FROM COMPLIANCE TO INSTRUCTION:

REFORMING ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

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Abstract

The academic achievement of historically underserved English Learners requires district leaders to make effective decisions about how to maximize the use of their fiscal and human resources to support instructional programs across their organizations. Historically, addressing the achievement of the English Learner student population has been equated with managing bureaucratic program components. This participatory action research study examined how leaders in a large urban school district strategically shifted the focus of their specialized human resources for English Learner Programs from conducting peripheral compliance activities to systemically addressing the quality of instruction.

The research examined how purposeful instructional coaching was used as a district reform tool for raising English Learner student achievement to build coherence, continuity and the commitment of teachers to more effectively deliver instruction. The findings suggest that district leaders should consider the following factors when implementing a shift from compliance-oriented behaviors to instructional reform roles: an approach to shift the behaviors, processes to create systems alignment that support the shift and access to interrelated professional support. This study concluded that school systems are deeply entrenched in how they support their English Learner instructional programs. In order to defy this historical trend, school districts need to develop a systematic approach to shifting the focus of human resources while eliminating organizational misalignment that does not allow the shift to happen.
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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Problem

As we examine public school systems today across the United States, the reproduction of inequitable student outcomes permeates our educational institutions with relentless force. Nearly one-fourth of U.S. schools are “failing” according to federal and state accountability measures, and a disproportionate number of these schools serve our nation’s socio-economically disadvantaged students of color (Basken, 2006). Historically underserved students continue to experience school in a way that sustains the notions of colonization and oppression (Yosso, 2005). An educational system based upon these involuntary pillars has yielded ineffective practice and poor results for so-called “minority” students.

Haberman (2003) argues that the extensive resources funneled into school systems are diverted from improving the education of children and instead used for the purpose of sustaining district bureaucracies themselves. This argument contends that the traditionally bureaucratic approach to education strategically produces dismal results for particular groups of students across the United States. Haberman insists that “every one of the urban school districts suffers from a disease that might appropriately be termed dysfunctional bureaucracy. The districts are the carriers that never die. The children and society at large are the victims” (p. 4).

The bureaucratic structure of school districts has created distance between the institution of schooling and the race, culture, and language of students. The hierarchical nature of districts has conveniently served the White dominant culture while intentionally
marginalizing others. Student performance trends indicate that the Latino English Learner population represents one of the most disenfranchised groups of students within our school system (Goldenberg, 2008). An exploration of the distance between this population and the institution of schooling could potentially guide us to change how they experience education in the U.S. Investigations of how schools and districts serve English Learners are essential, given that they are becoming the fastest growing segment of the student population at large.

States across the country are grappling with how to serve Latino English Learner students effectively. Educators are faced with the complexity of closing the academic, linguistic, and opportunity gaps for Latino English Learners. Specifically in California, the need is exacerbated given that Latinos represent the largest ethnic group within the state. In California, 3.9 million school-age children spoke a language other than English at home, more than 44% of the population (Rumberger, 2006).

Failing to educate our Latino student population has serious implications for our ability to compete in a global economy (Anderson, 2009). More importantly, our ineffectiveness in educating historically underserved groups will only threaten the social well-being of our communities across the state. Without question, this social injustice must cease and the transformation of our schools to better serve the Latino population must occur at an accelerated rate.

From a social justice perspective, educators need to urgently rethink their approaches to educating Latino English Learner youth. Analyses of how school systems are attempting to respond to the challenge of effectively educating Latino English
Learners are necessary. Evaluations of reform initiatives specifically targeting English Learners can support leaders at the highest levels to make more informed decisions about how to utilize their resources in a way that could drastically transform organizational culture, teacher practice, and ultimately English Learner student outcomes. Such analyses would support the construction of knowledge as to how to reform a system that dramatically under serves our Latino English Learner children.

Statement of the Problem

Practitioners recognize that many school districts in California establish departments and specialized personnel to manage the English Learner programs within their organizations as they face the formidable challenges of English Learner education. In fact, the establishment of these specialized personnel might be perceived as a reform initiative simply because resources have been allocated to monitor these specialized programs. This additional human capital is often funded by federal compensatory programs such as Title I and Title III within current legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act, and state funds such as Economic Impact Aid and English Language Acquisition. Many of these federal and state policies that support supplementary programs are presented as national commitments to educating economically and educationally disadvantaged children (Jennings, 2001). The following section describes how school districts have historically utilized these resources for compliance rather than instruction while also discussing the potential for change.

