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Using Cognitive Coaching to Facilitate Instructional Reflection

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USING COGNITIVE COACHING TO FACILITATE INSTRUCTIONAL REFLECTION

by

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Dedications

To my husband who supports me no matter what I want to accomplish. To my mother who always pushes me to be better and inspired me to become a teacher. To my brother who always reminds me to have fun. And to Riley, the greatest dog of all time. Without this group, I would not have been able to have fun with research and discover something new about myself and literacy coaching.

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Abstract

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Cognitive Coaching is a model (Costa &Garmston, 1985) designed to help teachers to become more self-directed in both their workplace and their lives. This single case study sought to analyze the effects of the Cognitive Coaching Model on instructional reflection. It also examined the coach's reflection on their strategies and how these strategies affected instructional reflection. One Reading Education graduate student conducted four coaching rounds with one veteran teacher who was teaching preschool for the first time. Data included video recordings, observational notes, Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessments, and researcher journals. This data was analyzed using a comparison/grounded theory that used coding to identify emerging themes. The findings of this study indicated that the use of Cognitive Coaching facilitated instructional reflection that led to instructional change. It was determined that questioning, paraphrasing, and remaining non-judgmental when summarizing observations allowed the teacher to draw conclusions about their instruction and seek to change it for the better. It was also discovered that coaching suggestions could lead to a lack of reflection. The implication of this study supports school districts implementing Cognitive Coaching Model because of its benefits to both staff and students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A Coaching Moment

Walking into the preschool classroom, Jean Marie is sitting with a student helping them to create the letter M. All around students are in their centers exploring letters, building with blocks, or playing in the kitchen. In a few minutes the sound of Jean Marie's bell will chime signaling the time for special.

As the students leave the room Jean Marie and I sit down to begin a coaching session. Jean Marie and I have been friends since my first year at New Hanover Township School District so many of our coaching sessions begin with small talk about our lives and how our day is going. The small talk begins to subside and it is time to begin recording our coaching interview. "So, what do you want me to say?" Jean Marie asks with all the support in the world dripping from her voice. At this moment I knew that a different conversation than the one I initially planned needed to occur. Jean Marie continued, "I really want you to look good for your study." I looked thoughtfully at Jean Marie, feeling so thankful for a friend in my school that is willing to do anything to make my day easier. "Jean, you do not have to say anything special. I want to know if this model truly works. I also want to know how I can become a better mentor and hopefully help you too," I responded carefully. At this moment it struck me that the model and style of mentoring that I was attempting was not something that was common in our school. This was new for me and new for my coachee. We already had built the trust that is so fundamentally important to the success of Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston,

2016), but we still had a lot to work on in other areas. Jean Marie looked slightly surprised that I did not want her to simply say something to make me look like the best coach in the world. She smiled at me and replied, "Okay, let's get this interview started."

Background to Proposed Study

School districts around the country are striving to keep teachers in their positions, while holding a high standard for the expectations of these same teachers. Teachers are asked to become many different things for all their students, all while maintaining these standards set by state guidelines. In order to maintain a sense of success within their positions, teachers need to be provided with more than just professional development, staff meetings, and articles forwarded through their emails. Teachers need to be able to talk to other professionals that are trained to help them to see their potential and to be a guide to their own instructional reflection.

In 2020, the *International Literacy Association* posted the report *What's Hot in Literacy.* This report covers many of the major issues that literacy and educators face. It also draws attention to the areas of literacy that are in the most need of rectification, according to teachers around the world. The past couple of years have been extremely challenging for teachers and what they require in their classrooms looks very different then prior to the pandemic. According to the report, 60% of teachers claim that teacher preparation is not preparing them to become effective reading teachers. This report goes on to state that 89% of teachers value research but feel as if they need more support (ILA, 2020). These issues are continuous and teaching in a post-pandemic classroom has only increased the need for effective coaching methods that can guide teachers through this tumultuous time. Coaching has been proven to help teachers overcome these challenges

and maintain a positive outlook on the many expectations placed on them. The Cognitive Coaching Model (Costa & Garmston, 2016) provides teachers with the tools they require to become the best version of themselves, coaching can increase their motivation and increase their knowledge of accessing their own inner expertise (Bair, 2017).

Literacy specialists have a unique opportunity to help teachers through these trying times. According the *International Literacy Association* Standard 6 Professional Learning and Leadership, "Candidates must demonstrate the ability to be reflective literacy professionals, who apply their knowledge of adult learning to work collaboratively with colleagues; demonstrate their leadership and facilitation skills; advocate on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities," (ILA, *Standards for Literacy Professionals,* 2017). To meet this standard literacy specialists can adopt any model that best suits their educational philosophy. They can use their advanced knowledge to guide teachers to be reflective individuals.

Using cognitive coaching in school districts could help to rectify this problem. A study conducted by Batt (2009) that looked at the value of Cognitive Coaching in monitoring and training in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) found that, "The difference in levels of implementation prior to and after coaching indicates that the coaching phase had a significant effect on teacher practice. After the coaching phase in the SIOP model, 100 percent of the teachers implemented the model to great extent, a substantial gain from 53 percent before their coaching activities" (p.1003). Cognitive Coaching is designed to help coach and coachee achieve their full potential in their professional and personal lives. Through the building of self-directedness teachers who work within this framework can find fulfillment in their instructional practice.

Story of the Problem

In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, a conversation between a coach and coachee is occurring. In this conversation the trust and friendship of both individuals is evident, but what is even clearer is the need for frequent reflective practice. Currently, in school districts there is a need for teacher support in many areas. This study will focus on the need for increased teacher reflection. Teachers, much like students, want to give answers that are correct instead of answers that are designed for inner growth. Throughout coaching sessions, it is important to keep the goal of teacher instructional reflection in mind. The teacher in this case study has seven years of teaching experience throughout many grade levels and views a coach/coachee relationship as something that can be correct or incorrect. This case study will attempt to show the growth of instructional reflection through the use of the Cognitive Coaching Model. It will show how teachers with appropriate coaching can reach their full potential and determine that they have the knowledge and skills within themselves to be successful in their classrooms no matter what curriculum they are told to teach.

Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive Coaching is a model designed by Arthur Costa and Robert Garmston (1985). This method is made up of a pre-conference, an observation, and a post-conference. The goal of each of these sessions is to help a teacher become more reflective and independent in their reflection. This is designed to aid teachers when they encounter challenges in their classrooms. When challenges are presented, teachers will be able to think through their previous experiences, knowledge of students, or professional development to create successful learning experiences.

Teachers meet with their coaches for pre-conferences and are guided through questioning to identify an area they would like to improve in an upcoming lesson. This conference is designed to help teachers predict challenges and create goals consciously with the non-judgmental guidance of a coach. The coach and teacher build a trusting relationship, so that the coach can act as a facilitator to help the teacher to become a self-directed educator. Both the coach and teacher agree upon an area in the lesson to be observed by the coach.

The next stage of the Cognitive Coaching process is the observation. During this observation the coach acts as the teachers' eyes. They collect data that was agreed upon during the pre-conference. This observation is non-judgmental, and the data collection is not seen as an assessment. Creating this expectation of the observation is imperative to the success of the teacher and coach relationship. The final stage of a coaching round is the post-conferences. During this conference the coach asked the teacher to reflect on the observed lesson. Through the use of questioning and data collection the coach guides the teacher to examine themselves and create instructional reflection. The goal is for the teacher to observe things they were successful in, as well as areas they would like to improve. Through these rounds of coaching the goal is for coach establish trust in relationship, process, and environment, the coach must purposefully interact with the goal of self-directed learning in mind, use strategies to create an enhanced sense of self awareness, and continue to grow professionally and mentally as a coach (Costa & Garmston, 2015).

Arthur Costa and Robert Garmston (1992), "believe that all human beings are capable of change, that we continue to grow cognitively throughout our lifetime and that we possess a vast reservoir of untapped potential" (p. 91). This belief was intertwined with the idea that teachers, when put into an environment that encourages professional growth and personal reflection, would become more aware of their instructional practices and work to improve their instruction through intrinsic motivation. Costa and Garmston (1992) quoting Frymier (1987) continued to argue, "the culture of the workplace often signals norms and values which may be more influential on teacher performance that are teacher training, staff development, or coaching (p. 92).

At its core Cognitive Coaching is designed to create professionals who are self-directed. One important aspect of being self-directed is to consciously reflect. The Oxford Dictionary defines reflection as serious thought or consideration (Simpson, Weiner, & Oxford University Press, 1987). Reflection is often viewed as something that is done when something has gone wrong or is in need of changing. Camburn and Han (2015) define reflection as a, "process that helps practitioners make sense and attempt to resolve dilemmas and challenges that arise in their work" (p. 514). It is usually encouraged by someone else and is not always an inherent personal practice. In the world of education there are no standards that state you must be a reflective individual to successfully teach. Though, research in the area of reflection consistently finds that it is vital to improving instructional practice. Some researchers have even split reflection into categories, reflection in practice and on practice (Camburn & Han, 2015, p. 514-515) "in practice" refers to in the moment reflections and immediate changes made because of this reflection, while "on practice" is done when reflection is completed after an event has

occurred. Reflective practice takes many forms all of which help educators to become more adept at their practice, especially when guided thoughtfully by a coach.

Research Problem

The current research on the Cognitive Coaching model is focused on how it is implemented with different professional developments. The research discusses the model in detail and strategies for coaches' to be effective. This case study will work to fill the gap in the research surrounding the model and the coaches that implement it. There is very little research on the model in practice in a public school district. There is also very little research on how the different strategies affect reflective practice in the coachee.

Purpose and Objectives of this Study

This case-study is an in-depth analysis of the coach and coachee relationship within a Cognitive Coaching model. This study will examine the reflective process of a coach working with a veteran teacher throughout their first year teaching a new grade level. The objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the reflective process of a Cognitive Coach as they work to become more self-directed in the practice.
2. To examine the effects of Cognitive Coaching in a teacher's instructional reflection during coaching sessions.

These objectives will be examined using research questions designed to give a comprehensive examination of Cognitive Coaching and reflection.

Research Questions

1. How does the Cognitive Coaching model increase/decrease teacher reflection?
2. Does a trusting coaching relationship impact a teacher's attitude toward reflection?
3. How does a Cognitive Coach reflect on their own coaching to improve their practice?
4. How will instructional methods change due to teacher reflection?
5. Will teacher attitudes about reflection change?

Significance of the Study

Teacher shortages and frustrations are heard throughout the media and schools everyday. According to the National Education Association (2022), 55% of teachers reported that they plan to leave education, many of them stated that they plan to leave earlier than their expected retirement. There have been multiple discussions about the additional pressures that teachers have been put under since the pandemic. Elizabeth Heubeck (2022) stated that it is not only new teachers feeling the pressures of the profession, but many veterans as well. Teaching in a pandemic has brought about unforeseen challenges, and often without the support of face to face coaching. The communities in schools have been forced to be separate and professional development has changed drastically. Many of the classes are being offered virtually, so the personal connection that is so important to teaching is severely lacking. This case-study looks to examine a relationship that is free to implement and can help to build deeper connections between colleagues. It studies the Cognitive Coaching model and how it can be utilized

to improve instructional reflection. This case-study will provide qualitative research in the area of Cognitive Coaching, analyzing the relationship between coach and coachee as well as the reflective practices that develop through the application of this coaching model.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis will be presented in five chapters. The first chapter included background information pertaining to the study, a description of the problem related to the study, the purpose of the study, the study's significance, and the organization of the thesis. In the second chapter a literature review will be presented on the relevant literature that has been used to inform this study and the practices examined. The third chapter will include the methodology utilized throughout the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter will analyze the findings determined from this case study and how further research can be done to improve Cognitive Coaching and reflective practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Teacher shortages have been seen across America. Teacher's share feelings of being unsupported or feeling like they are not improving their practice. The National Education Association (2022) conducted a survey to determine what teachers feel is the most difficult aspect of teaching and 91% state that the stress is stemmed from the pandemic. Some other challenges that teachers are reporting feeling burnt out. This burnout is attributed to a lack of staff in districts. Eighty percent of teachers have reported that they have taken on additional responsibilities to make up for the lack of staff. Cohen (as cited in Camburn & Han, 2015) believes that this achievement can be increased if teachers are given certain tools to succeed. Cohn and Hill (2000) elaborate: "Why reforms do not foster a deep integration of a new practice into teachers' repertoires is that professional development rarely provides teachers with opportunities to try out and reflect on their teaching in the context of their day-to-day work" (as cited in Camburn & Han, 2015, p. 512). Just like students need to have social interactions and peers to learn from, teachers require the same support. When providing teachers with the support of a mentor they are able to create a space to reflect and see in their classroom how their strategies are affecting their students. Mentoring also provides teachers with a safe, trusting environment that enables them to analyze themselves and their instructional practices.

