently selected response from the coaches was that they had more than 20 years of teaching experience. All of the coaches indicated they had at least 5 years of teaching experience.

Demographic item 12 asked for the number of years the individual was employed as an academic coach. The responses are presented in Table 12 which is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 12

Years of Experience as an Academic Coach (N=53)

Years of Coaching Experience	No. of Coaches (%)
3	14 (26.4)
2	9 (17.0)
4	5 (9.4)
6	5 (9.4)
7	5 (9.4)
5	4 (7.5)
8	4 (7.5)
10 or more	3 (5.7)
1	2 (3.4)
9	2 (3.4)
Total	53 (100.0)

The coaches' experience ranged from 1 to 10 or more years. The mean number of years of coaching experience was calculated to be 4.66 years and the median number of years of coaching experience was 4 years. The most number of coaches (14) reported having 3 years of coaching experience. The second most frequent response (9 coaches) was that they had 2 years of experience. Only 3 of the 53 respondents had 10 or more years of experience as a coach, and only 2 of the 53 respondents had only one year of experience.

The next demographic question asked the coaches if they had a job description. The data for this is represented in Table 13.

Table 13

Academic Coaching Job Description (N=53)

Do You Have a Job Description	No. of Coaches (%)
Yes	48 (90.6)
Not sure	3 (5.7)
No	2 (3.7)
Total	53 (100.0)

A majority the coaches (90.6%) reported that they do have a job description.

The fourteenth demographic item asked the coaches if they received any formal training as a coach and if so, how much training. Table 14 presents the data gathered for this item. The table is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 14

Academic Coach Training (N=53)

Training Received for Coaching Duties	No. of Coaches (%)
Multiple trainings	19 (35.9)
No formal training	17 (32.1)
One training	13 (24.5)
Annual training	4 (7.5)
Total	53 (100.0)

There were nearly the same number of coaches reported receiving multiple trainings (19 coaches) as those who reported receiving no formal training (17 coaches). The responses to this item ranged from 19 coaches reported receiving multiple trainings to 4 coaches reported only receiving annual training.

The next demographic item asked if the coach planned to continue next year in the position as an academic coach if the position was still available. Table 15 presents this data.

Table 15

Plans to Continue in Position (N=53)

Continue in Position if Available	No. of Coaches (%)
Yes	39 (73.6)
Not Sure	8 (15.1)
No	6 (11.3)
Total	53 (100.0)

A majority of the coaches (73.6%) indicated they would continue as an academic coach if the position is still available next year. Eight coaches said they were not sure if they would continue and 6 responded they would not continue to work as an academic coach.

The sixteenth demographic item asked the coaches if their coaching position would still exist if they could no longer serve in the position. The response data is displayed in Table 16 which is organized from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 16

Position Existence (N=53)

Would Position Exist if You Were Not the Coach	No. of Coaches (%)
Yes	28 (52.8)
Not Sure	20 (37.8)
No	5 (9.4)
Total	53 (100.0)

Just over half of the coaches (52.8%) responded that the position would still exist even if they were not able to be the academic coach. A combined total of 25 of the 53 coaches responded they were not sure or that the position would not exist if they were not in the position.

The final demographic item asked the coaches who completed their annual evaluation.

Table 17 presents this data.

Table 17

Annual Evaluation (N=53)

Who Completes Coach Evaluations	No. of Coaches (%)
County Level Supervisor	33 (62.3)
Building Principal	17 (32.1)
No Evaluation Completed	3 (5.6)
Total	53 (100.0)

Most of the academic coaches (62.3%) responded that their annual evaluation was completed by a county level supervisor. Only 3 of the 53 coaches indicated they did not receive an annual evaluation.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: What are the responsibilities of an academic coach in West Virginia?

The responses to the 22 questions included in the responsibilities section of the survey were used to answer this research question. The questions included prompts about tasks that were instructional and others that were administrative types of tasks. As shown by the prompt number, the tasks were ordered so that the two types of tasks were interspersed through the section. The respondents rated each responsibility on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating the task is never done and 5 indicating it is a task completed daily. There was a range of 54 to 56 individuals respond to each prompt. The responses are presented in Table 18 which is organized from highest to lowest mean score. The standard deviation, a value included in the table, is a measure of the amount of variation of a set of data values from the mean of those values. A standard deviation that is low indicates that many of the data points are close to the mean. A higher value for the standard deviation indicates a greater spread in the data. The table includes the frequency of each response, percent of responses for each scale item, the mean score for the group and standard deviation for each set of data.

Table 18

Academic Coaching Responsibilities

Prompt No.	Survey Prompt	Administrative (A) or Instructional (I) Task	Frequency of Response					Mean	Standard Deviation
			1 Never (%)	2 Yearly (%)	3 Monthly (%)	4 Weekly (%)	5 Daily (%)		
R18 (N=55)	Seek resources for classroom instruction	I	1 (1.8)	3 (5.5)	6 (10.9)	19 (34.5)	26 (47.3)	4.20	0.97
R21 (N=55)	Assist teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards	I	1 (1.8)	2 (3.6)	15 (27.3)	15 (27.3)	22 (40.0)	4.00	1.00
R13 (N=54)	Assist other teachers with implementing new teaching strategies and resources (i.e. technology) into their lessons	I	1 (1.9)	2 (3.7)	11 (20.4)	24 (44.4)	16 (29.6)	3.96	0.91
R4 (N=55)	Assist other teachers with lesson implementation	I	2 (3.6)	1 (1.8)	15 (27.3)	24 (43.7)	13 (23.6)	3.82	0.94
R17 (N=56)	Conference with teachers about a lesson, provide constructive feedback	I	3 (5.4)	4 (7.1)	16 (28.6)	20 (35.7)	13 (23.2)	3.64	1.09
R16 (N=56)	Observe teachers	I	6 (10.7)	3 (5.4)	16 (28.6)	12 (21.4)	19 (33.9)	3.63	1.30

(continued)

Table 18 (continued)

Prompt No.	Survey Prompt	Administrative (A) or Instructional (I) Task	Frequency of Response					Mean	Standard Deviation
			1 Never (%)	2 Yearly (%)	3 Monthly (%)	4 Weekly (%)	5 Daily (%)		
R8 (N=54)	Interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own	I	4 (7.4)	4 (7.4)	17 (31.5)	19 (35.2)	10 (18.5)	3.50	1.11
R1 (N=54)	Model lessons for other teachers	I	2 (3.7)	3 (5.6)	23 (42.6)	21 (38.9)	5 (9.2)	3.44	0.88
R19 (N=55)	Provide professional development	I	3 (5.5)	5 (9.1)	22 (40.0)	15 (27.3)	10 (18.1)	3.44	1.07
R11 (N=54)	Acquire resources for a department or the school	A	3 (5.6)	7 (12.9)	19 (35.2)	16 (29.6)	9 (16.7)	3.39	1.09
R20 (N=55)	Assist other teachers with lesson planning	I	7 (12.7)	3 (5.5)	14 (25.4)	26 (47.3)	5 (9.1)	3.35	1.14
R9 (N=55)	Assist teachers with student assessment	I	5 (9.1)	6 (10.9)	19 (34.5)	19 (34.5)	6 (10.9)	3.27	1.10
R6 (N=55)	Act as an instructional leader guiding instructional decisions about standards and/or materials used	A	9 (16.4)	10 (18.1)	14 (25.4)	5 (9.1)	17 (31.0)	3.20	1.47
R2 (N=55)	Assist a school principal with a project	A	4 (7.3)	10 (18.1)	21 (38.2)	14 (25.4)	6 (10.9)	3.15	1.08

(continued)

Table 18 (continued)

Prompt No.	Survey Prompt	Administrative (A) or Instructional (I) Task	Frequency of Response					Mean	Standard Deviation
			1 Never (%)	2 Yearly (%)	3 Monthly (%)	4 Weekly (%)	5 Daily (%)		
R3 (N=55)	Assist a county leader with a project	A	4 (7.3)	13 (23.6)	20 (36.4)	16 (29.1)	2 (3.6)	2.98	0.99
R14 (N=55)	Participate in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices	A	10 (18.1)	19 (34.5)	11 (20.0)	10 (18.1)	5 (9.1)	2.65	1.24
R22 (N=54)	Work with school principal to build instructional teams in the school	A	17 (31.5)	14 (25.9)	11 (20.4)	9 (16.7)	3 (5.6)	2.39	1.25
R7 (N=55)	Plan/implement operations of the school	A	24 (43.7)	9 (16.4)	8 (14.5)	6 (10.9)	8 (14.5)	2.36	1.50
R15 (N=55)	Assist with making a school schedule	A	29 (52.7)	20 (36.4)	6 (10.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.58	0.69
R12 (N=55)	Plan a budget	A	36 (65.4)	15 (27.3)	3 (5.5)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	1.44	0.69
R5 (N=54)	Participate in hiring decisions	A	41 (75.9)	12 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	1.28	0.56
R10 (N=55)	Conduct formal evaluations of teachers	A	52 (94.6)	2 (3.6)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.07	0.33

In reviewing the responses from the responsibilities questions, the first item of interest is the administrative or instructional task column. Going back to the definition of an academic coach, a coach is defined as a professional educator who provides “focused improvement in teaching and learning” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b)(4), 2015) by creating a “comprehensive infrastructure that routinely supports a continuous process” (WV State Code §18A-3C-1(b), 2015). The coach should be more focused on instructional tasks than administrative ones. The higher mean scores indicate the coaches reported more often completing instructional tasks than administrative tasks. As a group, the average of the mean scores for the instructional tasks was 3.66 while the average of the mean scores for the administrative tasks was 2.32. The top nine tasks identified were all instructional in nature. The lowest mean score for any of the instructional tasks was 3.27 (assist teacher with student assessment) where a score of 3 indicated the task was completed monthly.