First, it is essential to note that decades of compensatory programs have not changed how well we educate our underserved populations (Borman, Wong, Hedges, &
D’Agostino, 2001). These programs typically impose an exhaustive list of requirements, particularly with respect to documentation and accountability. In response to these legislative policies, school districts often create positions for individuals to manage systems that address the imposed requirements. The allocated personnel help ensure compliance at the federal and state levels that are the farthest removed from the classroom. Organizations often develop strategic plans to address how the system will ensure the needs of the English Learner are met. Strategic plans that focused on supporting English Learner instructional programs typically delineate the processes for identification, monitoring, and placement. These plans concentrate on the administrative structures that establish guidelines and parameters for instructional practice relevant to English Learners. The argument is not that these processes and structures are unnecessary, but the consistent achievement gap among this population of students should motivate leaders to question the extent to which these compliance items alone have made a difference in English Learner student outcomes. Practitioners need to ask themselves if such plans, policies, and structures have yielded transformational results for Latino English Learner students.

Secondly, without abandoning accountability, educators need to shift the focus of their approach when it comes to addressing English Learners in the schools. Educational leaders must realize that districts and schools could be considered compliant with mandates while still failing Latino English Learner students. This reality indicates that compliance alone does not yield transformational educational outcomes. By recognizing this, educators can then reconsider how they prioritize the use of their human and fiscal
resources. Districts need to assess how much of their human capital is used merely to ensure compliance to accountability pressures within the educational bureaucracy. Implementing efficient systems to address mandates would allow for the human resources specifically allocated for supporting English Learner students to shift from compliance oriented behaviors to being more involved in changing the classroom. The change effort being examined within this study suggests that an explicit focus on high quality instruction will better ensure English Learner academic success (Olsen, 2006) and potentially change teacher practice and student achievement. This transformation can only occur if educators begin to dismantle the bureaucratic, structural components of English Learner programs that purposefully distract us from this explicit goal.

The enactment of federal and state programs has resulted in the creation of numerous positions for individuals that espouse to make a difference for the Latino English Learner student in the schools. As discussed earlier, the positions often focus on the administration and management of processes and systems that emphasize compliance and top-down mandates. This can be inferred even from the titles organizations use to label these positions. In the researcher’s current and previous school districts, district and site English Learner focused positions have been called “coordinators,” “managers” and “specialists.” The titles alone indicate that the positions focus on the coordination of programs and services, not necessarily the transformation of the educational experience of our English Learner students and the instructional practices necessary to do so.

Moreover, this hierarchical, managerial approach creates multiple layers between the community being served and those who work within the system. This formal
bureaucratic structure creates distance between the classroom and the district office. As a result, maintaining meaningful connections between the classroom and the district becomes a struggle. Those who begin to work within the structure of such systems are quickly indoctrinated to embrace an emphasis on federal and state mandates. These mandates are often assigned to the specialized personnel viewed responsible for English Learners within school districts. Paying attention to the programmatic components in isolation allow these human resources to stay further and further away from the organizational epicenter, the classroom. This presents a systemic problem if practitioners believe that the quality of the instruction the English Learner receives in the classroom is the most important variable in transforming their educational lives.

In the researcher’s own professional experience as a bilingual educator, even mandates about instruction are perceived as items on a checklist that are required, not necessarily evaluated for depth, quality, and impact. Educational leaders must begin to critically evaluate these levels of bureaucracy entrenched within our organizations in order to purposefully narrow the achievement gap for our Latino English Learners. The compliance-focused structures impose distance between our practice and the needs of the community of children for whom we hope to make change. These bureaucratic mandates serve as justifiable distracters that deter a focus on effective pedagogy and practice for English Learner students. In essence, the top-down mandates defeat the very goal they are striving for. District leaders also may consider how issues that concern English Learners then become compartmentalized as the specialized personnel experience the compliance indoctrination. This process leads to silos of individuals working on English
Learner services while the remainder of an organization may fail to hold themselves accountable for the achievement of this group of students since assigned human resources are perceived as “managing” the English Learner challenge (Council of Great City Schools, 2009).

The researcher within this study seeks to understand how to eliminate the discrepancy between the articulated goal of closing the English Learner achievement gap and the bureaucratic practices that organizations repeatedly implement as substitutes for doing just that. This alignment between resources and student outcomes requires that district office departments clearly articulate what Argyris and Schon (1974) have defined as a theory of action as they support school sites. If the resources allocated within a system for English Learners espouse the transformation of students’ educational outcomes, educators’ actions must be directed toward teaching and learning instead of compliance. The actions that unfold, also known as an organization’s theory in use, must systemically align with effective, research-based instructional practices that could potentially ensure the academic success of English Learner students.