Chapter two discusses the literature surrounding the Cognitive Coaching Model, teacher leaders and coaching strategies, instructional reflection, and early childhood development. This literature review begins with an overview of the aspects of the Cognitive Coaching Model that make it a unique model that can be used to facilitate teachers' reflection. Next, the strategies that are used in a cognitive coaching model are discussed, along with the roles of a coach within a school district. Focusing on the questioning strategies, and types of questions that can be asked to create opportunities for reflection. Reflection is discussed in length following the first two sections. In this section, reflection is defined, and its benefits in the educational system are analyzed. Finally, literature pertaining to early childhood education is discussed to determine appropriate developmental strategies required to teach Pre-K. This chapter concludes with a summarization of all aspects of literature and how the study of Cognitive Coaching Model can facilitate a positive reflective environment for teachers.

Cognitive Coaching Model Development and Theoretical Background

Arthur (Art) Costa and Robert Garmston developed Cognitive Coaching in 1985 as a strategy designed to increase teacher reflection through trust building, learning, and autonomy. This style of coaching is created to truly encourage teachers to become their best instructional selves through reflection and mentorship. In their most recent book *Cognitive Coaching: Developing Self-Directed Leaders and Learners* (2015) Costa and Garmston state, "Cognitive coaching is all about producing: self-directed learners and leaders with the disposition for continuous, lifelong learning" (p. 399). Becoming a self-directed learner and having a mindset to grow is a continued goal for educators and school leaders. The profession is built on the idea that education is forever changing as

new ideas are presented. Cognitive Coaching creates this environment, allowing teachers to grow with their profession. Combining their work experience with current research creates an environment where the students can flourish from teachers unafraid to be flexible and reflective of their teaching. This model was designed to be implemented in four phases consisting of a planning phase, an interactive phase, a reflective phase, and an application phase. At the conclusion of these phases, the goal for the teacher is to become more perceptive in their instructional behaviors and become purposeful in future instruction. The role of the coach in Cognitive Coaching is one that is very purposeful in changing oneself to become more reflective and in turn help colleagues to become more reflective as well. This style of coaching is designed to become natural to both the coach and coachee. When discussing the components of Cognitive Coaching Costa and Garmston (2015) write,

> Cognitive Coaching comprises a set of: 1) skills, 2) capabilities, 3) mental maps, 4) beliefs, 5) values, and 6) commitments, all of which are practiced and tested over time, and assimilated into a person's day-to-day interactions. They also become part of the coach's identity as a mediator of self-directed learning. Ultimately, Cognitive Coaching's values and beliefs become an outlook on life. (p. 448)

This style of coaching is a commitment on the part of the coach to maintain a love of learning and to continue to grow professionally throughout their careers.

A Cognitive Coach maintains fluidity in their identities while coaching. Costa and Garmston (2016) guide coaches by arguing, "No one cognitively coaches all the time, and it is important for a Cognitive Coach to know when it is appropriate and how each function differs from others" (p. 558). Coaching is done with the teachers' identities in mind. The coach should be able to question at each point what does the individual need, and how can the coach use different coaching strategies to help the teacher to become independent in their thinking. "A Cognitive Coach helps another person to take action toward his or her goals while simultaneously helping that person develop expertise in planning, reflecting, problem solving, and decision making" (Costa and Garmston, 2015, p. 570). The goal of this model is to create both coaches and teachers that are self-directed. Costa and Garmston (2015) define self-directed people as able to self-manage, self-monitor, and self-modify (p. 583). Individuals with these qualities have the ability to evolve as they experience situations. They should be able to use their experiences to change future outcomes. Self-directed people are successful because they are aware of how their perception of situations is imperative to their ability to grow as an individual.

Implementing Cognitive Coaching

Many studies have been conducted to examine the effects of implementing a Cognitive Coaching model when working with teachers. The overwhelming majority of these studies report that educators who have worked with this model have reported that they are more likely to continue their professional development, they have a stronger sense of student accomplishment and expectation, and the school community is stronger as a result of this model being used with school leadership.

Often professional development is not followed through after the presentation is given. Support must be provided to continuously apply new skills and to provide support when difficulties develop while putting a theory into practice. Batt (2009) set out to determine the effectiveness of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) with the use of cognitive coaching. Previous studies have been conducted (Echevarria & Short, 2001, Echevarria et al., 2008, Short, 2009, Sherris, Bauder, & Hillyard, 2007) and determined that the SIOP model was not held to validity without the help of coaching. This protocol worked to help students from culturally diverse backgrounds to achieve academic success, specifically English Language Learners (ELL).

The participants within this study were teachers who worked in diverse school districts and had the support of administrators to use both SIOP and cognitive coaching. These teachers would meet with their SIOP coaches periodically, the coaches' used the Cognitive Coaching framework in their interactions to, "...build trust and rapport, to stimulate reflection on teaching episodes, to mediate teachers' cognition through questioning, and develop craftsmanship, efficacy, and autonomy in applying the SIOP model components and features" (Batt, 2009, p. 1000). Due to time constraints this study adopted the cognitive coaching model in a way that allowed the coach to be a consultant and at times, assume the role of a teacher. The study claims this is due to the time, and it helped to personalize the needs of the teachers more effectively. Batt (2009) claims, "This modified tactic resulted in a personalized, explicit, and deeper teaching of the SIOP model, as it simultaneously streamlined the coaching phase in accordance with schools' limited time allocations for additional training" (p. 1004). The results of this study determined that the teacher's perception of ELL students changed. They raised their

expectations of these students and, "...attributed this shift in their perception of English learners' potential to cognitive coaching" (p. 1005). This study exemplifies the use of the cognitive coaching model alongside professional development initiatives in schools. The model can be adapted to the needs of the schools and still provide a supportive, reflective environment for teachers.

The previous study was an example of a framework that was more successful when combined with cognitive coaching. Bair (2017) looked to examine how individual teachers can use this model to pick their own areas of growth. Demonstrating that the use of cognitive coaching can be beneficial to both schoolwide and individual professional development goals, Bair discovered a need for a faculty development coaching model that, "...create(s) a supportive, inclusive academic community for all faculty" (p. 80). She sought to study this need in faculty development by studying twelve faculty members at a college of education in the Midwest. The participants completed eight days of training in Cognitive Coaching, attended meetings throughout the year, completed a coaching cycle with in-person meetings, participated in a study reflecting their teaching practice, and finally submitted their studies to a peer-review conference\. The participants were expected to choose an area of their instruction that they would want to improve. After making this selection they worked together on a collaborative self-study. Throughout the meetings the participants all coached each other, each person having an opportunity to be the coach.

This study was conducted over two years and in its completion 10 out of 12 of the participants completed the required assignments. The responses from the participants were extremely positive. They reflected on how Cognitive Coaching effected authentic

collegiality, mentoring skills, and teaching. As faculty members, each participant felt as if they gained knowledge about themselves as educators. They also found that "listening for the intentions of others was very different from listening with the intention to change others" (p. 83). This study found stronger ties between faculty members due to the positions they each held. No one was considered an expert trying to "help" the others. They all had to reflect on themselves and listen to their colleagues in a non-evaluative way, creating a sense of self-awareness. The participants reported that many of them transferred this style of coaching into their classrooms. Bair (2017) mentions, "interestingly, two participants who had implemented Cognitive Coaching strategies into their classrooms received university awards for excellence in teaching" (p. 84). This study exemplifies the idea that faculty that use this method of coaching are growing individually and developing trusting relationships with their students and their colleagues. Cognitive Coaching when implemented with college faculty can result in a positive change in environment leading to successful teachers who have an intrinsic motivation to succeed in their own professional development goals and improve their relationships with peers and students in their schools.

The benefits of implementing Cognitive Coaching are clear when working on improving professional development, creating trusting and supportive relationships amongst staff on the university level, and guiding faculty to become more self-directed in the classrooms. Knowing all these benefits and seeking to add more support to the use of Cognitive Coaching Rodgers, et. al (2014) examined how school leadership could be improved using this model. They discovered that their principals could use more support, especially the new ones. They began a program called L2L Leadership pilot program

which included Cognitive Coaching. The researchers wanted to know what changed throughout the school year while these new principals were involved in the L2L program.

As seen in previous studies that applied Cognitive Coaching methods, the participants, thirteen out of the fifteen volunteer coaches, completed the 40 hour/eight-day Cognitive Coaching program. There were 22 new principals who had approval and agreed to participate in the program. The study began with a casual meeting of both the coaches and new principals. At the conclusion of this meeting new principals chose which coaches they would want to work with in the upcoming school year. This part of the study is important because it allowed the participants to develop relationships prior to the coaching process. Trust is important in Cognitive Coaching and choosing a coach who the principals have met before and connected with helps that coach/coachee relationship right from the beginning. Each of the participants were given a questionnaire to complete focused on the L2L Leadership Program and Cognitive Coaching. The findings from this questionnaire supported that Cognitive Coaching was beneficial in preparing new principals for their roles in school districts. Rogers, Hauserman, and Skytt (2016), state, "The knowledge, practice, level of thinking, self-reflection, self-efficacy, and confidence of the new principals improved during the time of the pilot program" (p. 24). The researchers used the recommendations from the questionnaires to make improvements to their L2L Leadership Program. Using Cognitive Coaching alongside new programs introduced on both the university and school district level is proving to be beneficial over and over again.

The studies discussed previously focus on leadership positions and how perspectives on the classroom or school have changed. Edwards and Newton (1995) used

a quasi-experimental posttest only design to examine how Cognitive Coaching affects teacher cognition and behavior. This study sought to discover if Cognitive Coaching truly improved teacher's outlook on their positions.

Edwards and Newton's study had 143 participants in total, the participants were made up of teachers, principals/vice principals, and central administrators. Two different instruments were used in their study, the *Vincenz Empowerment Scale* and the *Teacher Efficacy Scale;* these surveys looked at individual empowerment and efficacy. The results of these assessments supported what many of the other studies have determined. Cognitive Coaching had an overall positive effect on teachers' efficacy. The results were not as conclusive when it came to empowerment. An interesting takeaway from this study is the fact that these results were seen to steadily rise over time. This indicates that Cognitive Coaching is not something that will improve teachers' perspectives immediately, but it is a process that grows with time.

Each of these studies explored a different area in education where Cognitive Coaching was applied. Demonstrating the improvements in the participants, programs, and schools. This method of providing support to staff members is so beneficial because it is tailored to the individual who is participating in the coaching. The coach and coachee relationship is different in every case, this is designed for people to create their own expectations for their academic and professional growth.