Coaches most frequently reported seeking resources for classroom instruction, an instructional task. This responsibility had a mean score of 4.2 with 47.3% of the coaches reporting they complete this task daily. The next most reported instructional task (assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards) had a mean score of 4.0 and 40% of the coaches indicated they complete this daily.

The most frequently reported administrative task (acquire resources for a department or the school) had a mean score of 3.39 with the highest portion of coaches (35.2%) reporting they do this monthly. Somewhat surprisingly, 31.5% of the coaches reported they never work with a school principal to build instructional teams in the school. The lowest mean scores were for participating in hiring decisions with 75.9% of the coaches reporting they never did this and 94.6% of the coaches reporting they never conducted formal evaluations of teachers.

In reviewing the frequency of response for the responsibilities, some responsibilities were completed very often by the coaches. Over half the coaches reported completing the following tasks weekly or daily (percentages represent total of weekly and daily responses):

- Seek resources for classroom instruction (81.8%)
- Assist teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards (67.3%)
- Assist other teachers with implementing new teaching strategies and resources (i.e. technology) into their lessons (74.0%)
- Conference with teachers about a lesson, provide constructive feedback (58.9%)
- Observe teachers (55.3%)
- Interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own (53.7%)
- Assist other teachers with lesson planning (56.4%)

There were some responsibilities that were never completed by the academic coaches. Over 50% of the coaches reported they never completed the following tasks. All of these tasks fell into the administrative types of tasks.

- Conduct formal evaluations of teachers (94.6%)
- Participate in hiring decisions (75.9%)
- Plan a budget (65.4%)
- Assist with making a school schedule (52.7%)

An important point to consider is that these responsibilities would not occur as often as the instructional responsibilities. For example, hiring decisions and formal teacher evaluations are not done often by administrators during the year.

Some coaches did offer additional comments about their responsibilities. The comments provided were:

- With respect to R10 (conduct formal evaluations of teachers): I observe frequently and I provide feedback through conferencing, but my evaluations are not formal and are not shared with admin.
- With respect to R16 (observe teachers): Twice per year.

To explain some of the frequency responses, coaches provided the following comments:

- There are 3 Secondary Instructional Coaches in our county. We are responsible with Facilitating both new teachers and seasoned teachers. I am in the schools daily for different reasons; therefore, some of the monthly things are actually several times a month.
- My answer for most of these is monthly because I work with 5 schools in the county to support K-5 ELA and Math.
- I worked in four different schools.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

The responses to the 10 questions included in the challenges section of the survey were used to answer this research question. The respondents rated each challenge on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating the item is no challenge and 5 indicating the item is an extreme challenge. The responses are presented in Table 19 which is organized from highest to lowest mean score. The table includes the frequency of each response, the percentage of responses for each scale item, the mean score for the group, and standard deviation for each set of data.

Table 19

Academic Coaching Challenges

Prompt No.	Survey Prompt	Frequency of Response					Mean	Standard Deviation
		1 No Challenge (%)	2 Slight Challenge (%)	3 Moderate Challenge (%)	4 Great Challenge (%)	5 Extreme Challenge (%)		
C5 (N=53)	Opportunities for formal advancement (titles, pay)	13 (24.5)	3 (5.7)	8 (15.1)	12 (22.6)	17 (32.1)	3.32	1.58
C7 (N=55)	Time to meet with teachers and complete duties	7 (12.7)	15 (27.3)	17 (31.0)	12 (21.8)	4 (7.3)	2.84	1.13
C9 (N=55)	Clarification of my role/duties as an instructional/academic coach	15 (27.3)	15 (27.3)	12 (21.8)	7 (12.7)	6 (10.9)	2.53	1.32
C8 (N=55)	Professional development available for my position	18 (32.7)	14 (25.4)	9 (16.4)	9 (16.4)	5 (9.1)	2.44	1.34
C1 (N=55)	Willingness of teachers to collaborate with the coach	10 (18.1)	27 (49.1)	13 (23.6)	4 (7.3)	1 (1.8)	2.25	0.91
C10 (N=55)	Providing feedback that is constructive and received	17 (31.0)	20 (36.4)	12 (21.8)	4 (7.3)	2 (3.6)	2.16	1.07

(continued)

Table 19 (continued)

Prompt No.	Survey Prompt	Frequency of Response					Mean	Standard Deviation
		1 No Challenge (%)	2 Slight Challenge (%)	3 Moderate Challenge (%)	4 Great Challenge (%)	5 Extreme Challenge (%)		
C6 (N=55)	Availability of resources to do my job	18 (32.7)	14 (25.4)	19 (34.5)	4 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	2.16	0.98
C4 (N=55)	Support of your role from teachers	15 (27.3)	27 (49.0)	9 (16.4)	4 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	2.04	0.86
C2 (N=55)	Support from school administration	23 (41.8)	19 (34.5)	9 (16.4)	4 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	1.89	0.94
C3 (N=55)	Support from county administration	33 (60.0)	10 (18.1)	9 (16.4)	2 (3.6)	1 (1.8)	1.69	1.00

In reviewing the data of the challenges, the highest mean score is only 3.32. To determine tasks the coaches identified to be relatively high or low challenges, the mean scores were averaged. The average of the mean scores is 2.33. So, challenges with a mean score higher than 2.33 were identified as relatively greater challenges. The highest mean score of 3.32 was with the challenge “opportunities for formal advancement (titles, pay).” Though the mean was not high, a total of 54.7% of the coaches reported this as a great or extreme challenge. Only three other challenges resulted with a mean score greater than 2.33. “Time to meet with teachers and complete duties” had a mean score of 2.84 with the highest percentage of teachers (31.0%) identifying it as a moderate challenge. Another one was “clarification of my role/duties as an instructional/academic coach” with a mean score of 2.53. “Professional development available for my position” had a mean score of 2.44.

The three items that resulted with the lowest mean scores all dealt with support of their position. “Support of your role from teachers” had a mean score of 2.04 with the highest percentage of coaches (49.0%) rating it as a slight challenge. There were 41.8% of the coaches who identified “support from school administration” as no challenge and 60.0% of the coaches identified “support from county administration” as no challenge for them. Support for the work of the academic coaches at both the school and county level was reported to be a low challenge for the coaches.

Again, some coaches provided comments to clarify their responses. Comments received include:

- With respect to C2 (support from school administration) and C3 (support from county administration): We had too many people telling us what to do that were not on the same page as each other. This was the first year we were “owned” by the schools, so

the principals wanted full control at the same time the county admin still wanted to maintain that control.

- With respect to C5 (opportunities for formal advancement):
 - As a teacher, my pay is tied to years of service only.
 - Because I am National Board Certified and will lose that pay increase if I advance, I feel somewhat stuck.
 - My pay is based on my degree and years of experience only.
 - In my role as Academic Coach there are so many different roles I perform. The most important role is to be in classrooms modeling best practices and next meeting with teachers to provide feedback and professional development. This means I spend an inordinate amount of my own off duty time completing the other parts of my job. I realize that it is part of this profession to some degree but I believe Academic Coaches should receive a bump in pay for after hour work. I believe this job demands a higher level of expertise and the pay should reflect that.
- With respect to C7 (time to meet with teachers and complete duties):
 - Working with 2-3 different schools a week, I was not able to provide the same coaching experience as a coach assigned to just 1 school every day of the week.
 - Time is always a factor. As a coach, you have so much information to share, but little time to do it. If you hold a session after school, all teachers do not stay. If you hold it during the day, at planning times, the time is too brief to accomplish much. The best way I have found to meet with teachers is to

provide rotating sub coverage, but this gets to be quite expensive. The true model of coaching would allow a coach to be assigned at each building. This would provide the opportunity for the coach to do more embedded PD and modeling in the classroom.

- With respect to C8 (professional development available for my position):
 - I would find it beneficial to participate in a RESA or statewide coaching cadre especially if it was geared toward special education coaches.
 - There was PD available. However, our county leaders often would not allow us to attend.
 - The last state “training” for Instructional coaches was 2 years ago and did NOT coincide with my actual duties.
- With respect to C9 (clarification of my role/duties as an instructional/academic coach): One of the biggest challenges is that there is just one of me as an instructional coach and I also have numerous other hats I wear now.
- General comments relating to the challenges:
 - This is year 4 as a school based academic coach. I have been in three different schools with three different experiences. I have found that when the principal appreciates and understands the role of the coach, and when the climate and culture of the school is focused on student achievement and professional growth, the challenges of a coach’s acceptance are minimal. When the administration is a strong instructional leader, the challenges of time, resources, and attitude diminish greatly and my role as a coach is so much more effective. If the culture is toxic, the role of a coach is difficult.

- Some challenges are determined by how many years of teaching and/or how teacher perceives their ability and how close to retirement.

Related Findings

As the data was studied after the survey results were received, some additional examination was completed to explore ideas for further research. The researcher and chair reviewed the demographics and selected some to run further analyses. Since inception of the project, the researcher has been interested in the types of responsibilities the coaches complete, specifically the instructional and administrative tasks.

Using *Rita Bean's Levels of Intensity for Instructional Coaching*, the intensity level of the most frequently reported instructional responsibilities was reviewed. The responsibility most frequently reported (seeking resources for classroom instruction) was an informal, level 1 activity. The second reported (assist teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards), fourth reported (assist other teachers with lesson implementation), fifth reported (conference with teachers about a lesson, provide feedback), and sixth reported (observe teachers) activities were all of level 3 intensity which are described as formal and intense (Bean, 2004).

One question addressed if more experienced coaches completed more or less administrative tasks.