In summary, the enacted processes and systems described above indicate a misalignment between what educators of English Learners espouse and what they actually do within school systems. Districts that intentionally eliminate this discrepancy between what is theorized and what actually is practiced in classrooms might be able to enhance as opposed to deter English Learner student achievement. Districts’ theory in use must shift from the sustainability of the compliant bureaucracy to the production of innovative practice for English Learners with a plan that addresses the complexities of
reform implementation. This means that reformers need to design initiatives that go beyond just rhetoric. Reformers must understand the pragmatic challenges they will face as they implement a systemic change effort. Regardless, as educational leaders attempt change, the design of reform initiatives must intentionally focus on how the educational system can impact what is most important: the teaching and learning that transpires in the classroom (Labaree, 2007).

The Nature of the Study and its Significance

Motivated by the research on reform and the role districts play in its development and implementation (Knight & Erlandson, 2003; Fullan, 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009), this study focused on how an organization reinvented the role of its specialized human resources, particularly district and site English Learner instructional coaches, to respond to the perceived inequitable educational outcomes Latino English Learners experience. This study provides an opportunity to examine one organization’s attempt at changing how it addresses teaching and learning for English Learners. Baker, Brown, Fouts, and Stroh (2005) describe this type of change effort in our national context as follows:

As the nation’s schools are attempting to meet the most recent set of public and government demands, educators and related professionals are seeking ways to effectively change the organizations responsible for student learning. Individuals within these organizations, whether a school or a district, are recognizing that in many instances it is the very nature of the organization itself that must be changed if students are to meet the new learning expectations. (p. 1)

This investigation specifically focused on the reinvention of staff assigned to school sites responsible for supporting English Learner instructional programs. The role of these human resources was redefined. Previously known as coordinators, these new
instructional coach positions were strategically trained to support schools in addressing the quality of instruction through a district wide instructional coaching initiative in a large urban school district in northern California.

The study highlights this explicit shift from compliance to instruction as it documents the interaction between centralized staff of English Learner focused personnel and target school sites that serve Latino English Learner students. A reform effort that focuses on instruction changes the traditional role specialized English Learner personnel often hold within organizations. Learning about how a district office department’s leadership articulated a new expectation of the English Learner instructional coaches, who serve the English Learner instructional programs across schools, can inform organizations attempting to rethink the use of their human resources. The researcher investigated how a district office department developed the sites’ instructional coaches’ capacity to address the quality of teaching and learning as they were expected to defy their traditional roles.

Recognizing that this shift may have implications for the quality of English Learner instructional programs and student achievement, an examination of this case can contribute to how centralized departments in school districts reframe their support of English Learners in the schools. Understanding that this instructional coaching initiative involved the development of a framework for how a department attempts change, the researcher examined the literature, and the initial impact of the reform initiative. The researcher explored the department’s influence on instructional coaches to potentially inform school districts of the implications when redefining these traditional roles as part
of their English Learner services and support to schools. More specifically, the study investigated a department’s enacted theory of action as they align the use of their resources with two espoused, comprehensive outcomes:

1. To support the implementation of effective teacher practice for Latino English Learners at schools.
2. To improve the quality of English Learner instructional programs in order to raise levels of student achievement.

The articulated goal of the coaching framework being implemented assumed that this shift from compliance towards instructional coaching for English Learners would result in an increase of the implementation of more effective teaching practices. As the context and targeted initiative was explored, the approach this school district took in its attempts to eliminate the inequitable instructional conditions that exist in English Learner classrooms became the focus of study. This study aimed to capture the approach centralized staff used as they lead and support the transformation of site English Learner coaches from compliance coordinators to instructional teacher leaders at their schools. The goal was to discover whether a purposeful focus on the teaching and learning that manifests in classrooms where Latino English Learners are being served has implications for creating more equitable schools for a historically underserved group of students.

In the history of schooling in the United States, the educational reform efforts, like the one being investigated, have been unable to penetrate the core of the institution. Reform initiatives have had minimal impact on how teachers actually deliver instruction and instead have actually had greater impact on shaping the rhetoric of education and the
formal structure of schooling (Labaree, 2007). Within the context of this historical trend, this researcher posed the following fundamental questions (a) to what degree can an English Learner reform initiative with centralized guidance and support impact teacher practice and the quality of instruction?, and (b) will this potential change in practice ultimately support more socially just educational realities for our Latino English Learner students?