Coaching Roles and Strategies

Becoming a literacy coach in a school district often comes with new responsibilities. These responsibilities build upon the knowledge of a teacher, literacy coaches are often responsible for addressing the needs of students who are struggling in

the general education classroom. They might also address the needs of teachers, conduct professional development, or communicate with parents. A literacy coach at times may act as a bridge between administration and teachers. With so many roles and responsibilities that can be different depending on school districts it is important that literacy coaches have a philosophy and strategies that they can use no matter the situation.

One important aspect of being a literacy coach is to understand the role you are expected to play in a district and reflect on what challenges may be present within that role. Literacy coaches require a mindset that is non-judgmental when working with teachers in a district. “When literacy coaches appear to have power over teachers in terms of knowledge, teachers may resist their coaching” (Lynch, 2010, p. 201). A relationship built on trust and respect is invaluable when working with teachers. While maintaining the relationship with teachers, literacy coaches also need to be aware that one of their responsibilities is to help the teacher realize their abilities in the classroom and how they can be applied to different situations.

Teachers often address student challenges, but as a literacy coach the goal is to be the teacher’s support system so that they can in turn help the students (Lynch, 2010). Literacy coaches can accomplish this support in many different ways. Professional development is one way that many coaches help to support the teachers in their district. The professional development can be presented in a whole group traditional professional development, it can be grade level meetings facilitated by the coach, or the professional development could be study groups arranged to address challenges that multiple teachers are experiencing (as cited in Lynch, 2010). If teachers require support on a more

individualized basis coaches might observe lessons, organize student data, or provide coaching sessions.

When working with teachers individually coaches need to be very purposeful in their language and strategies that they engage. Shannon, et al. (2020) explored coach/teacher interactions within a Practice-Based Coaching partnership. In this study Shannon et al. discovered, "...coaches spent the largest portion of time engaging in conversations with teachers focused on reflection and feedback, followed by goal setting and action planning" (p. 229). The way that coaches engage in this style of conversation is specially designed to help teachers to build those reflective skills. The verbal behaviors of the coach directly affected the type of conversations the coach and teacher had. Shannon, et al. (2020) discovered that coaches are more often the initiators of conversations, but as the sessions progress the amount of initiation by the teacher increases. Along with observing who initiated these conversations the type of questioning done by the coach was also interpreted. The most common verbal behavior observed during this study was supportive *verbal feedback, constructive verbal feedback, and clarifying questions. The study showed that the use of probing questions and clarifying questions* elicited more teacher engagement and led to more reflective conversation (Shannon, et al., 2020, 237-238). Being aware of the verbal cues you are giving as a coach can help teachers to feel comfortable sharing their challenges. Being able to listen when coaching is a way to build a trusting relationship that is so important to guiding teachers to become reflective. Knowing when to summarize, question, and listen are skills that a coach is consistently practicing and reflecting on. "Questioning is a technique that coaches can employ to promote reflective thinking in teachers, which is more fruitful

than providing teachers with the right answers" (as cited in Hudson & Pletcher, 2020, p. 96). Using questions that allow teachers to elaborate on their thoughts are instrumental in creating an open environment for reflective conversation. During coaching sessions these questions paired with summarize will demonstrate to the teacher that their judgment on what occurred within their lesson is valid. Summarizing at times is acting like a mirror for the teacher to see where they could make changes and during the lesson next time, they will be more thoughtful in their reflection, because they have developed a confidence in their instruction.

Coaching is not without its challenges. This role which as explained before has many expectations, forces the coach to change roles many times throughout the day. Lynch (2010) found that some of the greatest challenges that coaches face are role definition, time allocation, teacher resistance, and administrative support. Being aware of these challenges can help a coach to define their role in their districts, have conversations with both staff and administration about scheduling, and build strong relationships with teachers. If coaches find their roles it has been seen that not only do the coaches feel more successful, but teachers feel more supported, and that leads to higher student achievement.

Reflection

Throughout the day teacher's make many instructional choices. These choices may have come from carefully laid lesson plans, in the moment observations, or on the drive home as they contemplate how everything they planned to do got completely changed around. These choices often are derived from reflection. The goal of Cognitive Coaching is to create teachers who can independently reflect. Fountas and Pinnell (2021)

discuss how language can be used to facilitate reflection. The choice of words that someone chooses directly affects the person they are speaking with. In the role of a coach an individual has to understand that "listening to better understand the teacher's perspective and strengths is an important part of fostering self-reflection, as is using silence to give space and time for reflection and processing" (p. 643). As a coach knowing how to facilitate reflection is just as important as understanding the coaching moves.

Defining Reflection

The following section will examine how the understanding of reflection and its implications on schools and teachers have been explored. Reflection is multifaceted and the research that has been done to define, understand, and explore this topic is extremely useful when seeking to understand how reflection is currently viewed in education.

When looking at reflection in schools the need to define reflection is apparent immediately. Reflection is not just thinking about something that occurred within the classroom and determining how to change it, reflection can be done with multiple metacognitive goals. Robinson and Rousseau (2018) sought to determine how critical reflection can allow teachers to analyze inequalities within the South African education system and seek to make changes. Thorough research into the definition of reflection was completed and they determined that reflection is multidimensional, especially when it is applied to create social change. Robinson and Rousseau (2018) go on to define the purpose of reflection as switching from short-term goal oriented to long-term goal oriented. They sought to examine reflection of, "...various traditions and conceptual orientations, with the critical lens providing a framing within a paradigm of social justice,

ethics and the greater good of society" (p. 2). This study discovered that teachers are not aware of the critical lens that can be gained through reflection. Many of the educators that were interviewed determined that reflection can be used to better a lesson, but they did not seek to use reflection as a tool to correct, "...moral, ethical, and social issues." (p. 4). Though this area of reflection is incredibly beneficial for schools, educators, and students it is not discussed often and its benefits to the community are at this point untapped.

The previous study determined that reflection is not being used to identify critical issues in South Africa the following exploratory study (Laverick,2017) sought to determine how secondary teachers define reflection and use it in their teaching. Laverick defined reflection through the lenses of Dewey (1910) and Schon (1987). Dewey defined reflection as having two clear elements, a problem, and a motivation to uncover the belief of that problem (as cited in Laverick, 2017, p. 57). Schon (1987) believed that there were multiple aspects of reflection, reflection on action and reflection in action. These two beliefs looked at reflection that was done after the action had occurred and how reflection was done in the moment to change the outcome (as cited in Laverick, 2017). From those two original theorists, Laverick determined that reflection is often affected by individual bias; he continued to explore the definition of reflection created by Rodgers (2002). This definition included four criteria for reflection. These criteria include the idea that through reflection individuals can change from one experience to the next, that reflection is systematic and can be based in "scientific inquiry", reflection occurs within communities and through personal interactions, and finally the value of reflection must be intrinsically motivated (p. 58).

Laverick (2017) conducted a qualitative study of five participants who taught in middle and high schools. The participants were interviewed and given surveys at the beginning and the end of the study. These surveys and interviews were heavily focused on the criteria mentioned above. The findings concluded that none of the participants used all four of the criteria for reflection during the interviews or surveys. Much of the reflection mentioned by the teachers was the most basic, "meaning making" level. This concluded that the teachers were reflecting on what students did and what that meant for their instruction. Only reflecting at the conclusion of a lesson and deciding what to change at the end of the lesson. They are adept at using reflection to make immediate changes, but many do not use any scientific methods to improve their reflection, nor do they use reflection with the community to limit their bias.

Both of the studies discussed have uncovered a major trend in the idea of reflection and its use in classrooms. The theme of using reflection to create meaning is common for educators but using reflection to overcome individual bias or rectify social injustices is not seen as an aspect of reflection to educators.

Using Reflection for Educational Reform

The previous section defined reflection and identified a need for teachers to use reflection in deeper ways than just meaning making. This section will examine studies done that sought to change teachers' use of reflection for instructional change. The studies investigated how reflection affects infrastructure, drives desired practices in school districts, and improves metacognitive awareness.

Camburn and Han (2015) identified that though many professional development opportunities are implemented to change instruction in school districts these changes are

not always maintained. Those professional development skills so carefully chosen by school districts are often left behind by classroom teachers for their own methods that they have determined are most effective. Camburn and Han conducted their study in a large urban school district with 887 members of the district being participants in the study. The outcomes this study sought to uncover were, "...teachers' engagement in reflective practice and self-reported change in English/Language Arts instructional practice" (Camburn & Han, 2015, p.517).

In order to measure these outcomes Camburn and Han used an eight-point scale measuring the teachers' individual reflection both in the classroom and outside of the classroom and they used self-reports of changes the teachers made to their English/Language Arts instruction. When they received the results of these measures, they determined that many of the teachers were participating in multiple types of reflection but taking that reflection to the next level and using it to experiment with new things in their classroom by critically analyzing their own teaching practices was noticeably less common amongst the teachers. One major trend that was noted in this study was that teachers were more likely to apply some kind of change in their ELA instruction when the professional development was directly related to their teaching, not to school wide initiatives. These changes and improvements in the professional development reflection was seen to have a greater success when there was a social component to the training, "...embedding teachers' learning experiences with ongoing social interactions with peers and instruction experts can provide powerful venues for teacher development," (p.527). This study concludes that the need for more than just professional development is imperative to the growth of reflection in educators. With the

guidance of social interaction alongside professional training, deeper reflective practices may be achieved.

Some schools have implemented tools, like the *Desired and Current Use of Constructivist Activities and Techniques* to help teachers to become more purposeful in their reflection. Eller, Polka, and Young (2019) focused on tools designed to guide educators to identify, "...discrepancy between desired practices and actual practices of various constructivist activities, strategies, and techniques…" (p. 8). This tool helped teachers to reflect on how they were including constructivist practices into their teaching, determining whether the "...student-centered approaches are most congruent with their current practices…" (Eller, et al., 2019, p. 8). By providing instruments capable of quantitatively measuring reflection in constructivist teaching practices, the researchers help teachers and supervisors to differentiate their instruction aligning it with constructivist beliefs.

Using this survey tool, teachers and supervisors are able to move toward a very student-centered approach to teaching. First, they are presented with a figure identifying the poles between teacher and student-centered instruction. Then, they are given a survey determining the amount of their instructional practice is already geared toward constructivism. After completing the survey, both supervisors and teachers can effectively reflect on the aspects that have already been adopted and the areas that are in the most need of improvement (Eller, et al., 2019). Previously it was discussed that one area of reflection in schools that is under practiced is to view reflection as scientific. By providing a survey tool to guide instructional reflection teachers can have more impactful moments of reflection.

Reflection has been identified as instrumental to successful teaching methods, but the question of how to make reflection meaningful is still being examined. One aspect of reflection in schools is the idea of *how* you think about thinking, or metacognition. In a five-week mixed-method exploratory study, Hughes and Partida (2020) engaged pre-service STEM teachers in professional development (PD) and Metacognitive Awareness (MA). "Metacognitive skills represent the synergy between knowledge and regulation of cognitive processes" (p. 6). An effective teacher should have the ability to have the knowledge to run their classroom successfully and appropriately, using skills gained from professional development. Effective teachers should also maintain the ability to monitor the thinking being done by students as well as themselves throughout lessons. The ability to think and elaborate upon information that is provided is a skill that will help teachers to effectively teach and apply personal experience to their professional development (Hughes & Partida, 2020, p.7). Professional development can be successful applied when presented to teachers who are metacognitively aware, Hughes and Partida (2020) argue that "metacognitively aware teachers will have improved learning capability, teacher practices, and their ability to help students develop their MA has prompted interest in teacher preparation and PD programs…" (p. 7).