1 – Do more experienced coaches do more or less administrative tasks?

To answer this question, the coaches were separated into two groups with 1-6 years being less experienced coaches and 7 or more being more experienced. A statistical t-independent test was computed using the statistical program SPSS to determine mean statistical significant difference between less experienced coaches and more experienced coaches completing administrative tasks with significant level at $p < 0.05$. For the responsibility of “assist a school

principal with a project” (R2, an administrative task) there was a significant difference in the scores of coaches with 1-6 years of coaching experience ($M=3.41$, $SD=0.966$) and coaches with 7 or more years of coaching experience ($M=2.57$, $SD=1.08$) with conditions $t(51)=2.70$, $p=0.009$. So, the less experienced coaches identified assisting a school principal with a project as a higher responsibility than the more experienced coaches did.

A second question that was examined was if the coaches at different grade levels experienced different challenges.

2 – Are the challenges different for the different grade levels coached?

To analyze this question, the individuals were separated into programmatic levels (elementary, middle, and secondary) such that a coach working in a configuration including grade 12 was labeled as secondary. A coach working in a grade configuration including grade 8 but not grade 12 was labeled as middle. A coach working in a configuration including grade K but not grade 8 or grade 12 was labeled as elementary. These designations were used to separate the coaches into groups to allow for comparison. The groups were defined using grade configuration information from WVDE Policy 2510 (2014).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were any significant differences between the means of three or more independent, unrelated groups. The ANOVA was used to determine significance between the three programmatic levels (elementary coaches, middle coaches, and secondary coaches). Once the ANOVA was computed using SPSS for the responses to the items in the challenge section, only C5 (opportunities for formal advancement) indicated significance at $p<0.05$. A post hoc analysis using Tukey HSD was computed to determine which of the programmatic levels indicated significance. For item C5 there was a significant effect on the scores of the three programmatic levels at $p<0.05$ level for

the three levels [$F(2,49)=4.178$, $p=0.021$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for middle coaches ($M=4.05$, $SD=1.129$) was significantly higher than secondary coaches ($M=2.73$, $SD=1.778$). However, elementary coaches ($M=3.09$, $SD=1.375$) did not significantly differ from middle coaches and elementary coaches. So the middle level coaches identified the challenge of having opportunities for formal advancement as a greater challenge than the secondary coaches did.

Once the survey results were received, it became obvious that most of the coaches were in three of the eight RESAs in the state. A third question that was more closely examined was how the responsibilities of the coaches in these three RESAs, with a higher number of coaches, differed from the responsibilities in other RESAs.

3 – Most of the coaches worked in RESAs 2, 7, and 8. Do their primary responsibilities differ from coaches in other RESAs?

To analyze this question, the RESAs were separated into two groups. Group 1 included coaches in RESAs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and group 2 included coaches in RESAs 2, 7 and 8. A statistical t-independent test was computed using the statistical program SPSS to determine the mean statistical significant difference between responses to R3 (assist county leader with a project) between the two groups of coaches with significant level set at $p<0.05$. There was a significant difference in the scores of coaches from group 1 ($M=3.41$, $SD=0.618$) and coaches from group 2 ($M=2.89$, $SD=1.008$) with $t(51)=-1.966$, $p=0.025$. So, assisting a county leader with a project was reported as a higher responsibility for individuals in RESAs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 than in the RESAs 2, 7 and 8 which have more academic coaches.

Again, stemming from the interest in the responsibilities of the coaches and the work they do at different programmatic levels, the survey results were examined to see if there were any statistically significant findings about the responsibilities at different programmatic levels.

4 – Is there a significant difference in the responsibilities of coaches at different programmatic levels?

To analyze this question, the individuals were separated such that a coach working in a configuration including grade 12 was labeled as secondary. A coach working in a grade configuration including grade 8 but not grade 12 was labeled as middle. A coach working in a configuration including grade K but not grade 8 or grade 12 was labeled as elementary. These designations were used to separate the coaches into groups to allow for comparison. The groups were defined using grade configuration information from WVDE Policy 2510 (2014).

Using a one way ANOVA analysis, there were significant differences in the responsibilities for five of the responsibilities at different programmatic levels.

- R4 (assist other teachers with lesson implementation). There was a significant effect on the scores of the coaches at the three programmatic levels at the $p < 0.05$ level for three conditions [$F(2,51) = 5.12$, $p = 0.009$]. A post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for elementary coaches ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.669$) was significantly higher than secondary coaches ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.978$). However, middle level coaches ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.696$) did not significantly differ from elementary coaches and secondary coaches. So the elementary coaches identified assisting other teachers with lesson implementation as a greater responsibility than secondary coaches did.
- R8 (interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own). There was a significant effect on the scores of the three programmatic levels at the $p < 0.05$ level for

three conditions [$F(2,49)=3.91$, $p=0.026$]. A post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for middle coaches ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.725$) was significantly higher than for secondary coaches ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.334$). However elementary coaches ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.798$) did not significantly differ from middle coaches and secondary coaches. So middle school coaches indicated that interpreting data to plan instruction in a classroom other than their own classroom was a greater responsibility than the secondary coaches indicated it was for them.

- R9 (assist teacher with student assessment). There was a significant effect on the scores of the three programmatic levels at the $p<0.05$ level for three conditions [$F(2,50)=3.55$, $p=0.036$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for middle coaches ($M=3.75$, $SD=0.967$) was significantly higher than secondary coaches ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.136$). However elementary coaches ($M=3.25$, $SD=0.866$) did not significantly differ from middle coaches and elementary coaches. So the middle school coaches identified assisting teachers with student assessment as a greater responsibility than the secondary coaches indicated it was for them.
- R14 (participate in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices). There was a significant effect on the scores of the three programmatic levels at $p<0.05$ level for three conditions [$F(2,50)=4.75$, $p=0.013$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for elementary coaches ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.084$) was significantly higher than secondary coaches ($M=2.10$, $SD=1.091$). However, middle coaches ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.252$) did not significantly differ from elementary and secondary coaches. So the elementary coaches indicated

participating in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices was a higher responsibility than was reported by the secondary coaches.

- R21 (assist teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards). There was a significant effect on the scores of the three programmatic levels at the $p < 0.05$ level for three conditions [$F(2,50) = 3.94$, $p = 0.026$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for middle coaches ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.813$) was significantly higher than secondary coaches ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.024$). However elementary coaches ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.888$) did not significantly differ from middle and secondary coaches. So the middle coaches indicated assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards was a higher responsibility than was reported by the secondary coaches.

Two other questions were also posed, but due to limitations in the data, statistical findings could not be determined. One question was if certain certification levels resulted in being responsible for more administrative tasks. The other question was if coaches who still have classes assigned to them do more or less administrative types of tasks. Due to one group being much larger than the other, a statistical comparison could not be made for either inquiry.

Summary

In summary, the data collected about the profile, responsibilities, and challenges of academic coaches provide insight into who the coaches in the state are and what they do.

Generally, an academic coach in West Virginia is a female between the ages of 51-60 with more than 20 years of teaching experience and 3 years of coaching experience. She has attended multiple academic coach trainings and will continue in the position in future years if it is still available. The individual most likely works in RESA 7 in the state and has multiple

certifications, most likely in elementary education and reading. She is no longer teaching in a classroom of her own, but in a coaching position funded solely by Title I. The coach is most likely certified in grades 2-9 and coaches in grades K-8. She has a master's degree with additional credit hours, but is not a National Board Certified Teacher. As for the position the coach is in, there is a job description for the position, the position would exist even if this particular person could not be the coach, and the annual evaluation is completed by a county level supervisor.

With respect to the coaches' responsibilities, they are most responsible for completing tasks identified as instructional in nature. The coaches reported spending the most time on seeking resources for classroom instruction and assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards (West Virginia's version of the Common Core standards). The coaches spent much less time on administrative types of tasks such as planning a budget, participating in hiring decisions, and conducting formal evaluations of teachers.

The coaches did not report any of the challenges as being much more than a moderate challenge for them. The greatest challenges they identified were opportunities for formal advancement and having time to meet with teachers and complete duties. The coaches reported that support for their position from colleagues and administration was their least challenge.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions, Discussions, Recommendations

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study and includes conclusions made from the findings. The chapter continues with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand who West Virginia academic coaches are, what types of responsibilities they have, and what challenges they encounter. Three research questions were answered by conducting a survey. The researcher determined a survey did not exist to address the specific questions of this study. A valid and reliable survey instrument was developed.

The population of academic coaches was identified by acquiring a list of the coaches from the state and confirmed by checking the on-line county directories. The email addresses of individuals identified as academic coaches were collected. The survey Academic Coaching in West Virginia was originally sent to 149 individuals through an email invitation to participate. The email contained a link to the survey which was completed electronically. There were ten individuals who accessed the survey but did not complete any part of it. Sixteen individuals requested to be removed from the list. Of the remaining 133 prospective respondents, 56 academic coaches returned complete or mostly complete surveys for a 42.1% return rate. The data was analyzed, and findings were used to determine answers to the three research questions.

Conclusions

There were three research questions investigated with this study. The questions and conclusions about each follow.

1. What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?

Based on the survey results from this study, a general profile of an academic coach in West Virginia is a female between the ages of 51-60 with more than 20 years of teaching experience. The individual has multiple certifications, most likely in elementary education and reading. She has been in a full-time coaching position for about 3 years which is funded solely by Title I.

2. What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia?

Coaches are responsible for instructional tasks. The coaches reported spending the most time on seeking resources for classroom instruction and assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards (West Virginia's version of the Common Core standards). The coaches spent less time on administrative types of tasks such as planning a budget, participating in hiring decisions, and conducting formal evaluations of teachers.