The theory of action underlying this reform effort supposes that its focus on penetrating the classroom will yield more favorable results. If we defy the traditional administrative focus on the peripheral components of the district’s system, one assumes that paying closer attention to the nucleus of the organization, the classroom, will yield higher quality instruction and improved student outcomes. Given the cycles of failure that plague districts’ efforts in effectively changing instruction and the weak control administrators usually exert over teacher practice (Lortie, 1975), it becomes essential to examine not only the content of the systemic reform initiative, but also the approach used during early phases of implementation. Reform initiatives, like the one being examined, often face complexities at theoretical, pragmatic, and ethical levels (Noell & Gansle, 2009) because they ask adults within the system to change behavioral regularities that have become deeply entrenched within the cultures of schools. Previous investigations suggest that reform initiatives are heavily shaped by local factors (McLaughlin, 1989) and that the path of a centralized reform policy is not linear in nature (Knight & Erlandson, 2003). Such research on systemic change suggests that choosing, planning, and advocating for what needs to change is simply not enough. An awareness of the
complexities reform initiatives confront requires leaders driving change ideas to consider the varying contexts across schools, the resources for support, and the potential implementation issues if they hope to avoid the reproduction of poor reform results (Noell & Gansle, 2009).

As district staff attempts to grow its own framework for supporting English Learner instructional programs across schools, a reflective, collaborative design can inform the change effort itself. The study of this initiative could inform others who are engaging in the same struggle to effectively respond to the educational needs of Latino English Learners. If the effectiveness is attained and becomes systemically replicable, social justice and educational equity might finally become more of a reality for a historically underserved group within a school district.

Research Questions

Guided by the literature on systemic reform, the intent of the researcher was to explore the pragmatic variables that either accelerate or prevent the desired outcome of the English Learner instructional coaching initiative as the researcher engaged in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The use of a PAR approach allowed for a deep, collaborative examination of how these site instructional coaches changed as district coaches supported them through the beginning phases of the implementation process. The assumption was that a strategic and thoughtful shift from compliance to instruction would influence how schools serve Latino English Learners so that instructional programs become more effective at meeting students’ academic, linguistic, and social needs.
Having presented the general context of the study, this investigation addressed the following empirical questions:

**Overarching Theoretical Question:**

1. What theories in use operated as a district office staff shifted its focus from compliance to instruction through the implementation of a district wide instructional coaching initiative?

**Primary Research Question:**

2. How does the support of a district English Learner instructional coach and the professional development they provide influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness of site English Learner instructional coaches?

**Secondary Research Questions:**

3. What do the site English Learner instructional coaches experience as they make this shift from a compliance-oriented role to an instructional-reform role?

4. In what areas are district and site coaches experiencing successes in building instructional capacity? In what areas are they experiencing the greatest challenges?

5. What do the site instructional coaches deem the most valuable in terms of the district office department support?

6. What additional support do site coaches need in order to implement the instructional coaching framework?
The Argument

The synthesis of the literature provided the foundation for understanding how district office staff led the reform initiative by outlining the following tenets:

- how school systems contribute to the English Learner gap;
- how systemic reform has had minimal impact on narrowing the gap; and
- how instructional coaching could influence teacher practice to close the gap.

In understanding the urgent need to change how schools educate Latino English Learner students, educators should realize that without drastic transformation, school systems perpetuate the same inequitable results. Through an understanding of concepts fundamental to school reform, we can critically evaluate the elements of this initiative and adjust them to better align with their intended outcomes.

This research study is also based upon two assumptions about district leadership implementing reform. First, there was an assumption that district leadership can guide change using a less bureaucratic, hybrid approach based upon relational trust and building capacity. A blending of district office guidance with differentiation for individual site contexts may help create a useful framework for potential change (Smith & O’Day, 1991). As a district leads a reform initiative, it is essential to establish parameters that guide schools within the organization, but these parameters must still allow for enough flexibility so that site personnel can engage in some localized decision making based upon the unique conditions of their context. Secondly, there was an assumption that centralized support that models the two following behaviors could impact the personnel working closest with the students in our schools (a) shift in resource
allocation that supports instruction; and (b) a focus on building relationships. A shift from bureaucratic compliance to instructional leadership and relational trust between district and site personnel modeled at the highest levels may help cease district offices’ contributions to sustaining the existing Latino English Learner achievement, language, and opportunity gaps.