To provide adequate support for both the professional development and metacognitive awareness along with the training, pre-service teachers were given cognitive coaching support. The participants in this study were university professors, instructors, mentor teachers, and pre-service STEM education teachers. The professional development provided to the pre-service teachers was focused on metacognition and how it can be used to better teaching practices, specifically in STEM. The teachers and

mentors were given training in cognitive coaching. The training included, "...the use of a lesson plan facilitation guide, a formal teaching observation protocol, and a post lesson discussion guide" (Hughes & Partida, 2020, p. 11). The pre-service teachers took the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory at the beginning of the study, as well as at its completion.

With the professional development in metacognition the study showed that the preservice teacher increased their knowledge of metacognition. Though this result was expected some other factors arose that contributed to how metacognition can be a useful skill for educators. During the interview process the mentors discovered that many of the preservice teachers required more instruction in pedagogical content knowledge, or the knowledge of strategies to implement to increase cognition. Metacognitive awareness was also found to increase the participants participation in the professional development, indicating a self-directed engagement in furthering learning ((Hughes & Partida, 2020, p.15). This study furthers the idea that reflection is a driving force to educational reform on all levels, whether it is in the classroom, on an administrative/district level, or in teacher preparation.

Reflection in education has been proved to create more effective teachers, though what that reflection looks like varies in terms of its definition. It has been determined that reflection is defined by its multiple uses and when it occurs. The goal of effective teacher reflection should be purposefully activated throughout teaching, whether it is occurring in the moment, or after the lesson is completed. Reflection should also be guided without individual bias and with the goal of addressing cultural disparities in the classroom/school system. This has been shown to happen with the guidance of a coach or

teacher leader, and explicit instruction on how to reflect. Reflection shows that it holds great power when used appropriately by educators that care.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood educators are a child's first experience with formal education. These classrooms and their educational standards are more exploratory in nature. Preschool students are expected to explore the world around them and build experiences. Veraksa (2011) believes, "child development involves the process of mastering cultural tools, which modify relations with the world and provide means to act on the self" (p. 79). So, when educating preschool students, the goal is to create an environment rich with experiences that the children can adapt to the cultural norms that are associated with moving into the next stage of development. These experiences provide opportunities for children to observe behaviors, engage in arts to understand social events, and use these artistic avenues to express their reaction to the social situations (Veraksa, 2011, p.79). Preschool teachers have the unique opportunity to create these moments for students and to create a positive learning experience for them.

Early Childhood Education Curriculum

To build positive experiences within a school for preschool age children play needs to be an integral part of the curriculum. The following section will discuss three different curricula and how their implementation positively impacts early childhood development. Each of these strategies and curriculum combine natural human behaviors and experiences and presents them within the preschool classroom. These experiences are designed to help students to become antiquated with their world and provide tools both

mental and physical that help the children to engage successfully with the world (Veraksa, 2011, p. 80).

One curriculum framework that is currently being used in Taiwan that supports the development of preschool age children is “aesthetic domain”, this is designed to help children to identify the natural world around them and identify the beauty that can be found. It is reached through the use of artistic creation. Students respond to their environment in an imaginative way, encouraging them to understand their emotions (Shih, 2019, p. 37). These goals can be met through the principals that are found within the aesthetic domain. Some of the aspects of the curriculum include, using the five senses to react to the living environment, play imaginatively, create using artistic mediums, respond to personal feelings, and create artistic expressions of these feelings (Shih, 2019, p.39). This type of education allows preschool children to respond positively to their environment while participating in exploring their feelings related to all of the new experiences they are exposed to when first entering school.

Using the natural environment and arts to engage and educate preschool children is used internationally. At the Kaleidoscope Preschool Arts Enrichment Program in Philadelphia, PA, “...the founders expected that children from diverse/ethnic minority backgrounds might benefit from a culturally relevant arts education…” (Brown, 2020, p. 15). The education provided to students engaged them in school readiness, emotional regulation, and managing physiological stress (Brown, 2020, p. 17-18). Providing students with opportunities to express themselves through the arts and engaging in the natural world has shown to provide major benefits to their development. Students who

have art integrated into their everyday curriculum exemplify school readiness along with emotional regulation.

Early Childhood Literacy Strategies

The subject of the case study in this thesis is a veteran preschool teacher. Designing a successful preschool classroom requires thoughtful research and reflection on what strategies are most effective for learning. Preschool teachers are given the responsibility to help build experiences, prepare students for school, and provide them with social skills. This age group requires a special balance of time and space to become curious learners. As a preschool teacher uses reflective thinking and the help of coaching, they can become successful in providing the best learning environment for their students.

At the core of a successful early childhood curriculum children need to be introduced to their environment in a way that allows them to express themselves and identify emotions that occur with the introduction of new experiences. Literacy at this stage of cognitive development needs to be taught in a similar fashion. The instruction should allow for natural discovery that includes social skills that will be utilized throughout the student's lifetime, with the teacher acting as a guide facilitating culturally sustaining conversations. Norling and Lillvist (2016) express, "...preschool teachers' knowledge and methods play an essential role in supporting children's language development and promoting emergent literacy skills in the preschool environment" (p.50). Incorporating play and talk into literacy instruction at the preschool level is instrumental in creating a learning environment that is both developmentally appropriate and engaging.

In Norling and Lillvist (2016) study preschool staff in Sweden was observed using literacy strategies in play situations (p.49). The study set out to determine, "how does preschool staff support children's concept development in literacy-related play activities and what are the characteristic features of these literacy-related events and concepts" (Norling & Lillvist, 2016, p.50). The play-related literacy activities could be dramatic play, spontaneous play, or teacher initiated. These activities were recorded and amounted to about, "...39 two-minute video sequences focusing on preschool staff social language promoting strategies" (Norling & Lillvist, 2016, p.51). In observing the teachers who held a belief that literacy strategies were guided through play Norling and Lillvist (2016) discovered that growth within themes of, colors/patterns, words/letters, pictures/photos, constructions/functions, narratives, and searching/finding events (p.59). These skills were guided by preschool teachers providing students both indoor and outdoor opportunities to play. The play was different depending on the activity and the amount of teacher involvement also differed. They discovered that, "when literacy play activities were child-initiated, the children were motivated and engaged on their own, based on their own experiences and interests" (Norling & Lillvist, 2016, p.59). Allowing children to have structured play to facilitate learning increases their engagement in literacy activities, preschool age children need time and guidance by teachers to find this independence, but these skills are built upon throughout their educational lifetime.

Another method that has been proven to encourage children to excel in literacy and maintain their cultural identity is "talk story". This strategy developed by Kathryn Hu-pei Au and Alice J. Kawakami (1985) encourages children to have natural discussions in small groups facilitated by the teacher. Though this study was conducted

on children in first through third grade this strategy can be applied in the preschool classroom. Au and Kawakami (1985) discovered, "by loosening their attempts to control *how* the children talked, the teachers described in this article were able to share control with them–to collaborate with the children in exploring stories and, therefore, in teaching/learning to read" (p. 406). This idea is supported by the previous research discussed on preschool curriculum methods that are designed to have students explore in their learning. This exploration can also come from the discussions around books. Initially rules are set that are culturally responsive and provide a setting where the students can feel comfortable in a discussion with their peers. Both the teacher and the students work together to develop these social rules, since the students are helping to create these social cues that are more likely to participate in the conversation (Au & Kawakami, 1985, p. 407). The goal of this literacy strategy is to have the students speak to each other, not just respond to teacher prompts. Students are able to develop their identities as "leaders" or students who are more outspoken. Au & Kawakami (1985) discovered, "children who are leaders, who are more liked and have many friends, are usually those who know how to involve other children in conversation during talk story" (p. 409). This strategy is providing the time and guidance to develop meaningful connections with stories and with peers. The students work collaboratively to control their small group discussions. The teacher acting as a facilitator determines and gently guides conversations through questioning to maintain on task discussions. This strategy can be extremely effective when students are developing their social skills and helps them to understand conversational cues that are unique to their school and culture.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an extensive overview of Cognitive Coaching and how it can be applied to enhance school districts, especially in a time when educators are feeling the effects of burnout more than ever. Teacher leaders and coaching strategies were discussed providing a solution for some of the support that teachers and other school staff members feel is lacking within districts. The use of coaches has been proven to be instrumental as reflection was defined. Reflection is another tool that can be used to help teachers to feel prepared to accomplish any challenge that they face in their classroom. Finally, an early childhood curriculum was presented, providing the coach with a framework for educational theory and best practices. Clearly, this stage of development is critical for children and having teachers who are well supported and reflective can give preschool students a foundation for success. In Chapter 3, the methodology used to analyze the case study of one preschool teacher who participated in one academic year of Cognitive Coaching will be detailed.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter is an explanation of the research design and methodology. It begins with the research paradigm explaining the qualitative nature of this case study. The procedural steps are explained, followed by the sources in which data was collected and data analysis procedures. This chapter also gives an in-depth analysis of the participant and school environment in which this case study was conducted. This chapter concludes with a summary of the research design and methodology.

This chapter explores the research design and methodology of this qualitative case study. This study uses interviews, observations, and reflection journals to examine the relationship between Cognitive Coaching methods and instructional reflection. A coach trained in the methods of Cognitive Coaching mentors a veteran preschool teacher throughout the course of a year. The coach and coachee participated in four full rounds of Cognitive Coaching sessions. Each included a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference. Video records of the conferences were analyzed using coding and the use of the Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessment (Costa & Garmston, 2014).

Research Paradigm

The research methodology for this case study was qualitative in nature and included interviews, observations, and a reflective journal completed by me. This study examined the relationship between coach and coachee from the same school environment. This relationship was examined, and trends were found that supported the idea that a trusting relationship can lead to openness in reflection of instructional practices.

Conducting a case study was the best approach to studying Cognitive Coaching and its impact on reflection due to the personal nature of conducting a study of this kind. The premise of coaching is building a relationship between coach and coachee, that foundation can easily be analyzed through a case study.

The study included recordings of the conferences; these recordings were invaluable in identifying the underlying themes that arose from the conferences. Shagoury and Power (2012) explain how examining videos can lead to identifying body language within a conversation that would otherwise be missed. This aspect of the research was extremely important when identifying how the coach's body language affected the coachee's responses to probing questions. When determining how conversations were important when demonstrating reflection, transcribing the videos was another useful tool for data analysis. Researchers commonly use this style of data collection to,'" ...illustrate key points in their research" (Shargoury & Power, 2012, p. 110).

Using the recordings and analyzing the relationship between the coach and coachee in a case study allows for the researcher to give a comprehensive narrative about the nature of the relationships that form in a coaching environment and how this relationship can lead to professional growth for both of the parties involved. Using the qualitative format of a case study allows for a close look at the variables such as body language, questioning types, and reflectional action. It gives the researcher the freedom to focus on the many variables that come up during a qualitative research and narrow them down to moments that naturally occur during the Cognitive Coaching process.

Procedure for the Study

This study took place throughout the 2021-2022 school year at New Hanover Township School District, which is a preschool through eighth grade school. This school is located in Wrightstown, New Jersey. The study included four full rounds of Cognitive Coaching. I acted as the coach in this study. My training in Cognitive Coaching consisted of a summer internship provided by Rowan University. During this internship I participated as both the coach and coachee for three full rounds of coaching. I then received feedback on the different aspects of Cognitive Coaching by two professors at the university. This training was very successful and inspired me to study its effects in my school district.

During the summer before the school year, I reached out to a colleague that I already had a trusting relationship with, Jean. She was teaching a new grade level and liked the philosophy behind Cognitive Coaching. She agreed to work with me on this case-study.