3. What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

The coaches reported two challenges of a moderate level. The two challenges coaches faced were: opportunities for formal advancement and having time to meet with teachers and complete duties. The coaches reported that support for their position from colleagues and administration was their least challenge.

Discussion

Non-participants. A limitation of the study that must be considered is the response rate. Of the academic coaches who were contacted, 77 did not respond to the request to participate. In addition to an introduction email, an invitation to participate, and four reminders to participate in the survey, these individuals still did not return a completed survey. There are a multitude of reasons this could have happened. Some of the individuals may have recently retired and no longer use the state assigned email address where the request was sent. Another possibility could

have been that the coach was busy and just did not take time to complete the survey. The survey was sent in mid-September as the coaches may have been starting new assignments in schools and consumed with their work. Another possibility is that the survey invitation may have been forwarded to a spam folder and not seen by the coach.

Demographics. There were seventeen items that were included in the survey to determine who the individuals were who work as academic coaches in West Virginia. The first item asked in what RESA the coach worked. In literature that was reviewed, the studies focused on single school districts (Burke, 2009; McCollough, 2007; Wall, 2009) rather than a region. From this study, the researcher found that the coaches from across the state of West Virginia were primarily in 3 of 8 regions of the state: RESAs 2, 7, and 8. These areas of the state do have a higher population than some other areas and include the counties with the state's two major universities. In the study by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010), they found that sometimes it was difficult for school systems to find certified teachers in some content areas to fill teaching positions. Rural areas of West Virginia may have difficulty finding enough certified teachers to fill their classrooms. There may not be certified individuals to fill classrooms if some are used in the capacity of an academic coach.

The following demographic questions addressed content area(s) and grade levels of certification. In the literature, the most common certification was in elementary education and most of the participants held multiple subject certificates (Cosenza, 2010). Likewise, in this study most of the coaches were certified in elementary education and one other content field. When asked what grade levels the coaches work with, 81% replied they work with teachers at the K-4 programmatic level. In the literature, other studies of academic coaching (Cosenza, 2010; McCollough, 2007; Wall, 2009) were conducted in elementary and middle school settings.

Another demographic question addressed degree level. In the research, Cosenza (2010) found in his study that just under one-half the participants held a masters degree. In this study of academic coaches in West Virginia, 89% of the coaches held a masters degree with additional credit hours. There are several reasons for the high percentage of teachers with that level of degree in West Virginia. First, as noted in one comment, teachers' pay is based on degree level and years of experience. Many teachers achieve that level of education to acquire additional compensation for their work. Also, as the demographics identified, 70% of the coaches were in age categories of over 40 and 52% had more than 20 years of teaching experience. These individuals have had many years to acquire the additional training to put them in this degree level. While the age range was consistent with other studies (Burke, 2009; Cosenza, 2010), the years of teaching experience was higher in this study than in other studies (Burke, 2009; Cosenza, 2010; McCollough, 2007; Wall, 2009). The higher number of years of experience could be because the individuals started teaching soon after finishing college and have remained in the position. These teachers have probably not worked in careers outside education. This could be because the profession provided a steady income with benefits for families that may not have a second income or have one that is not stable due to the state's economy.

The following demographic question asked if the teacher was a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). A large majority (83%) indicated they were not. This question was posed because there is financial incentive of \$3,500 annually for the 10-year life of the certificate to acquire the status of NBCT (WV State Code §18A-4-2a(b)(1), 2015). Also, it is currently included as point of consideration when a teacher is hired (WVDE Policy 5000, 2013). The reason for the high percentage who were not NBCT may again be attributed to the age and experience level of the coaches. Many of them may have acquired training through college

courses and are at a point in their careers it may not be enticing to them to acquire the certification given the amount of work required of them by the certification board. The certification process requires successful completion of three professional teaching portfolios and a computer-based assessment of content knowledge (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2015). Also, as noted in one of the challenge comments, the financial incentive to become NBCT is often tied to staying in a teaching position. For individuals who are considering leaving the classroom, that financial incentive is not as important.

Also in the demographic section of questions, the coaches were asked how many years they have been employed as an academic coach. The median number of years of experience was 3 and the mean number of years of experience the coaches reported was 4.66. For a very veteran group of teachers, they did not have a lot of experience as an academic coach. In other literature the mean number of years of experience was 4.1 (McCollough, 2007) and in the study by Feldman and Tung (2002) three of the five coaches had less than one year of experience and the other two had two or more years as a coach. Findings about years of coaching experience in this study of West Virginia coaches are similar to findings in previous research studies.

Responsibilities. Leithwood (1997) found that teacher leaders perform administrative tasks. This finding prompted the researcher's interest in looking at the tasks the academic coaches completed. Overall, the mean score of the instructional tasks was a 3.66 and that of administrative tasks completed by the coaches was 2.32. The instructional tasks were completed between monthly and weekly, and the administrative tasks were primarily completed between yearly and monthly. The coaches complete instructional tasks more often than they do administrative tasks.

Coaches most frequently reported seeking resources for classroom instruction with a mean score of 4.20. In the literature, McCollough (2007) stated that coaches need to help with anything to help build trust and rapport with teachers. The coaches cannot appear to be unwilling to assist with whatever the teacher needs to be successful. Having necessary resources for teaching a lesson is an important piece of teaching students. The resource may be a manipulative that needs purchased or borrowed or a chart prepared for data collection. The coach can assist the teacher with acquiring the resources needed to ease the pressure on the teacher. The teacher can come to trust that when something is requested of the coach, the teacher can rely on assistance. This could lead to building trust between the coach and the classroom teacher.

The second most frequently reported responsibility identified was assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards, West Virginia's label for the Common Core initiative. Interestingly this prompt was added at the recommendation of Bruce Joyce, a member of the expert review panel. The Next Generation Standards in West Virginia were drafted as new content standards for all students in West Virginia. The task was completed by West Virginia teachers with a plan to increase the depth of understanding of fewer concepts. The state planned to begin implementation of the Next Generation Content Standards in the fall of 2011 in kindergarten, then in the fall of 2012 for first grade, and in the fall of 2013 for second grade. Finally, all other grades would have complete implementation in the fall of 2014 (WVDE, 2013). The high frequency of this item indicates the coach and teacher are working together to implement new requirements into the classroom. With the multi-year implementation plan, working with these new standards is something the coaches and teachers may have had to learn about together. As the coaches work with various teachers, they may carry ideas from one classroom to another to help all work more efficiently. This responsibility was evaluated more

closely among the coaches at the different programmatic levels. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the middle level coaches reporting and the secondary coaches reporting for “assisting teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards.” The mean score for middle coaches was 4.35 and the mean score for secondary coaches was 3.62. The coaches working with middle level teachers reported this to be a greater responsibility for them than coaches at the secondary level reported.

The third most frequently reported responsibility was “assist other teachers with implementing new teaching strategies and resources (i.e. technology) into their lessons.” In previous research, Cornett and Knight (2008) and Truesdale (2003) studied strategy implementation and academic coaching. Cornett and Knight found the implementation of new teaching strategies increased with coaching. That West Virginia coaches reported a high frequency for this responsibility is a good sign that teachers are implementing strategies that may be more complex and/or innovative in their classrooms.

The fourth most frequently reported responsibility was “assist other teachers with lesson implementation.” This responsibility was evaluated more closely among the coaches at the different programmatic levels. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the elementary level coaches reporting and the secondary coaches reporting for this responsibility. The mean score for elementary coaches was 4.08 and the mean score for secondary coaches was 3.43. The coaches working with elementary teachers reported this to be a greater responsibility for them than coaches at the secondary level reported. The reason for this could be that elementary programs often involved tiered interventions to address individual student needs. Having a coach assist with such implementation would be helpful.

The responsibility “interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own” had a mean score of 3.50 with 85.2% of the coaches reporting it as an activity completed at least monthly. This responsibility was also evaluated more in depth among the different programmatic levels. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the middle level coaches reporting and the secondary coaches reporting for “interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own.” The mean score for middle school coaches was 4.00 and the mean score for secondary coaches was 3.10. Middle school coaches indicated that interpreting data to plan instruction in a classroom other than their own classroom was a greater responsibility than the secondary coaches reported.

For the responsibility “assist teachers with student assessment”, 79.9% of the coaches reported doing this at least monthly. This responsibility was also evaluated more in depth among the different programmatic levels. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the middle level coaches reporting and secondary coaches reporting for this item. The mean score for middle school coaches was 3.75, and the mean responsibility score for secondary was 2.90. So the middle school coaches identified assisting teachers with student assessment as a greater responsibility than the secondary coaches indicated it was for them.

The middle level coaches reported both of these tasks as a greater responsibility for them than was reported by the coaches at the secondary level. In the literature Feldman and Tung (2002) identified that coaches assessed progress on benchmark tests which are tests used to measure progress toward mastering a learning goal. The coaches used the information about the progress to help make instructional decisions with the teachers. Wall (2009) identified that coaches provided professional development on data analysis. With the current emphasis on testing and preparing students at the middle grades to be prepared for high school, there is a great

amount of data to interpret. The annual standardized testing results can be used as well as the results for any benchmark tests completed during the year. Typically, benchmark tests are used in at least language arts and math classes to track students' progress during the year. It is encouraging that coaches report they are working with the teachers so frequently to use data to direct instruction.

The eighth frequently reported responsibility for coaches was “model lessons for other teachers.” In the study by Feldman and Tung (2002) they found that coaches were rarely in the classroom modeling a lesson. In this study, the mean score of the frequency for this task was 3.44 with 42.6% of the coaches replying they do this monthly and 38.9% indicating they do this activity weekly. Fortunately, these coaches report they engage in this task fairly often.