If the intended goal is to transform teacher practice to improve student outcomes, then educators must be able to engage in decision making and behaviors that support those outcomes at all organizational levels. In addition, educational leaders must look to reform strategies, such as instructional coaching, that focus on teaching and learning. These instructional reform initiatives must include structures and processes that support implementation, sustainability, evaluation, and continuous reflection of the on-going improvement cycle.

Terminology

In order to establish clarity, it is important to attend to the language being used to communicate ideas in the discussion of this study. When referring to the initiative being studied, the researcher used the following terms interchangeably: reform initiative, instructional coaching initiative, reform effort, and change effort.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature deepens the readers’ knowledge of the context being examined through multiple theoretical and applied perspectives. This section examines the research literature that addresses the three underpinnings of the theory of action that guides the attempted shift from compliance to instruction. The work conducted within this study is based on the three following tenets:

1. Individuals working with Latino English Learner populations must understand the urgency to respond to the Latino achievement, language, and opportunity gaps.

2. District leaders enacting reform initiatives designed to respond to this gap must ground their work in an understanding of the facets of organizational life that play out in any change effort.

3. If the intended outcome of a reform is to improve the quality of Latino English Learners’ educational experience, then the use of fiscal and human resources must directly support improving teacher practice and classroom instruction.

These underpinnings serve as the premise for reviewing three bodies of literature that explore the following topics:

1. The English Learner achievement gap.

2. Systemic reform, organizational theory and district leadership.

3. Instructional coaching as a reform initiative.
The literature synthesis intends to provoke thinking about the elements of this attempt to narrow the English Learner achievement gap within a large urban school district through an alignment between resources and desired outcomes.

**The English Learner Achievement Gap**

Understanding the implications of the English Learner achievement gap is a critical factor within the framework being implemented to improve both teacher practice and English Learner student outcomes. First, educators must consider the issue from the viewpoint of demographics. Although the numbers are not the only factor to consider, statistics demonstrate the urgency necessary if our school systems intend to educate a significant proportion of the population in the United States. Multiple perspectives could be used to frame this issue. These trends indicate that Latino students may be the majority of students sitting in our classrooms across the United States in the near future. The population simply cannot be ignored for a multitude of reasons that have implications for individuals, communities, and our entire nation at large.

English Learner students have been and will likely continue to be one of the fastest growing segments of the school-age population in this country (Fry, 2008). The Pew Hispanic Center (as cited in Fry, 2008) projects that the number of school-age children will increase by 5.4 million from 2005 to 2020, and this growth will comprise the children of immigrants. Immigrant populations are historically concentrated in six states (California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), but they are also quickly dispersing across the country in large numbers (Fortuny, Capps, Simms, & Chaudry, 2009). Demographers predict that in 20 years, one in four public school students will be a language minority student. Approximately 80% of these English
Learners in the United States’ schools are Spanish speakers. Moreover, the majority of Spanish-speaking students are more likely to live in poverty than children of native-born parents in the United States (Fortuny et al., 2009).

The performance trends of academic measures of Latino English Learners (EL) on a national level merit concern. On the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), fourth-grade EL students scored 36 points below non-ELs in reading and 25 points below non-ELs in mathematics when compared to their White counterparts. The gaps among eighth-graders were even larger: 42 points in reading and 37 points in math (Goldenberg, 2008). Approximately 46% of Latino students educated in this country graduate from high schools and fewer than 1% attain the opportunity to experience the highest level of education within a doctoral program (Yosso, 2006). Thus, as Latino students progress through the school system, the gap results in observable inequitable outcomes that affect life opportunities. Addressing these English Learner educational outcomes can create a more socially just reality.

In California, the issue requires a greater sense of urgency because Latinos are the largest ethnic group. Given that the quality of life and economic opportunity are strongly correlated with education levels in our country, the state needs to effectively educate this significant proportion of the population. The direct consequences of miseducating Latino youth have imposed devastation on Latino communities for decades in the United States. For example, Latinos, who make up only 13% of the U.S. population in 2000, account for 20% of those incarcerated in state or federal prisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). As educators continue to under serve Latino students in California, they must realize that
the majority of the population will likely: struggle with attaining a job, live in poverty, develop dependency on the welfare system, and increase the number of crimes that lead to incarceration.

The long-term implications of this changing demographic demand that policymakers and educators look beyond the Latino student achievement gap. These factors require that our government and school systems across the state and nation begin to address the educational debt that has accumulated for underserved communities. This educational debt is owed to communities of color after centuries of intentionally denied access to a high quality, equitable educational system that impacts the quality of their lives (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This section has illustrated the extent of the English Learner achievement gap. The next section addresses the organizational perspective guiding this study.