The Cognitive Coaching began in October. This provided enough time for Jean Marie to get to know her students and implement a routine. The four coaching rounds included a pre-conference, in-person observation, and a post conference. These conferences were held in either the preschool classroom or in my reading classroom. The conferences were each about 15 minutes in length and were video recorded. The four observations were each 30 minutes in length. During the observations I collected data on teacher talk, pacing, and student engagement. The collection of data was discussed during the pre-conferences and then reflected upon during the post-conference. After two rounds

of coaching, a survey was given to reflect and provide feedback to myself. I then altered my coaching to meet the needs of Jean Marie more thoroughly.

At the conclusion of the coaching sessions an informal interview was given. During this interview Jean Marie and I discussed Cognitive Coaching. We reviewed the themes found in the data and discussed how this model could fit into our school culture. This provided me with feedback on my coaching, as well as information that would be useful to future coaches implementing Cognitive Coaching in their school districts. In the following sections I will provide an explanation of the data sources and the data analysis.

Data Sources

I examined the responses to the interviews and observed the coachee's change in perception of reflection. I also examined how coaching changes through reflection. Patterns were analyzed to determine if the Cognitive Coaching Model was effective in creating a positive reflective environment for both coachee and coach. Materials for the study included critical digital tools such as laptops and video cameras.

Data Analysis

When approaching the data analysis for my study I began by reviewing the recorded coaching sessions. Initially these videos were analyzed with the use of constant comparison/grounded theory (Strauss, 1967). This theory allowed me to develop codes for the events that occurred in the recordings. Using these codes, I looked for emerging themes. I determined that the themes would be best found if I first observed all the pre-conference meeting recordings and then looked at the post-conference recordings. This allowed me to separate the two and see what themes were most prevalent at both stages of Cognitive Coaching. After the initial codes and themes were identified, I used event

analysis/microanalysis (Erickson, Lewin, & Hall, 1992) to look at the moments where I was using the strategy of paraphrasing and if it had a direct effect on my coachee's reflection. Finally, I analyzed my own coaching and how it changed through the use of quasi-statistics (Becker, 1970) this allowed me to see how my coaching grew throughout the school year. Using multiple methods to review my data allows me to strengthen the validity of my findings.

Context (Community & School)

New Hanover Township community is made up of two separate towns. The school is the center of many community events. NHTS hosts bingo for the students annually. This event is met with full attendance. The school hosts dances and sporting events. The community comes to the school for pizza nights and themed book festivals. In Wrightstown, New Hanover Township School is central to the lives of the community. This was even more evident with the closure of our school during the 2019-2020 school year. New Hanover Township School District perseverance and commitment to the community was most evident in our ability to reopen full time in person for the 2020-2021 school year. During the 2021-2022 school year at NHTS there has been a full return to in-person instruction. Virtual instruction was only offered on a case-by-case basis.

In the fall the community hosts a Trick-O-Treat. The local church has at least 20 cars come and deliver candy to the students. Halloween is a HUGE event in the community that I work. There are MANY haunted houses, from the student's perspective they believe this is the best thing their community does. The community also hosts a huge Easter Egg hunt. There is a separate hunt for students with disabilities, so it is sensory

friendly. The small community stands together and supports each other. Many of the events are hosted in Cookstown.

New Hanover Township School District is located in Burlington County, NJ. The school serves PK-8th grade students. There are 191 total students that attend New Hanover Township School. According to the *CCD Public school district data for the 2017-2018, 2018-2019 school years,* the teacher to student ratio is 7.83. The ethnic groups that can be found there are Black (12%), Hispanic, (20%) White (58%), and Asian (6%) (National Center for Educational Statistics).

The school district is separated into two towns, Wrightstown and Cookstown. The mayor of Cookstown's wife is the middle school science teacher. He will often be seen at school sporting events, or at the staff versus student kickball game.

The school is located next to the Fort Dix-Joint Military Base. At times the residents will be stuck in traffic due to a drill weekend, or training weekend. The sound of the *Star-Spangled Banner* can be heard at five pm throughout the town. You will often see people stop during this time to respect the song. The school is the center of the community. New Hanover Township School hosts a Christmas show that almost always has full attendance. The students in every grade perform the last song together and you can feel a connection throughout the entire community.

As an educator at New Hanover Township, I have met almost every child in the school's parents. I have met and I can name almost every student in my school as well. I have taught cousins, siblings, even some aunts and uncles. The connection between the families and the school is extremely close. Being an insider of the school community, I can respect the closeness of the families that attend my school. I attended a huge school

district myself; the feeling of community was not as strong as it is in New Hanover Township.

Participant and Their Classroom

The participant for this case study is named Jean Marie Alban. She has been a teacher for seven years at New Hanover Township School District. Mrs. Alban was a teacher in New York prior to coming to teach at NHTS. Her teaching experience ranges from teaching Kindergarten to teaching 5th grade. Though she enjoyed teaching all the grades, her heart is with the primary grades. Mrs. Alban often speaks about how she enjoys the excitement the kids share and finds teaching foundational reading skills to be more enjoyable than the comprehension focused standards of the older grade levels.

Jean Marie Alban's classroom is a reflection of her. Whenever you walk by or walk into her room you are immediately struck by the calming atmosphere. The kids are seated in groups of four to six square tables. All the materials in the classroom are easily accessible to the students. They have individual bins that have been going since the beginning of the school year. The room is designed for the students to easily move through different centers. *The centers include blocks, one teacher center, a kitchen center, technology center, library center, toys and games, and a writing center. The chairs and tables are centered around two base ten rectangles. These rectangles each have numbers within them for the students to sit in.*

The play center is located immediately when you walk in the door, there is an abundance of fake food, dress up clothes, and a small play kitchen. Students in this center are engaged in imaginative play. Across from the play center the toys and games center are located. This center includes many different toys, such as baby dolls, toy cars,

Barbies, and toy phones. Next to the toys and games center is the writing center, this center is filled with envelopes and cards for every occasion. It has all different types of pens and pencils. Students are encouraged to write letters, numbers, or just draw pictures. Fine motor skills are developed in this center. The writing center also includes a library. The library is comfortably designed with comfortable pillows and a lot of small stuffed animals to act as reading buddies. There are puppets for students to practice their reading or oral story skills. Behind the library and writing center is the blocks center. The block center is one of the most popular centers. It includes blocks of every size as well as the sand table. The blocks are used to build structures, but sometimes the building of letters can be seen as the students become familiar with their alphabet. Finally there is Mrs. Alban's center. Her center incorporates whatever skill is being practiced in a small group or one on one session. The students rotate to her and after meeting with her some skills are reinforced at a computer station run by the classroom aid.

This academic rich preschool classroom has already fostered so much learning. It is many of these students' first experience with school, after a couple of years of not normal. Mrs. Alban has worked tirelessly to create a safe, exploratory learning environment for her students and their growth and happiness are clear indications of her dedication to the students and her craft as a teacher.

In the next chapter the themes that arose during data analysis will be presented. These themes were found through video analysis, interviews, and coach journals. The themes that arose support that idea that Cognitive Coaching can be used to increase instructional reflection. They are also supportive of the use of journals to reflect as a coach on methods implemented and their effectiveness in encouraging teacher reflection.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

In this chapter a complete analysis of the data collected throughout the academic school year 2021-2022 will be discussed. During this year New Hanover Township School District was returning 100% in person for the first time since March 2020. The effects on both the students and staff were evident in everyone's eagerness to return to normalcy. This was a great year to have a coaching model, because of its positive effects on staff morale. The data was collected from eight video recordings of meetings between a coach and coachee. Four of the videos were from pre-conferences and the other four were from post-conferences. Discussed in this chapter is also the observational recordings of the coach during half-hour sessions. These sessions included observational data that was collected and reflected upon during the post-conferences. Journals written from the coach's perspective were also examined to determine trends in the coach's reflection of their Cognitive Coaching skills. These journals are accompanied by analysis of the Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessment (Costa and Garmston,2014), publicly available on the Thinking Collaborative website (Thinking Collaborative, 2022).

This chapter is organized with the initial theme of Jean Marie's value on natural learning environments being discussed to the themes from the pre-conference discussed first and themes discovered in the post-conferences following. Throughout these sections will be the effect of coaching moves on the coachee. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the themes found throughout the case study.

Coaching Relationship

Jean Marie and I have been coworkers at New Hanover Township School District for five years. Jean Marie was selected as a participant due to her newly obtained position as a preschool teacher. She had never taught this grade level before and sought out the coach for some support throughout her first year.

After explaining the Cognitive Coaching Model, Jean Marie seemed eager to begin the coaching process. Both the coach and Jean Marie held similar teaching philosophies. They both believed that learning is a natural social process. This was an important aspect of the coach/coachee relationship. Having an already established trusting and respectful relationship made the coaching sessions less intimidating, it also allowed for the coach and coachee to be comfortable presenting any challenges they were experiencing, without fear of judgment.

The following sections will explain the data analysis of the pre-conference and post conference themes. It will explain how the coach's actions and questioning are directly responsible for the facilitation of instructional reflection.

Natural Learning

From the first time I spoke with Jean Marie her philosophy for her preschool education was clear, Jean Marie highly values allowing children to learn in a natural environment. When meeting for her first pre-conference, Jean Marie felt the most important time of day for me to view was their exploratory morning time. Before even a minute of time in the conference she explains, "You do not want anything structured at that time so that they can have their own routine and work at their own pace." She is so clear that she wants the children to be in charge of their own learning and what they

experience in her classroom. In my journal I noted, “She said this skill (natural discovery) is important because so many of their behaviors occur during natural exploratory time.” Knowing this about Jean Marie I made sure to keep in mind her educational philosophy throughout my conferences. After observing in her classroom that very first time I wrote, “Never having taught Pre-K before I was amazed by the independent abilities of such young children. It was clear immediately that Jean Marie had created something special in this room, and I was going to be able to be a part of it.” I truly was amazed by the simple, natural environment she created.

Cognitive Coaching involves creating a trusting relationship and being respectful and open to different teaching styles is an important part of being a successful coach. I clearly held Jean Marie’s teaching style to a high standard, and it was a foundation for how our conferences were conducted. After the first two rounds of coaching, I asked Jean Marie if she thought trust was important in a coach/coachee relationship and in a very Jean Marie way full of blunt humor she stated, “If I do not respect the coach or trust them I would not feel interested or trust what they have to say.” So, to gain this trusting relationship, it had to occur naturally, just like in Jean Marie’s preschool classroom.

Pre-Conference Recordings

The goal of the pre-conferences is to help the teacher to prepare for a lesson. This is the time when instructional reflection is focused on anticipating any challenges that may occur during a lesson. Through the use of Strauss’s (1967) comparison/grounded theory, the themes that were discovered during the pre-conference coaching sessions were the impact paraphrasing had on increasing the amount of instructional reflection, the coachee’s strong beliefs in naturalistic learning, coach suggestions decreased

instructional reflection, and the use of probing or clarifying questions increased the coachee's instructional reflection.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a powerful tool in coaching sessions. These moments allow for the coachee to hear what they are saying and respond to their own thoughts. During the pre-conference meetings, the teacher is guided to create instructional reflection based on their previous experience within their classrooms. This reflection focuses on challenges that can occur or instructional strategies that the teacher wants to implement. In the second round of coaching, Jean Marie and I were discussing introducing letters to her students using the first letters in their names. She identified the goal that she would like to accomplish: she wanted the students to be able to identify the first letter of every student's name, which would be 13 letters. From the identification of the goal, Jean Marie and I began discussing how she could accomplish this goal. I implemented paraphrasing to continue to increase Jean Marie's instructional reflection. The use of this strategy was so successful that Jean Marie even reflected on prior knowledge she had about how many times a student needs to hear a word to commit it to memory:

> Jean Marie: At first, I just had them stand up when they heard their letter–letter sound now I have them match their upper-case letter to their lower case letter. So, I am going to do that for a while and then I will get more into that in the afternoon activity. Umm…and then we work on some counting and then there is a rhyming song. So, I just try to hit on all of those in the morning and their attention span is longer and longer, so I make it a little more as time goes on.
>
> Coach: So, it's a lot of songs and music…

From this short moment of paraphrasing, Jean Marie was able to gather her thoughts and return to her literacy routine. After this conversation she reflected on specific kids and

how they respond to hearing their letter, moving into that instructional reflection: “They are used to the routine they really like echoing the letter sounds…” It is clear at this moment that she is planning for the students' engagement in the lessons as well as their mastery of the goal she has set for herself. After discussing the reflection of the strategies for memory Jean Marie continued to reflect on her previous success with teaching kindergarten:

Jean Marie: I’ve always liked–in kindergarten I always used drills.