Though academic coaching is a form of on-going professional development, 40.0% of the coaches responded they only do this monthly. In another research study, Wall (2009) found the job-embedded professional development provided by coaches as a most valuable form of professional development. Based on comments made by some coaches, it appears they did not necessarily consider the work they do regularly in classrooms with teachers as professional development, but were thinking of it as specific training sessions they have with the teachers outside of the classroom.

The tenth frequently reported responsibility was the first one that was considered an administrative task. The responsibility was “acquire resources for a department or the school”, and 81.5% of the coaches reported doing this at least monthly. The high percentage of people doing this monthly could be because the coaches may work with multiple teachers in the same building which would result in them doing more for a department or the whole school.

The fourteenth frequently reported responsibility was “assist a school principal with a project.” From the literature, Feldman and Tung (2002) found that coaches serve as critical friends who help principals stay focused on tasks to complete, and Leithwood (1997) found that teacher leaders perform administrative tasks. Though low on the list in general, this responsibility was the third highest administrative task. This responsibility was also evaluated more in depth between coaches with different levels of experience. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the less experienced coaches’ reporting and the more experienced coaches’ reporting for assisting a school principal with a project. Coaches with 1-6 years of experience identified this as a greater responsibility for them than coaches with 7 or more years of experience. Coaches with 1-6 years of experience responded with a mean score of 3.41 while coaches with 7 or more years of responded with a mean value of 2.57. This finding was surprising as it was expected that more experienced coaches would be working more with the principal on school projects.

The next responsibility, “assist a county leader with a project”, had a statistical finding that coaches in RESAs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 ranked this as a greater responsibility than coaches in RESAs 2, 7, and 8. To examine this, an independent t-test was completed. Coaches in RESAs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 had a mean responsibility value of 3.41 while the mean score for coaches in RESAs 2, 7, and 8 had a mean score of 2.89. There were fewer coaches in RESAs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Though it was suspected that the reverse would be true, it could be that some regions do not have as large of staffs so the individuals in positions such as academic coach are expected to take on additional roles and assist with a variety of projects in the county.

The sixteenth frequently reported responsibility was “participate in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices.” Other studies indicate that teacher

leaders participate in school-based decision making and that principals seek their input (Burke, 2009). Also, previous research indicated that teachers no longer view site administrators as the sole source of decision making (Cosenza, 2010), and that coaches were involved in decision making at the school level (Feldman & Tung, 2002). This responsibility was also evaluated more in depth among the different programmatic levels. Using a one way ANOVA analysis, a difference was found between the elementary level coaches' reporting and the secondary coaches' reporting for participating in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices. In this study, the elementary coaches identified this as a greater responsibility than the secondary coaches did. The mean score for elementary coaches was 3.08 and the mean responsibility score for secondary coaches was 2.10. Only 34.5% of the coaches reported they did this yearly and 20.0% reported doing this monthly. The low frequency of this task may be because some of the coaches work in multiple schools, as identified in the respondent comments, and are not as vested in one specific school.

The seventeenth frequently reported responsibility was "work with a school principal to build instructional teams in the school." This prompt was added as a result of comments from the expert review panel. Surprisingly 57.4% of the coaches responded they never or only yearly participate in this activity. This may be because the teams are already established by the time the coach begins work in the school or there are established criteria the schools use to determine who is on what team.

Near the bottom of the list of responsibilities in the twenty-first spot was "participate in hiring decisions." In this study 75.9% of the coaches indicated they never participate in this activity. In the research this was identified as a task completed by 67.1% of teacher leaders in the

MetLife (2009) study. Though academic coaches are a specific type of teacher leader, they may not be the group who regularly participate in hiring decisions.

The responsibility reported to be done the least by the coaches was “conduct formal evaluations of teachers.” In this study 94.6% of the coaches reported they never do this. In the research, the MetLife (2009) study reported that 23.7% of teacher leaders in their study completed this task. Also, McCollough (2007) found that coaches became frustrated when they had responsibility but no authority and wanted to be involved with evaluation. Due to the trusting relationship necessary for a teacher-coach partnership to function productively, this is not a task that would enhance that collaboration and is not one coaches are typically encouraged to participate.

Looking at the Teacher Leader Model Standards presented in Chapter 2, Standards 1 (fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning), 2 (accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning), 3 (promoting professional learning for continuous improvement), and 4 (facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning) are most reflected in the coaching responsibilities examined in this study. The top five identified responsibilities are included in these four standards. Standards 5, 6 and 7 were not predominantly found in the coaching literature.

Challenges. When the coaches responded to the prompts about challenges to their position, no challenge was rated very high. The scale went from 1 to 5 with a rating of 3 indicated a moderate challenge, and the highest mean score for any of the items was 3.32.

The challenge “opportunities for formal advancement (title/pay)” was the most frequently reported challenge with a mean score of 3.32. This was not a point addressed directly by other research studies, but one included in this research because of the teachers’ pay structure in West

Virginia. As noted by comments the coaches included, the teachers are paid based on their years of experience and degree level. Even though these professionals are willing to take on a position with more responsibility, they are not financially compensated any different than a classroom teacher. As the data was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA calculation, it was found that the middle level coaches ranked this as a greater challenge than the secondary coaches did. The middle level coaches had a mean score of 4.05 while the secondary coaches had a mean score of 2.73. This could relate to other responsibilities the middle coaches rated higher (interpreting data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own and assisting teachers with student assessment). Perhaps the coaches at the middle school level feel they are investing more time in their duties and should be compensated for that.

The challenge with a mean score of 2.84 was “time to meet with teachers and complete duties.” Finding a way to coordinate the teacher and coach schedules is quite difficult because there are so many external factors affecting both individuals. This issue was a common challenge identified by other studies also (Feldman & Tung, 2002; Neufeld & Roper, 2003 Noonan & Hanson, 1999).

The next challenge was “clarification of my role/duties as an instructional/academic coach” with a mean score of 2.53. In responding to the survey, 91% of the coaches in this study indicated they have a job description, but still identified it as a moderate challenge to their position. Even though there is a job description, it may be written vaguely allowing a multitude of duties to be assigned to the coach or ambiguity on the part of the coach and school/county administration about the coaches’ responsibilities. In other studies, Feldman and Tung (2002) found that a lack of a clear definition of the role of a coach is a challenge and McCollough

(2007) explained that coaches can feel isolated from administration and teachers making their position in the school difficult.

The next challenge the coaches identified was “professional development available for my position” with a mean score of 2.44. Only 32% of the coaches identified they have not received any formal training in academic coaching and 36% of the coaches indicated they have received formal training multiple times. Again, from the comments, it appears the coaches would like the training to be focused on the work they are doing and be allowed the release time to participate in the training. This was a concern identified by McCollough (2007) as that study found that coaches need professional development for leadership and coaching skills. Also, Noonan and Hanson (1999) stated that teacher leadership is sustainable only if someone accepts responsibility for its development.

The challenges “willingness of teachers to collaborate with the coach” and “providing feedback that is constructive and received” were the next two challenges identified by the coaches with mean scores of 2.25 and 2.16 respectively. These two challenges have some similarities as they directly address interactions between the teacher and coach. In McCollough’s (2007) study, coaches expressed that seasoned faculty were sometimes resistant to change and that the coaches were not always welcome in some classrooms. With both of these challenges scoring below the mean score of 2.33 for all challenges, neither appears to be creating much challenge for the academic coaches.

The final challenges were “availability of resources to do my job”, “support of your role from teachers”, “support from school administration”, and “support from county administration.” Such low scores indicate the coaches do not feel these items to be much of a challenge to them as they complete their coaching duties. This is a good sign as Birky, Shelton and Headley (2006)

found that teacher leaders are seldom effective in their roles without the support and encouragement of their administrator and Noonan and Hanson (1999) stated that principals have to be supportive of teachers having empowerment. With the support items resulting in low mean scores, it appears the coaches are generally getting necessary support from teachers and administrators.

Recommendations

Future policy. Since it was identified at the top of the challenges for the coaches, providing opportunities for formal advancement (i.e. titles, pay) should be considered. That may mean adding other levels into the pay scale established by the state. Another option is establishing this as a more recognized, defined position in counties across the state. Perhaps individuals in this position could receive position pay, like administrators do, in addition to their teacher salary since they have taken on additional responsibilities.

Another option that was previously considered was to offer a state-issued advanced credential titled Teacher Leadership for Student Learning (L. Bragg, personal communication, January 28, 2013). In the previous plan, the individual would take a series of courses to acquire the credential. This training could address professional development needs of the coaches and focus on working with other professionals and adult learners. This could be a requirement for the position and could also result in additional pay for the position. This is a position between teacher and administrator, with the pay of a teacher and some of the responsibilities of an administrator.

Future practice. Principals need to continue to support coaches where they exist and keep them focused in the classroom on instruction. Schools and counties could work to alleviate the challenges of having time to meet with teachers by paying more attention to the schedule of

the coach and that of the teachers the coach is working with during the school year. If planned in advance, they could have common meeting times. The teacher could be provided with a period devoted to working with the coach and/or other teachers in a collaborative or peer coach initiative.

As for the clarification of role or duties, this challenge could be eased by making sure all parties involved with the coach understand the responsibilities and expectations of the role. This can occur by having an orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year to introduce or re-introduce the coach to the school. The meeting could be held with county administrators, principals, teachers and the coaches. This would be an opportunity to ask questions among the group. A mid-year meeting may also be scheduled to check-in with the group and address any new concerns or questions. This challenge can be alleviated by taking time to proactively address the people, roles, and interactions.

“Professional development available for my position” was reported as a challenge for the coaches. In future practice at the state level, it appears it would be beneficial to re-institute a coaching cadre for trainings and professional support. The coaches would likely benefit from trainings that address how to work with adult learners, processes of continuous school improvement, and data analysis techniques. This initiative could also address the issue of role clarification and brainstorm ways the teachers and coaches may accommodate more meeting time.

Future research. As this study progressed, other ideas for additional research on the topic became apparent. Additional research could be done by surveying the teachers who work with a coach to identify the teachers’ perceptions of the coach’s strengths and purpose. Another perception would be to survey principals who work with an academic coach in their school to

identify the principal's perceptions of a coach's benefit to the school. Either of these could be done as a quantitative study with a survey. This would be similar to the study completed by Feldman and Tung (2002).

A qualitative study of academic coaches in West Virginia could be done to more deeply examine the responsibilities and challenges of the coaches. Through observations and interviews with the coaches, a researcher could become more immersed in the work of the coaches and acquire a greater understanding of what they do and how they do it. This could also include inquiry as to why coaches at one programmatic level view certain responsibilities or challenges greater or less than coaches at other programmatic levels.

Another interesting, and potentially beneficial, point of research would be to examine the correlation between student achievement and academic coaching in schools. This research would require careful examination of student achievement scores as well as the understanding of all the factors that affect student achievement. Isolating the impact of academic coaching on student performance would be a difficult task. Very limited research on this topic has been completed.

For this study, all academic coaches in the state were contacted. Some areas of the state had a larger population of academic coaches than other areas had. A study of individual counties or RESAs could be done to better understand why the position of academic coach is more popular in some school districts than in others.

As the data were examined more carefully, findings were identified that could warrant additional study. One finding was that less experienced coaches identified assisting principals with a project as a greater responsibility than more experienced coaches did. The second finding was that middle level coaches identified having opportunities for formal advancement as a

greater challenge than secondary coaches did. Further exploration into these findings could provide greater understanding of the work of the academic coaches in West Virginia.

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Appendix A

Matrix Showing Support for Survey Items from Literature Research of Related Topic

Research Document	Type of Research Conducted and Purpose
Birky, V. D., Shelton, M., & Headley, S. (2006, June). An administrator's challenge: Encouraging teachers to be leaders. <i>NASSP Bulletin</i> , 90(2), 87–101. Retrieved from George Fox University website: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/soe_faculty/1/	Document describes results of two studies conducted. Studies used surveys and interviews. The findings identify how principals can influence teacher leadership.
Burke, K. A. (2009). <i>The principal's role in supporting teacher leadership and building capacity: Teacher and administrator perspectives</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3344566)	Qualitative research study conducted for completion of dissertation requirements. Purpose of study was to examine the principal's role in developing teacher leadership and using it to meet school improvement goals.
Cornett, J., & Knight, J. (2008). Research on coaching. In J. Knight (Ed.), <i>Coaching: Approaches and perspectives</i> (pp. 192-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.	Mixed methods study using observations and interviews was completed. Authors conducted a study of 50 teachers and compared implementation of those coached to those not coached.
Cosenza, M. N. (2010). <i>The impact of professional development schools on teacher leadership</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3426693)	Qualitative research study conducted for completion of dissertation requirements. Purpose of study was to examine the effects of professional development schools (PDS) on teacher leadership.

<p>Feldman, J. & Tung, R. (2002, April). <i>The role of external facilitators in whole school reform: Teachers' perceptions of how coaches influence school change</i>. Boston, MA: Center for Collaborative Education. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED470680)</p>	<p>Mixed methods study incorporating coaching logs, interviews, and surveys. Report identifies teacher and principal perceptions of coaching in their school. Teachers and principals could see that coaches helped guide changes in a school.</p>
<p>Leithwood, K. (1997, March). <i>Distributed leadership in secondary schools</i>. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED407411)</p>	<p>Mixed methods study with three purposes: study the nature of teacher leadership in secondary schools engaged in restructuring, study the influence of the principal compared to that of teacher leaders, and study what areas of the school could be most influenced by teacher leadership.</p>
<p>Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2010, July). <i>Learning from leadership project: Investigating the links to improved student learning</i>. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. Retrieved from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf</p>	<p>Mixed methods study composed of quantitative data, qualitative case studies, and documentation review. The purpose of this study was to identify successful educational leadership and how it can improve educational practices.</p>
<p>McCollough, S. (2007). <i>Teacher leadership in standards-based reform: School standards coaches' reflections</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3287731)</p>	<p>Qualitative research study conducted for completion of dissertation requirements. Purpose of study was to understand roles and responsibilities of coaches.</p>
<p>MetLife, Inc. (2009). <i>The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Collaborating for student success</i>. New York, NY: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED509650)</p>	<p>Quantitative research study was conducted with follow-up interview phone calls. This study examined how principals promote teacher leadership in high schools.</p>

Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2003). <i>Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity</i> . Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Retrieved from http://annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/product/268/files/Coaching.pdf	Longitudinal qualitative study over six years interviewing coaches, teachers, principals, and central office personnel about coaching. This document included conclusions from literature and their own research.
Noonan, B. & Hanson, B. (1999). Can school-based teacher leadership work? <i>Education Canada</i> , 38(4), 30. Retrieved from ERIC database. (EJ582550)	Qualitative research (case study) of Saskatchewan Catholic Schools. The report explains how teacher leadership can assist with curriculum implementation.
Rutledge, L. (2009). <i>Teacher leadership and school improvement: A case study of teachers participating in the teacher leadership network with a regional education service center</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Texas State University). Retrieved from https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/4345	Qualitative research (case study) of teachers involved in a leadership network. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of teachers and principals as they shared leadership roles.
Truesdale, W. T. (2003). <i>The implementation of peer coaching on the transferability of staff development to classroom practice in two selected Chicago public elementary schools</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Loyola University Chicago). Retrieved from http://www.marzanoresearch.com/documents/William_Truesdale.pdf	Mixed methods study conducted using observations and coded journal entries. Study examined the difference in professional development implementation between peer coached teachers and non-coached teachers.
Wall, E. L. (2009). <i>Instructional coaching and classroom practice: Dynamic leadership for teacher development</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3342439)	Qualitative research study conducted for completion of dissertation requirements. Purpose of study was to understand the impact instructional coaches have on teacher practice and effectiveness in the classroom.
West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Policy 5000: Procedures for Designated Hiring and Transfer of School Personnel. 16 August 2013. Retrieved from http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/	Procedures for the hiring process of school personnel in West Virginia which includes provisions for teachers and administrators to be included in the process.

<p>West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Policy 5310: Performance Evaluation of School Personnel. 11 August 2014. Retrieved from http://wvde.state.wv.us/evalwv/</p>	<p>Procedures for the evaluation of school personnel in West Virginia.</p>
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Responsibilities

Item	Survey Item	Literature Reference(s)
R1	Model lessons for other teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches were rarely in the classroom modeling a lesson. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers need to work in an environment that emphasizes sustaining curriculum implementation. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches worked with teachers by modeling lessons.
R2	Assist a school principal with a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches serve as critical friends who help principals stay focused on tasks to complete. ➤ Leithwood (1997). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders perform administrative tasks.
R3	Assist a county leader with a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leithwood (1997). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders perform administrative tasks; as teachers have assumed more expended roles, their interactions with formal school leaders have been a point of interest for research.
R4	Assist other teachers with lesson implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers need an environment that sustains curriculum implementation.
R5	Participate in hiring decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MetLife (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified as a task completed by 67.1% of teacher leaders in study. ➤ WVDE Policy 5000 (2013). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes provisions for input from teachers via faculty senate.

R6	Act as an instructional leader guiding instructional decisions about standards and/or materials used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MetLife (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified as a task completed by 81.6% of teacher leaders in study. ➤ Neufeld & Roper (2003). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches may help schools examine their resources and develop leadership capacity. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Materials selection was the third phase of the teacher leadership project that was studied.
R7	Plan/implement operations of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burke (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders support a change initiative and get other teachers to also support it, but teacher leaders may not continue to emphasize support if other teachers resist. Teacher leaders expressed frustration without any authority. ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches lead school-wide reform. ➤ Leithwood (1997). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders share professional knowledge.
R8	Interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches assessed progress on benchmark tests. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Found that teacher leadership can promote curriculum implementation. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches provided professional development on lesson planning, data analysis, modeling and feedback.

R9	Assist teacher with student assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches assessed progress on benchmark tests.
R10	Conduct formal evaluations of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches expressed frustration that they had responsibility but no authority and wanted involved with evaluation. ➤ MetLife (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified as a task completed by 23.7% of teacher leaders in study.
R11	Acquire resources for a department or the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rutledge (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders work as resources for curriculum or instruction.
R12	Plan a budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MetLife (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified as a task completed by 68.4% of teacher leaders in study. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial responsibility is needed to support teacher leadership. Leadership teams had a small budget to manage within the leadership project. This financial aspect reportedly had a positive impact on the teachers.
R13	Assist other teachers with implementing new teaching strategies and resources (i.e. technology) into their lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cornett & Knight (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Found strategy implementation increased with coaching. ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers stated the coaches guided them in developing classroom practice. ➤ Truesdale (2003). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investigated impact of coaching on strategy implementation.

R14	Participate in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burke (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders participate in school-based decision making; principals seek their input. ➤ Cosenza (2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers no longer view site administrators as the sole source of decision making. ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches were involved in decision making at the school level.
R15	Assist with making a school schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches helped with altering instructional time. ➤ Leithwood (1997). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study found teacher leaders were more influential in school planning and organization than the principal.
R16	Observe teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches were rarely in the classroom observing. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches observed teachers.
R17	Conference with teachers about a lesson, provide feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches provided feedback after lessons were complete.
R18	Seek resources for classroom instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches need to help with anything to build trust and rapport with teachers.