Coach: Okay, so the drill and practice is your style for them to really… I was interrupted as Jean Marie was eager to share how this style of instruction has always built confidence in the students she has taught in the past.

Jean Marie: Just because it is so routine too and they get so confident with it, so it builds their confidence too.

Coach: Building confidence is definitely important and important to you.

This coaching moment was a great example of how paraphrasing facilitates instructional reflection, the conversation was dominated by Jean Marie sharing her thoughts on her lessons and how her past success can be built upon in this new classroom setting.

Paraphrasing was found to be extremely effective in facilitating instructional reflection, and when it was not used the instructional reflection stopped. In Round 1 of the pre-conference, a conversation had turned to discussing assessment strategies. Jean Marie was very open on her assessments that she had previously done. Instead of paraphrasing what she said about assessments, I attempted to paraphrase, but then made suggestions:

Coach: So, do you think you could maybe build more there, is there

something you could do in that area of one-to-one assessment, because you told me earlier that this time is really one on one. Um…whether it is documentation or your observation.

Jean Mare: So, what's your question?

Coach: Like what do you think you could do, or that you would want to do to make it easier on yourself?

In this discussion it is clear that instead of simply paraphrasing or questioning I combined both strategies and did a lot of talking, leading to Jean Marie becoming confused about what I was asking. Due to the trusting relationship already established, we were easily about to get back on track, but I stopped Jean Marie from creating an instructional reflection. After this moment her body language changed slightly. She responded to me now in a questioning manner, looking for my approval rather than just trusting her own instructional skills. Jean Marie responded, "Hmm…I don't know, maybe I could do a weekly assessment of their name and see how they grow from week to week. Do you think that—I don't know if that would be a good time span, maybe every other week would be a good gauge?" Our trusting relationship was extremely useful here because when I began to paraphrase again, Jean Marie was already reflecting on assessments she already is doing in the classroom. She knew that I was not judging her or putting myself in a position where I knew more. That previously developed relationship was the foundation for her next statement that was extremely reflective. She reflected, "And really the goal isn't really to—well I guess the goal is to write their name, but really the goal is to explore and discover the other letters in their name while they are at it…" This is when I used just listening and body language to signify that I was following what she was saying. Realizing I had shut down her reflection earlier, my approach returned to just a guide in her instructional reflection.

As the coaching rounds went on during the pre-conferences, I implemented paraphrasing more purposefully and frequently. According to the Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessment (Costa & Garmston, 2014) in the first round of coaching, I rated my use of paraphrasing with a 2: aware but not evident in practice in the section paraphrase with emotion and a 3: with conscious effort in paraphrasing prior to posing questions (Figure 1). These were the only two areas of paraphrasing that I utilized during the first pre-conference. In my personal journal I reflected on listening and then paraphrasing, as I described what I did instead: "At this point I was thinking more about a measurable observation goal, rather than listening to my coachee. This could cut off that trusting relationship." I was aware after that first round that I played a huge role in facilitating that instructional reflection and that I needed to be in the moment of coaching and not just thinking about myself. By the third round of coaching the Cognitive Self-Assessment (Costa & Garmston, 2014) demonstrated that I was utilizing each section of paraphrasing to facilitate reflection, and I was doing it with automaticity (Figure 2).

Figure 1

Paraphrasing Self-Assessment Round 1

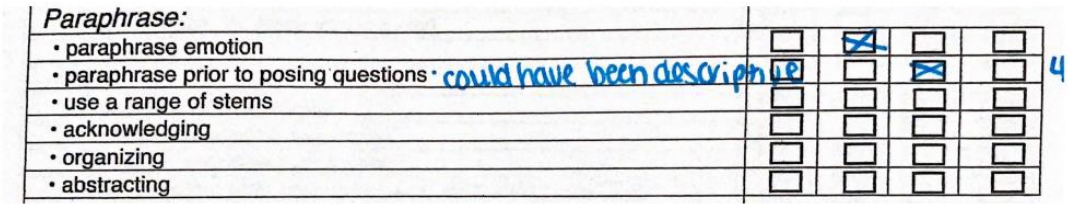
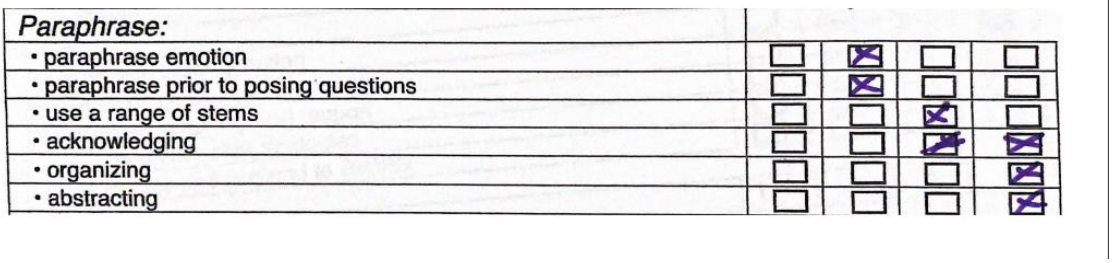


Figure 2

Paraphrasing Self-Assessment Round 3



Paraphrase:				
• paraphrase emotion	☐	☒	☐	☐
• paraphrase prior to posing questions	☐	☒	☐	☐
• use a range of stems	☐	☐	☒	☐
• acknowledging	☐	☐	☒	☒
• organizing	☐	☐	☐	☒
• abstracting	☐	☐	☐	☒

Clearly, the use of paraphrasing was a powerful strategy to allow Jean Marie to reflect. It enabled her to keep track of what she was reflecting on, and to build on instructional routines she already had in place. She reflected on her previous position as a kindergarten teacher and applied those successful strategies to her current classroom. When it was not used the shift away from openness was clear, but with an established trusting relationship returning to instructional reflection was easy for Jean Marie because she knew that I was not judging her. Paraphrasing was just one strategy implemented during pre-conferences. In the next section, a closer analysis of coaching language will be examined and its effects on instructional reflection.

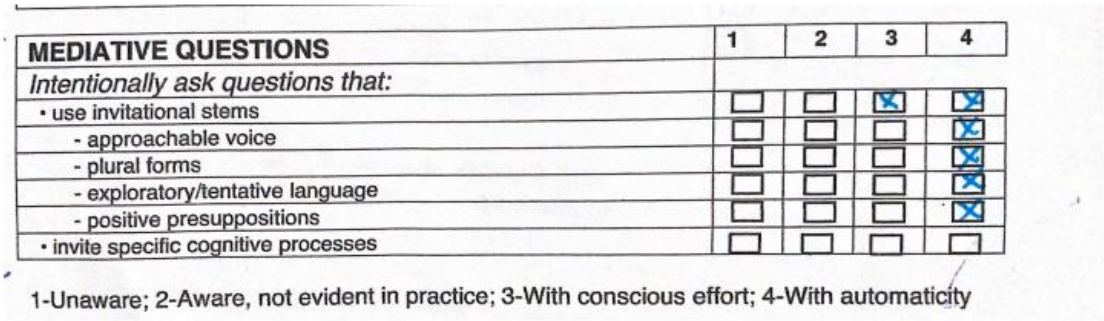
Coach Talk

When coaching, the type of language used and the way that questions are posed can create a comfortable environment for instructional reflection or the language can be suggestive, leading to a shutdown of reflection. Being very conscious of questioning and speaking is important when being non-judgmental and promoting thinking. The Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessment (Costa & Garmston, 2014) has a section for reflection called Mediative Questions; this section allowed me to reflect on the intentions of my questions. These sections included, use invitational stems, approachable voice,

plural forms, exploratory/tentative language, positive presuppositions, and invite specific cognitive processes. It is clear from the reflection I was very purposeful in this area (Figure 3). I was clearly aware of the expectations of asking these questions and throughout each pre-conferences questioning was present and utilized to increase reflection. In Figure 4 through Figure 6, my self-assessment indicated that I was questioning, “with conscious effort” and “with automaticity”.

Figure 3

Round 1 Pre-Conference

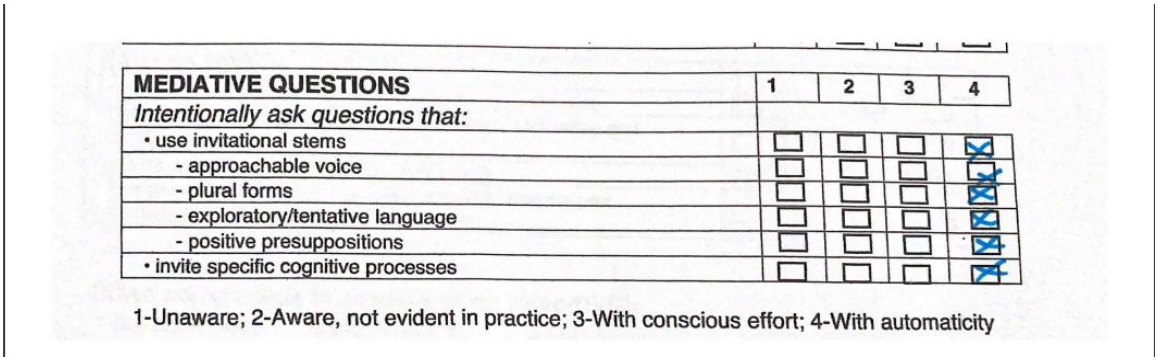


MEDIATIVE QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
Intentionally ask questions that:				
• use invitational stems	☐	☐	☒	☒
- approachable voice	☐	☐	☐	☒
- plural forms	☐	☐	☐	☒
- exploratory/tentative language	☐	☐	☐	☒
- positive presuppositions	☐	☐	☐	☒
• invite specific cognitive processes	☐	☐	☐	☐

1-Unaware; 2-Aware, not evident in practice; 3-With conscious effort; 4-With automaticity

Figure 4

Round 2 Pre-Conference

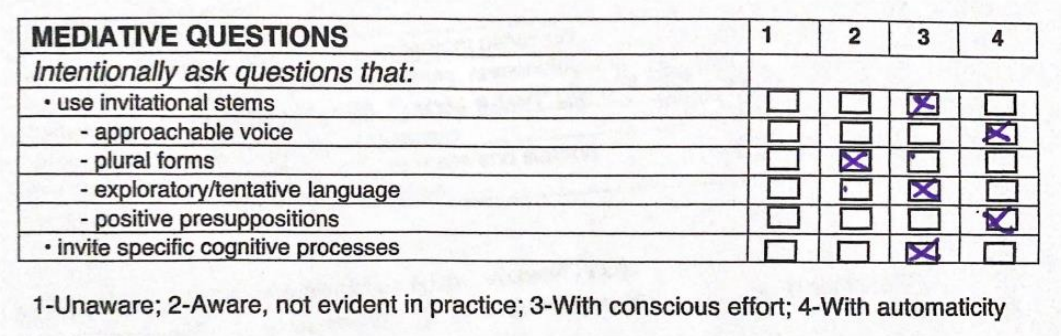


MEDIATIVE QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
Intentionally ask questions that:				
• use invitational stems	☐	☐	☐	☒
- approachable voice	☐	☐	☐	☐
- plural forms	☐	☐	☐	☒
- exploratory/tentative language	☐	☐	☐	☒
- positive presuppositions	☐	☐	☐	☒
• invite specific cognitive processes	☐	☐	☐	☒