R19	Provide professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leithwood (1997). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers may lead professional development. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches could provide professional development for teachers. ➤ Neufeld & Roper (2003). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need on-going, context-sensitive support to improve teaching and learning. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches provided professional development on lesson planning, data analysis, modeling and feedback. Teachers found the job-embedded professional development provided by coaches as a most valuable form of professional development.
R20	Assist other teachers with lesson planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches help teachers make decisions to improve instructional practice and design interdisciplinary units. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers need an environment that sustains curriculum implementation. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers planned lessons as they were guided by coaches.
R21	Assist teachers with implementing Next Generation Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches help teachers make decisions to improve instructional practice and design interdisciplinary units. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers planned lessons as they were guided by coaches.

R22	Work with school principal to build instructional teams in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Feldman & Tung (2002).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Coaches were involved in decision making at the school level.➤ Leithwood (1997).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Study found teacher leaders were more influential in school planning and organization than the principal.➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Teachers need to work in an environment that emphasizes sustaining curriculum implementation.➤ Rutledge (2009).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Teacher leaders work as resources for curriculum or instruction.
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Challenges

Item	Survey Item	Literature Reference(s)
C1	Willingness of teachers to collaborate with the coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cosenza (2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers believe they are empowered as leaders when collaboration takes place. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches expressed that seasoned faculty were sometimes resistant to change and that the coaches were not always welcome in the classrooms. ➤ MetLife (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration can lead to higher levels of trust and job satisfaction. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers and coaches valued the professional support available through collaboration.
C2	Support from school administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Birky, Shelton, & Headley (2006). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leaders are seldom effective in their roles without the support and encouragement of their administrator. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership requires professional support services; principals have to be supportive of teachers having empowerment.
C3	Support from county administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership requires professional support services.
C4	Support of your role from teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches were not always welcome in the classrooms.

C5	Opportunities for formal advancement (titles, pay)	
C6	Availability of resources to do my job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership requires professional support services.
C7	Time to meet with teachers and complete duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches and teachers have difficulty finding time to work together because of conflicting instructional schedules. ➤ Neufeld & Roper (2003). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches and teachers have difficulty finding time to work together because of conflicting instructional schedules. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers are committed to working with their students and have difficulty finding time for other professional activity.
C8	Professional development available for my position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches need professional development for leadership and coaching skills. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership is sustainable only if someone accepts responsibility for its development.
C9	Clarification of my role/duties as an instructional coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of a clear definition of the role of a coach is a challenge. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches can feel isolated from administration and teachers.

C10	Providing feedback that is constructive and received	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ McCollough (2007).<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Coaches expressed that seasoned faculty were sometimes resistant to change and that the coaches were not always welcome in the classrooms.○ Coaches need professional development for leadership and coaching skills.
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Demographics

Survey Item	Demographic Item	Literature Reference(s)
D1	In what RESA do you work as an academic coach?	<p>➤ Burke (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study was conducted at three high schools in an urban school district in southern California. All participants were from the same district. Demographics used to describe participants. <p>➤ McCollough (2007).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study was done in one large district (Duval County, Florida). All participants were from the same district. Demographic information was included to describe the setting and characteristics of the participants. <p>➤ Wall (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study completed in two middle schools examined how coaches impact instructional practice of teachers in the classroom. All participants were from the same district. Demographic information was included to describe the setting and characteristics of the participants. <p>Summary: Each of these studies was conducted in a single school district.</p>

D2	In what content area(s) are you certified?	<p>➤ Burke (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Content area was identified to describe characteristics of the teachers included in the study. Most of the teacher leaders were English teachers. <p>➤ Cosenza (2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study identified if participants have elementary certificate and if it is single-subject or multi-subject as part of participant description. Most of the participants (12 of 22) held multiple subject certificates. <p>Summary: The most common certifications were in English or elementary education.</p>
D3	For what grade levels are you certified?	<p>➤ Cosenza (2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study identified if participants have elementary certificate and if it is single-subject or multi-subject as part of participant description. Most of the participants (12 of 22) held multiple subject certificates. <p>Summary: The most common certifications were for elementary education.</p>
D4	What is your highest degree level?	<p>➤ Cosenza (2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified if participants have bachelor's or master's degree as part of participant description. All participants had a bachelor's degree, 10 of the 22 also had a master's degree. <p>Summary: Just under half the participants held a master's degree.</p>
D5	Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?	<p>➤ WVDE Policy 5000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NBCT is included as a hiring attribute. <p>Summary: NBCT is considered when hiring a teacher in West Virginia.</p>

D6	Do you still have classes assigned to you as a teacher?	<p>➤ McCollough (2007).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches in this study were full-time coaches as explained in the participant description. <p>Summary: Coaches in this study were not still working as teachers.</p>
D7	What grade levels do you work with as a coach?	<p>➤ Cosenza (2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducted study at two sites. One was a K-5 school, the other was 6-8 school. <p>➤ McCollough (2007).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches in this study all worked in elementary schools. <p>➤ Wall (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The coaches in this study worked with teachers in grades 6-8. This information was included in describing the participants. <p>Summary: These studies were conducted in elementary and middle school settings.</p>
D8	How is your coaching position funded?	

D9	What is your gender?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burke (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher gender was included in the demographics to describe characteristics of participants. Of the 15 teacher participants 12 were female, only three were male. Of the three principal participants, two were male, one was female. ➤ Cosenza (2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender of participants is included in the demographics. All teachers in the study were female. Male teachers who met the study qualifications declined participation. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The gender was included in the results as part of the participant description. The teachers in the study included 10 female and two male teachers. <p>Summary: Most participants in the studies were female. There were very few, if any, male participants in the studies.</p>
D10	What is your age range?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burke (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific age of teachers was included in the demographics of the study. Ages ranged 26-62 with the average age being 40. ➤ Cosenza (2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants' age range is included (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+). Most of the participants (14 of 22) were in the 40-59 ranges. <p>Summary: Participants in these studies were typically in the 40+ age range.</p>

D11	How many years have you been a teacher?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burke (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific number of years teaching is included in the demographics of the subjects. Years of experience ranged 4-34 with the average being 15. ➤ Cosenza (2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study includes range of years participants have been teaching (less than 5, 5-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, more than 25). The largest population (7 of 22) was in the 5-10 range. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study identifies the number of years each individual has been a teacher in describing participant characteristics. The teachers had to have a minimum of three years to apply for the coaching position. The years of experience ranged 5-29 years. ➤ Wall (2009). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The teachers were the main subjects interviewed; the number of years of experience was included in the results to describe the participants. The teachers ranged 2-8 years experience while the coaches averaged over 10 years of teaching experience. <p>Summary: There was a large range of years of experience. Most had at least five years of experience as a teacher.</p>
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D12	How many years have you been employed as an academic coach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study identified the number of years the individual has served as a coach to describe the participants. Three of the five coaches had one year of experience as a coach. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study identified the number of years each individual has been a coach to describe the participants. All participants have been a coach for six years at most. <p>Summary: Coaches studied had a fairly limited amount of experience as a coach.</p>
D13	Do you have a job description?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feldman & Tung (2002). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of a clear definition of the role of a coach is a challenge. ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches can feel isolated from administration and teachers. <p>Summary: Clarification of duties was identified as a challenge for some coaches in previous studies.</p>
D14	Have you received formal training as a coach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ McCollough (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches need professional development for leadership and coaching skills. ➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership is sustainable only if someone accepts responsibility for its development. ○ Teacher leadership requires professional support services. <p>Summary: Professional development for coaches is necessary to develop and sustain the role.</p>

D15	If the position is available, do you plan to continue in this job next year?	➤
D16	Would this position exist if you could no longer serve as an academic coach?	<p>➤ Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson (2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficult to find certified teachers in some content areas to fill teaching positions let alone coaching positions. <p>➤ Noonan & Hanson (1999).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher leadership is sustainable only if someone accepts responsibility for its development. <p>Summary: Difficulty finding enough certified teachers for teaching positions and maintaining sustainability of position.</p>
D17	Who completes your annual evaluation?	<p>➤ WVDE Policy 5310 (2013).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual evaluation of school personnel is required. <p>Summary: All WV school personnel are evaluated annually.</p>

Appendix B

Survey Instrument: Academic Coaching in West Virginia

The following survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Please answer the questions according to your experiences as an academic coach in West Virginia.

The following definition will be used for this survey:

Academic coaching occurs when an individual works regularly with a classroom teacher for the purpose of improving content knowledge and pedagogy.

All responses will be kept confidential.

Individuals providing email addresses at the end of the survey or who verify completion via direct email to *mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu* will have an opportunity to be awarded a \$50 Amazon Gift Card. Cards will be awarded to the 1st, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 100th respondents.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey; your assistance is much appreciated.

Academic Coaching Survey

Part I: Responsibilities. Please identify how often you complete(d) the tasks listed. At the end of the list there is a place for comments for you to elaborate on any of your answers. Please reference the responsibility number if making additional comments. For the frequency, use the following descriptors

- 1) Never – I have never completed this type of task
- 2) Yearly – I do this approximately once a year
- 3) Monthly – I do this type of task an average of once a month
- 4) Weekly – I do this type of task an average of once a week
- 5) Daily – I do this type of task almost daily

#	Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
R1	Model lessons for other teachers	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R2	Assist a school principal with a project	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R3	Assist a county leader with a project	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R4	Assist other teachers with lesson implementation	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R5	Participate in hiring decisions	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R6	Act as an instructional leader guiding instructional decisions about standards and/or materials used	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R7	Plan/implement operations of the school	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R8	Interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R9	Assist teacher with student assessment	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R10	Conduct formal evaluations of teachers	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R11	Acquire resources for a department or the school	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
R12	Plan a budget	Never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily

Part III: Demographics. Please answer the following questions about yourself.