1-Unaware; 2-Aware, not evident in practice; 3-With conscious effort; 4-With automaticity

Figure 5

Round 3 Pre-Conference

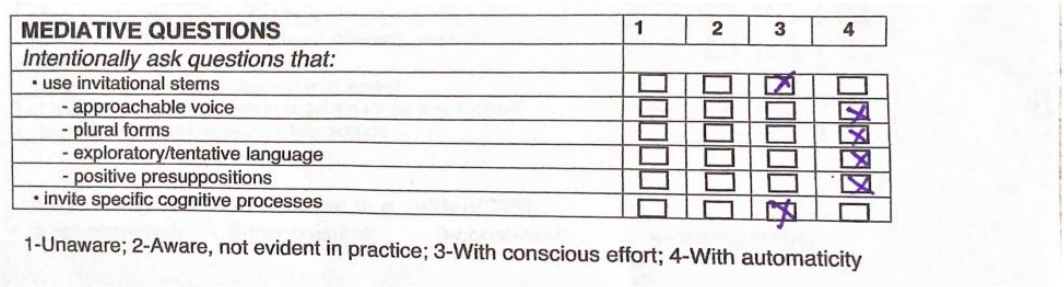


MEDIATIVE QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
Intentionally ask questions that:				
• use invitational stems	☐	☐	☒	☐
- approachable voice	☐	☐	☐	☒
- plural forms	☐	☒	☐	☐
- exploratory/tentative language	☐	☐	☒	☐
- positive presuppositions	☐	☐	☐	☒
• invite specific cognitive processes	☐	☐	☒	☐

1-Unaware; 2-Aware, not evident in practice; 3-With conscious effort; 4-With automaticity

Figure 6

Round 4 Pre-Conference



MEDIATIVE QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
Intentionally ask questions that:				
• use invitational stems	☐	☐	☒	☐
- approachable voice	☐	☐	☐	☒
- plural forms	☐	☐	☐	☒
- exploratory/tentative language	☐	☐	☐	☒
- positive presuppositions	☐	☐	☐	☒
• invite specific cognitive processes	☐	☐	☒	☐

1-Unaware; 2-Aware, not evident in practice; 3-With conscious effort; 4-With automaticity

Questioning. Questioning is a useful strategy to implement to support a teacher's instructional reflection. Throughout the pre-conference coaching rounds, I used probing questions and clarifying questions most often. Probing questions were used to provide Jean Marie with the opportunity to think deeper about something she said. Clarifying questions were utilized to clearly define what Jean Marie was saying and to provide her with the opportunity to reflect on her instructional decisions more thoroughly.

In one of our first meetings Jean Marie and I were discussing her use of exploratory time in her classroom. When explaining their morning routine, Jean Marie was clear on the time being used for kids to naturally explore their classroom. They use that time to look at their own names, copy friends' names, or to copy numbers. She explained that at times she guides her students to activities that she thinks they would benefit from, but she really wants them to explore on their own. At this point I realized through her body language that she was searching for an answer, so I utilized paraphrasing followed by a probing question to facilitate that deeper instructional reflection that Jean Marie seemed to be searching for.

Coach:	So, where would you think your kids would—you said that you really are having them discover things. Where do you think your role would be best encourage their discovery?
Jean Marie:	Well…that's what I am working on, like to know who to push and who not to push. You know, like if one of the kids is writing their name on their dry erase strip and they just write the T for Tom (psuedem), for him that's okay and like he can make up other letters or try to write the rest of his name. But other kids that I know can write their name. I expect to write their name so it's just like figuring out really where they are and who to push or not to push.
Coach:	Oh. Okay so do you have any formal way that you're documenting what their ability is with their names that maybe you could reflect on and look back at?
Jean Marie:	Um…well I have the names that they write everyday but then they erase them at the end of the day. I did one, one to one assessment during center time where I had them write their names, so I had a gauge as to where they were in September, October really.

By just using probing questions Jean Marie was able to reflect on assessments she was using during her exploratory time. She also reflected on her expectations for her students and how she differentiates these expectations even during her exploratory time.

In the Round 2 pre-conference, Jean Marie continued to demonstrate instructional reflection, this time as a result of a clarifying question. She mentioned to me that her goal for her students was to discover who knows most of the letter sounds. At this point, I reflected that it was clear Jean Marie was beginning to know the expectations of Cognitive Coaching and came to the conference with something she wanted to work on. I clarified by stating, "So all of their sounds or just their names?" This question was designed to focus Jean Marie's goal and lead to increased reflection that was purposeful to a very specific goal she set. This is a moment of building Jean Marie's self-directed behavior with coaching. She quickly responded, "All of them. So, there are fifteen kids and thirteen letters because two are J and two are L." I use a clarifying question to set a point for her assessment by clarifying, "Okay, so thirteen letter sounds would be the goal?" Jean Marie agreed, but it was clear from her body language that she was still thinking very deeply about what she expects from her students. By asking clarifying questions, I was guiding her to continue thinking about what she truly wanted her students to accomplish. This conversation continued with Jean Marie describing the routine of their letter activity. Listening to Jean Marie's responses and choosing the correct style of questioning guided her to become self-directed.

As the pre-conferences went on to Round 4, questioning was the most used strategy. Immediately upon reviewing the recordings from this conference, it was clear how comfortable Jean Marie and I had become with the Cognitive Coaching Model. The first few minutes of the session were reminiscent of how far her preschool students have come in just one year. She began to explain how now during their exploratory time, she is conducting emergent Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 1986). Jean Marie explained that this

time is just cumulative of everything they have covered this year. As she reflects on the students and their writing, she mentions how she uses the drawings to assess their maturity. The natural comfortability of coach and coachee is seen when she is discussing this because my clarifying question asked her to talk a little more about how she identifies maturity in a picture. Jean Marie goes on to take on a teaching role in the session, she describes the different stages of drawings and how they are developmentally appropriate. This interaction is empowering for Jean Marie because it shows her expertise with the students she is teaching. The conversation continues and Jean Marie reflects on the expectations of the drawings and their labels.

Jean Marie: You can always pick out the ones who are delayed because their pictures are so simple…

Coach: So, you're getting a lot of information just from the drawings that the kids are doing?

Jean Marie: Yeah. Yeah.

Coach: That's pretty cool.

Jean Marie: Yeah. Yeah. It is cool. And then labeling, like if there is a tree. If they don't write a lot I'll say, are you inside or outside I can't tell. The tr blend is kind of hard to—but you know they all write and draw a sun. Which is fine.

Coach: Okay–are they able to write the word sun?

Jean Marie: Yeah–mhmm. So, they can all do that so they start there, and they will all draw a sun. I'll be like did you label your sun?

In this coaching moment you see the relationship and how it caused her to be instructionally reflective. She was thinking about how they are labeling, how she was assessing, and which parts of this process might have challenged for her students.

Questioning when done appropriately is an effective tool to facilitate reflection during a pre-conference. Jean Marie was responsive and eager to explain and reflect about her day, and I listened carefully to what she was saying so I can pose clarifying or probing questions. However, questioning, when paired with suggestion, can sometimes lead to a lack of instructional reflection.

Coach Suggestions. Within the Cognitive Coaching Model (Costa & Garmston, 1994) the coach is meant to act as a mirror for their coachee. Through questioning, planning, and building trusting/ nonjudgmental relationships an individual being mentored using this model should become more self-directed and independent in their reflection. This idea was very prevalent when in my pre-conferences I made suggestions. These moments were not planned, and they were a result of still learning to be effective in implementing the Cognitive Coaching Model. Questioning at times can be leading if not presented properly. Jean Marie discussed her writing in the morning, and she asked me, “Should I have it more focused, or are they more motivated to write what they want to write about?” To this question I responded, “What is holding you back from giving those suggestions?” Jean Marie replies, “Stifling their creativity.” At this moment I should have taken a moment before responding, but instead I attempted to help her by questioning. I continued to try to guide her when I should have realized that her value in natural learning is more important to her than her students responding to a writing prompt. Due to this Jean Marie shuts down. Her body language becomes more closed off and as I am talking, she is just responding, “Mhmm.” At that moment I reflected as a coach and I fell back to paraphrasing something she had said before, to try to reinstate that comfortable open atmosphere that was just clearly there. Paraphrasing along with

wait time allowed Jean Marie the opportunity to continue her reflection in her way, not in the way I was trying to guide her.

It is easy as a coach to fall into the classic role of providing help, especially when a direct question is asked. To remain in a Cognitive Coaching mindset is a challenge, but when suggestions are made, the independence and the success of the coachee is decreased. To continue the discussion that is focused on instructional reflection remaining nonjudgmental and using questioning and paraphrasing is the best way to maintain open communication between a coach and coachee.

Post-Conference Recordings

The goal of a post-conference was to have Jean Marie create new meaning from her reflection, leading to some kind of instructional change. These meetings often began with a conversation reflecting on how the lesson went, followed by the presentation of the data I collected during the observation. These conferences tended to be slightly shorter than the pre-conferences, I noticed that I was very comfortable during these conferences, and I enjoyed having data to reflect on for Jean Marie. In my Cognitive Coaching Self-Assessment, I did accomplish many of the areas with more automaticity, creating an environment that Jean Marie can feel more comfortable to reflect in.

Two themes that arose as important to instructional reflection was my use of summarizing the observations while maintaining non-judgmental and Jean Marie's instructional reflection leading to her creating her own goals in her classroom without probing from myself.

Summarizing Impressions & Remaining Non-Judgmental

Post-conferences initially feel like they should be judgmental, especially when observation culture in our school district has always been that way. Observations in our district are most often conducted by an administrator and it comes along with a proficiency grade. Inviting a teacher into the classroom just to make observations for reflectional purposes is new for both of us. One important theme of the post-conference meetings was to remain non-judgmental while summarizing events that occurred within Jean Marie's classroom.

I connected to Jean Marie using my knowledge of her educational values, this created a non-judgmental environment, and this also increased her willingness to reflect on the lessons:

Coach:	When you're watching them is there anything that you really look for or want to see from them?
Jean Marie:	Umm…I want to see them busy. And I like to see them talking about it. A lot of them will talk with their friends or show one of the teachers what they're doing. You know just the difference between a number and a letter, some of them will write numbers and say, "hey look at my letter!" And it's a time to you know show them the difference between letters and numbers.
Coach:	Yeah, it is very natural. That is what I got when I was in there, I got that very natural learning environment and sharing.

In this moment I was able to tell Jean Marie something I witnessed in her lesson, and I validated her desire to have the students naturally engage in their educational world. This summarization of what I witnessed allowed Jean Marie to feel comfortable and even go on to explain that she wants the kids to have conversations with their teachers and peers. This non-judgmental summarization led to the presentation of the data collected on

student dialogue. As I explained the data to Jean Marie, I maintained that non-judgmental tone; I just summarized what I witnessed and how I organized that data by explaining,

> Coach: I observed a little bit, and I just wrote down some of my observations. So, if you want to take a look, the bullet points are what I saw, and it was really great to see you walking around and interacting and prompting. I saw a lot of positive reinforcement during that time. You were encouraging them and kind of guiding them. But I also observed a lot of the student dialogue that you were talking about.

This conversation was met with extremely open body language. Jean Marie was smiling and nodding her head, agreeing with my observations, and seemingly feeling good about the data that was collected in her classroom. This moment demonstrates the importance of seeing a coachee, without judging them.

Through the use of non-judgmental summarization, the theme of instructional change emerged due to reflection. Instructional reflection was found to be effectively facilitated through this openness in communication over observations.

Instructional Reflection Leading to Changes

The purpose behind providing coaching is to allow a teacher to become more independently reflective, so that they can make instructional decisions in their classrooms. In the initial interview, Jean Marie claimed to already be a reflective individual. When asked if Cognitive Coaching has changed her perspective on instructional reflection Jean Marie claimed, “Yeah because it has forced me to become more reflective. I would not have thought through the lessons as thoroughly.” She also stated, “I feel like I am pretty reflective to begin with, on my own. I feel like maybe the questions make me think of things I would not have thought of before or validate what I am feeling.” These statements were proven to be true when examining the data. As Jean

Marie was guided into instructional reflection, she easily began to make instructional changes. In the Round 1 post-conference, Jean Marie reviewed the data and began to reflect on the students' independence in the classroom:

Jean Marie: "Yeah, you said they are so independent. I think they are just like…I think it is just so natural for them to explore like that. After you left, and every time I see that they are really into something I try to just make them all aware of it and make it's a part of the time. They really love the dice so I got a big, huge thing of dice and every morning they can't wait to get their dice. I am just walking around watching them count it and they are doing a pretty good job at it.

Coach: Okay (nods head and demonstrates active listening)

Jean Marie: I noticed there are like three kids who can't ID their numbers and have trouble with counting. So I mentioned it to the aids and I am going to make sure we sit with them one on one and work on that number ID.

Coach: Okay so do that a little more in the mornings.

Jean Marie: But I am not sure if I want that to come naturally, I am not sure how hard to push it right now because I think by the end of Kindergarten if they can ID the numbers 1-10 that's fine and really we are only in November. I see them picking up stuff as they go along when they are really excited about it, so I don't want to push it on them if they are not ready for it.

Coach: Is there a way that you can naturally have them interact with numbers more?

Jean Marie: I don't know do I give them more time with what they have available to them. If I give them too many things, is it too many things like too many choices?

Coach: What have you seen when you taught Kindergarten? So, how did it go when you were introducing things in a Kindergarten setting?

Jean Marie: I felt like it was different because they had to master it. I feel like now they are more exploring it.

In this conversation there was a shift from Jean Marie simply reflecting, to her validating that exploratory time in her classroom, which was the standard that she should be meeting. In the beginning of the conversation, she was attempting to understand how much she should challenge the students. By the end of this instructional reflection, she had set a goal that it is exploratory time, and the students will learn the skills naturally.

In these moments I was mostly active listening and providing small questions when I noticed she seemed to be seeking answers. When the challenge of writing lower case letters was discussed, Jean Marie again was able to develop an instructional change independently just by being guided through her reflection. Jean Marie began her reflection by explaining the challenge she encountered when her students were matching the uppercase letters to their lower-case counterparts, but when they were told to write them independently, it became very difficult. To guide her reflection, I used a probing question strategy, I stated, "How do you think right now they are doing?" This question prompted Jean Marie to look off thinking about how many of her students truly were struggling. She begins to discuss that most of her students are able to write uppercase letters. She explains, "I would say most of them definitely have the uppercase because they talk about it all day long. Now the lowercase is tripping them up a little bit, so now this is what we need to work on." At this moment I wanted Jean Marie to continue to reflect until she reached a solution for the challenge that she identified:

Coach:	Last time we met you were going to check in and make a list to check in on what they know. Have you done any more with that?
Jean Marie:	I am going to evaluate after, I am going to do the lowercase for a little bit longer and then I am going to see who has upper case and lower case and go from there. I think I am going to give them like two more weeks with it.

Coach: Okay. So, you're giving them time and then you're going to reevaluate.

Jean Marie: Because I assessed them all in September/October and so I think after we are done with this routine like over and over, drill, drill, drill then I will see who retained it and who is ready to move on.

Coach: You had said you wanted to get a better idea of who had it. Now seeing them struggle without the visuals of lowercase letters…can you talk a little bit more about that? How could you help to push them further with that?

My intention was for Jean Marie to continue that reflection she began in the beginning. Using paraphrasing I facilitated continued reflection. When that probing question was asked Jean Marie moved to make an instructional change. She responded, "I mean I could scaffold and then put the lower-case magnets there and have them draw/write it. I will try that tomorrow because today was the first day I had them write it without a visual so tomorrow I will put the visuals up, and then take them away. It was super difficult and most of them just wrote uppercase letters again." Through paraphrasing and probing questions that facilitate reflection Jean Marie was able to come up with a solution to a challenge in her classroom.

In a post-conference combining questioning, paraphrasing, and data helped Jean Marie to continue to reflect, even when she was looking for a solution from me. Lessening my talk to just a short paraphrase followed by a question allowed her to see her challenges in a new way and discover ways to solve the problems using her previous experience in the classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter vividly explained the coaching moments that were instrumental in creating instructional reflection. Throughout both the pre-conference and post-

conferences Jean Marie's value of natural learning was integral to all of the coaching rounds. Recognizing her values helped me to build trust and support her through her instructional reflection because I knew what the basis of her classroom teaching style was.

In the pre-conferences it was clear that questioning in the proper moments can lead to instructional reflection. It was also noted that coaching suggestions during this time have a negative impact on instructional reflection. In the post-conferences remaining non-judgmental after observing in a class was one of the largest themes that contributed to a comfortable environment. Summarizing impressions of the lessons was useful to get Jean Marie to begin to discuss how she believed those same moments played out. This reflection from the data and summaries often led to instructional change in the classroom.

In the next chapter implications pertaining to this case study will be discussed. The implications pertaining to school districts, coaches, and teachers will be thoroughly investigated. Future research in Cognitive Coaching will be explored as well as the limitations of this case study.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Implications

Chapter four gave an in-depth analysis of the themes that were discovered throughout four rounds of Cognitive Coaching. It examined reflections made by a Cognitive Coach and how the coach's strategies can affect the instructional reflection of the coachee. The goal of this study was to describe a Cognitive Coach's reflective process and to examine the effects of Cognitive Coaching on a teacher's instructional reflection. The findings of this case study included the idea that natural, exploratory learning was the main educational philosophy of the coachee. The type of questioning and the uses of paraphrasing proved to be most effective in facilitating instructional reflection, during the pre-conferences of Cognitive Coaching. When participating in the post-conferences, it was discovered that providing nonjudgmental summarizations of the observations were the most successful in getting the coachee to be open to instructional reflection. The final theme that was found was that instructional reflection that derived from coach recorded data led to changes in instruction and goals being set by the coachee.

Costa & Garmston (2015) claim that, "teachers reported that Cognitive Coaching not only impacted them professionally, it impacted them personally" (p. 5197). Four rounds of implementing Cognitive Coaching with one teacher has created positive changes and made the educators examine their practice differently. Mentoring and spending time having educational discussions can positively impact the way that individuals work, how they relate to their coworkers, and even create a stronger connection to the profession (Bair, 2017). Due to the personal nature of a coach/coachee

relationship the values between professionals are shared. This leads to a school culture that values the ideals of the educators.

Findings and Implications

This study showed that the use of the Cognitive Coaching Model (Costa & Garmston, 2015) was in fact successful in facilitating instructional reflection. The rounds each allowed for different types of instructional reflection. The pre-conferences utilized a lot of probing and clarifying questions. These questions were extremely useful in allowing the coachee to reflect on challenges they might encounter during a lesson and plan for those challenges accordingly. Costa & Garmston (2015) argue, "mediative questioning is intentionally designed to engage and transform the other person's thinking and perspective" (p.1255). During the pre-conferences it was also important for the coach to refrain from making suggestions as these suggestions often led to the coachee stopping their reflections and looking to the coach as having more knowledge, instead of approaching the goal of becoming self-directed.

In post-conferences, it was imperative that the coach remain non-judgmental when discussing the observations. Coaches are responsible for providing summaries of the lesson, when this is being done it is beneficial to instructional reflection if the coach is understanding of their educational philosophy and remains non-judgmental throughout the conversation. "The coach's goal is to maintain trust and communication rather than change beliefs" (Costa & Garmston, 2015, p.3326). In post-conferences, it was also discovered that through the reflection facilitated by the observational data instructional change was made, often self-directed by the coachee.

Implications for School Districts

The use of this model would be extremely beneficial for school districts to implement due to its success in allowing teachers to anticipate challenges in lessons, and reflect on lessons so they can make better instructional decisions in the future. School districts looking to implement this model would benefit from conducting school wide professional development, discussing the goals of the Cognitive Coaching Model. Training would have to be provided to any teacher leaders who would like to become coaches. This training could be done through the Thinking Collaborative (2022) corporation. The training offered through this company is an eight-day training that takes place over an 18-24 month period. The first half of the training focuses on Planning Conversation Map and Reflective Conversation Map and the second half of the training refines coaching skills and the Problem-Resolving Map (Thinking Collaborative, 2022). Continued reflection for the coaches could be provided by administrators to create a stronger academic community. Administration would have to provide time in teacher schedules for conferences as well as for in class observations. If this time would occur outside of contracted hours, funding could be discussed for coaches. According to the State of New Jersey Budget Brief for the fiscal year 2023, additional support has been put in place to accommodate elementary and secondary school districts it states, "as part of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER), the Department received over $276 million in state set-asides" (p. 15). This relief money can be used in any way that a district deems necessary. By providing supplemental pay to coaches they would be providing mental health support as well as professional learning opportunities (Muoio, 2022). Cognitive Coaching has the potential

to create stronger classroom communities, where teachers feel empowered to make decisions in their classrooms with the support of a coach.

To maintain strong coaches in a school district the use of self-assessment would allow for the coaches to remain cognitive of their strategies. This assessment paired with a mentor would allow the coach to reflect on their strategies and the implications of their actions. Adult learner's need to be met at their developmental learning level. Having a mentor for coaches or having the coaches mentor each other could lead to a stronger community of coaches, benefiting teachers who participate in the Cognitive Coaching Model.

Implications for Future Research

Research into Cognitive Coaching should continue to be conducted. Due to this study being conducted with only one coach and one teacher a large sample size could be used to further support its effectiveness in creating instructional reflection. Conducting a study that focused across all the grade levels could examine the differences in instructional reflection among elementary, middle school, and high school teachers. A longitudinal study that looks at the development of teachers over a longer period of time would also provide more support to the model's effectiveness. These future studies could increase the validity and reliability of their findings through the use of triangulation and member checks. This would increase the trustworthiness of the model and provide researchers with information regarding how the relationships within the school district that are already established influence the Cognitive Coaching Model.

Limitations of the Case Study

The limitations of this study include the time constraints. The coach in this study worked as a Read 180 teacher, working with grades 3-8 in the school district. This study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a large limitation because the coach was often subbing because of staff shortages, due to COVID quarantine in the district. Another limitation of this study is that the trusting relationship between coach/coachee was already established prior to the study. Indicating that having to initially build that relationship could change the outcome.

Conclusion

In conclusion this case study sought to describe the reflectional practice of a Cognitive Coach and examine the instructional reflection that resulted from the coaching. This study determined that each part of the model had important roles in facilitating reflective practice for the coachee. It demonstrated that through building a trusting relationship the Cognitive Coaching model can create instructional reflection that is self-directed by the coachee.

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