- 1) In what RESA do you work as an academic coach? (select all that apply)
 - a. RESA 1 (McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming)
 - b. RESA 2 (Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Wayne)
 - c. RESA 3 (Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Putnam)
 - d. RESA 4 (Braxton, Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Webster)
 - e. RESA 5 (Calhoun, Jackson, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wirt, Wood)
 - f. RESA 6 (Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, Wetzel)
 - g. RESA 7 (Barbour, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, Upshur)
 - h. RESA 8 (Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton)
- 2) In what content area(s) are you certified? (select all that apply)
 - a. Elementary (multi-category)
 - b. Special Education
 - c. Math
 - d. Science
 - e. Reading
 - f. English
 - g. Social Studies
 - h. Elective course
 - i. Administration
- 3) For what grade levels are you certified? (select all that apply)
 - a. Pre-K
 - b. K
 - c. 1
 - d. 2
 - e. 3
 - f. 4
 - g. 5
 - h. 6
 - i. 7
 - j. 8
 - k. 9
 - l. 10
 - m. 11
 - n. 12
- 4) What is your highest degree level?
 - a. BA/BS
 - b. Masters
 - c. Masters with additional hours
 - d. Doctorate

- 5) Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 6) Do you still have classes assigned to you as a teacher?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 7) What grade levels do you work with as a coach? (select all that apply)
- a. K-4
 - b. 5-8
 - c. 9-12
- 8) How is your coaching position funded? (select all that apply)
- a. County Funds
 - b. Title I
 - c. Grant Funds
 - d. Unknown to me
 - e. Other: _____
- 9) What is your gender?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
- 10) What is your age range?
- a. Under 30
 - b. 31-40
 - c. 41-50
 - d. 51-60
 - e. Over 60
- 11) How many years have you been a teacher?
- a. Less than 5
 - b. 5-10
 - c. 11-20
 - d. More than 20
- 12) How many years have you been employed as an academic coach?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
 - f. 6
 - g. 7
 - h. 8

- i. 9
- j. 10 or more

13) Do you have a job description?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

14) Have you received formal training as a coach? If yes, answer with amount of training that best describes your experience.

- a. Yes, once
- b. Yes, annually
- c. Yes, multiple times
- d. No formal training

15) If the position is available, do you plan to continue in this job next year?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

16) Would this position exist if you could no longer serve as an academic coach?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

17) Who completes your annual evaluation?

- a. No evaluation completed annually
- b. Building principal
- c. County level supervisor

18) E-mail address: _____ (optional)

Appendix C

Expert Review of the Proposed Survey Instrument

Academic Coaches in West Virginia: Who They Are and What They Do

Directions: Please review the survey directions and instrument *Academic Coaching in West Virginia* (attached). The invitation will be distributed via email to all academic coaches in West Virginia public schools. Those invited will receive a link to a URL hosting the survey instrument.

As you review the documents, please complete the attached response form following the directions provided at the top of the form. You will be asked to consider the following questions as you review the survey:

- Are the instructions clear?
- Is the item clear and easily understood?
- Is the item directly related to the study and research questions?
- Is the item concise?
- Do the choices listed allow for appropriate response?
- Should any items be omitted? If so, please identify.
- Should any items be modified? If so, please identify.
- Are there items that should be added to the survey? If so, please provide description and rationale.

Study Research Questions:

1. What is the profile of an academic coach in West Virginia?
2. What are the responsibilities of academic coaches in West Virginia?
3. What challenges do academic coaches encounter as they complete their work?

Please contact Mary Lynn Westfall at mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu or (304) 677-8671 if you have any questions. Your assistance and input is valuable in improving the survey instrument. Please provide your feedback to mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu no later than DATE.

Thank you for taking the time to review this survey instrument.

Academic Coaching Survey Expert Review

Part I: Responsibilities. Please review each responsibility item on the survey and respond.

#	Responsibility	Clear & easily understand	Related to research questions	Concise	Appropriate responses provided	Keep, delete, modify	Comments, suggestions, modifications
R1	Model lessons for other teachers						
R2	Provide professional development						
R3	Assist other teachers with lesson planning						
R4	Assist other teachers with lesson implementation						
R5	Assist other teachers with implementing new teaching strategies (i.e. technology) into their lessons						
R6	Observe teachers						
R7	Conference with teachers about a lesson, provide feedback						
R8	Interpret data to plan instruction in a classroom other than my own						
R9	Assist teacher with student assessment						

#	Responsibility	Clear & easily understand	Related to research questions	Concise	Appropriate responses provided	Keep, delete, modify	Comments, suggestions, modifications
R10	Seek resources for classroom instruction						
R11	Assist a county leader with a project						
R12	Assist a school principal with a project						
R13	Plan a budget						
R14	Acquire resources for a department or the school						
R15	Participate in school-based decision making about programs, funds, and/or instructional practices						
R16	Assist with making a school schedule						
R17	Participate in hiring decisions						
R18	Conduct formal evaluations of teachers						

Part II: Challenges. Please review each challenge item on the survey and respond

#	Challenge	Clear & easily understand	Related to research questions	Concise	Appropriate responses provided	Keep, delete, modify	Comments, suggestions, modifications
C1	Willingness of teachers to collaborate with the coach						
C2	Support from school administration						
C3	Support from county administration						
C4	Support of your role from teachers						
C5	Opportunities for formal advancement (titles, pay)						
C6	Availability of resources to do my job						
C7	Time to meet with teachers and complete duties						
C8	Professional development available for my position						
C9	Clarification of my role/duties as an instructional coach						
C10	Providing feedback that is constructive and received						

Comments (please reference challenge number (#) that correlates with comment):

Part III: Demographics. Please review each demographic item on the survey and respond.

Demographic	Clear & easily understand	Related to research questions	Concise	Appropriate responses provided	Keep, delete, modify	Comments, suggestions, modifications
In what RESA do you work as an academic coach?						
In what content area(s) are you certified?						
For what grade levels are you certified?						
What is your highest degree level?						
Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?						
Do you still have classes assigned to you as a teacher?						
What grade levels do you work with as a coach?						
How is your coaching position funded?						
What is your gender?						
What is your age range?						

Demographic	Clear & easily understand	Related to research questions	Concise	Appropriate responses provided	Keep, delete, modify	Comments, suggestions, modifications
How many years have you been a teacher?						
How many years have you been employed as an academic coach?						
Do you have a job description?						
Have you received formal training as a coach?						
If the position is available, do you plan to continue in this job next year?						
Would this position exist if you could no longer serve as an academic coach?						
Who completes your annual evaluation?						

Appendix D

College of Education and Human Services

September 8, 2015

Dear Superintendent:

In partial fulfillment of the educational leadership studies doctoral program at West Virginia University, I am required to conduct a research-based study. The purpose of my study is to better understand the responsibilities and challenges faced by academic coaches in West Virginia public schools. The results of this study will provide perspectives from the individuals who have served in this capacity within the past year in the state. This information will provide information about the responsibilities of these individuals and the challenges they face.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you I will be contacting the academic coaches in your county by email to seek their participation in the study by completing an electronic survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes of their time. There are only 150 individuals in the state included in the certified personnel list as academic coaches, so their participation is important to the quality of the study. Participation is voluntary and there are no consequences for non-participation. Respondents may skip any questions they are not comfortable answering or may quit at any point and submit a partially completed questionnaire. Individual survey responses will be kept confidential. The survey results will not indicate the identity of the participants or their respective work sites.

Respondents are asked to complete the survey no later than October 5, 2015. If you have further questions, please contact me at mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu or (304) 677-8671. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Helen M. Hazi, Ph.D.

Professor and Committee Chairperson

Mary Lynn Westfall

Doctoral Candidate

**DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION/LITERACY STUDIES
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS**

**P. O. Box 6122
Morgantown, WV 26506-6122
304-293-3441 Fax (304) 293-3802**

Appendix E

College of Education and Human Services

September 10, 2015

Dear Academic Coach:

In partial fulfillment of the educational leadership studies doctoral program at West Virginia University, I am required to conduct a research-based study. The purpose of my study is to better understand the responsibilities and challenges faced by academic coaches in West Virginia public schools. The results of this study will provide perspectives from the individuals who have served in this capacity within the past year in the state. This information will provide information about the responsibilities of these individuals and the challenges they face.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your participation in the study by completing an electronic survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Your participation is voluntary and there are no consequences for non-participation. You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering or may quit at any point and submit a partially completed questionnaire. Individual survey responses will be kept confidential. The survey results will not indicate the identity of the participants or your respective work sites. West Virginia University's Institutional Review Board acknowledgement of this project is on file. The survey will be available at [Academic Coaching Survey](#) from **September 12, 2015 through October 3, 2015**.

In appreciation for your involvement, all respondents who provide an email address at the end of the survey or confirm completion via email to mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu will qualify to receive a \$50 Amazon Gift Card. Cards will be awarded to the 1st, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 100th respondents. If you have been sent this invitation but did not work as an academic/instructional coach in West Virginia in the past year, please reply with a request to be removed from the list.

I sincerely appreciate your participation in this survey as well as the work you do with students and teachers in West Virginia. Please complete the survey no later than October 3. If you have further questions, please contact me at mwestfa4@mix.wvu.edu or (304) 677-8671. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Helen M. Hazi, Ph.D.
Professor and Committee Chairperson

Mary Lynn Westfall
Doctoral Candidate

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