**Systemic Reform, Organizational Theory, and District Leadership**

An understanding of how organizations attempt change is foundational to this study. Many researchers have defined the concept of systemic reform in the literature. Systemic reform is referred to as the application of comprehensive change across the school system (Fuhrman & Massell, 1992). Clune, Porter, and Raizen (1999) describe the concept in the following manner:

Systemic reform is sometimes called the “third wave” of educational reform, following higher educational requirements in the 1980s and school restructuring in the early 1990s. Most states and many school districts have educational reforms under way that aim at the whole system. The wide acceptance of systemic reform means that a powerful lesson has been learned: education in grades K-12 will improve only if all the critical components are addressed in concert. (p. 1)
These researchers suggest that change efforts must occur comprehensively and collectively across a system as opposed to isolated strategies being employed in individual schools within a district.

Decades of comprehensive reform efforts have led to the same inequitable results for students of color and Latino English Learner students specifically. There are discrepancies between the articulated goals driving reform agendas and the inequitable results after many attempts at transforming our schools. The systemic change often delineated in educational organizations’ theories of action has repeatedly failed to narrow the achievement gap over the last few decades (Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001).

The concept of large-scale reform is grounded in organizational theory. Organizational theory explores how organizations, as collective entities, behave. School districts have historically behaved in a bureaucratic fashion (Haberman, 2003). School systems in the United States are often layered with a multitude of bureaucratic mandates that directly create obstacles to change. Districts as organizations could be portrayed as groups of people dedicated to sustaining ineffective, established programs while intentionally obstructing innovation. In fact, some researchers argue that the institutional features of public school systems actually depress and inhibit student performance (Chubb & Moe, 1988). From a different perspective, Meier, Polinard, and Wrinkle (2000) suggest a reciprocal relationship between bureaucratic behaviors and organizational performance. These researchers contend that an increase in the levels of bureaucracy within an organization often is a sign that a school system is trying to respond to low
levels of performance. Establishing new roles, rules, and accountability systems are what school leaders know how to do.

Whether bureaucracy perpetuates low performance or whether low performance is a direct consequence of bureaucratic approaches remains arguable. Regardless of which school of thought one subscribes to, educators need to examine how organizational theorists frame approaches to changing the bureaucracy within the educational context. Implementation of any reform effort requires a discussion of the debate between a top down approach or an attempt at decentralization. These two contrasting views have implications for practice. Smith and O’Day (1991) argue that implementation of reforms within schools fail because of the fragmented and complex system schools must operate within. This research study requires a consideration of these mindsets and examines how neither of the two opposing views has served the purpose of enhancing student achievement for marginalized groups of students.

One body of research emphatically supports the idea of decentralization and school-based management when implementing reform initiatives (Ouchi, 2006). These studies suggest fundamental changes in school governance that support local autonomy in order for performance to be more effective. This approach of ensuring schools have local control is based upon the notion that schools are the epicenters for change based on their unique set of needs (Clune, 1993). The perception here is that if schools controlled the reform process, then there might be conditions that would allow for organizations to behave less bureaucratically and thus achieve desired outcomes. Byrd (2001) found a
positive correlation between school autonomy and student achievement suggesting that a decentralized approach may increase student performance levels.

An opposing pool of research suggests that even though site-based management might appear to eliminate the bureaucratic details, schools actually do not become more effective when controlled less by districts (Miller, 1995). Researchers presenting the role of district leadership insist that districts indeed behave as influential agents that have a significant role to play in transforming student achievement. Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) provide a framework as to how districts can approach the change process from a centralized position. Their findings argue that districts can systemically implement a reform and equity agenda through their targeted focus on four areas (a) providing instructional leadership, (b) reorienting the organization, (c) establishing policy coherence, and (d) maintaining an equity focus. Additionally, advocates for centralized guidance provide evidence as to how districts can improve their decision-making processes. These studies (Honig & Coburn, 2008) suggest that districts should deeply explore the most effective evidence-use processes and strategies that will support them in aligning their work with desired outcomes.

Marzano and Waters (2009) ask readers to consider whether or not district leadership matters. Their meta-analysis study of the research conducted on the influences of districts on student achievement demonstrates that when district leadership carries out their goals effectively, student achievement improves. Although the research is complex, it becomes clear that districts, as units and a collection of subunits, need to coherently
lead change efforts based on evidence from the more local sources within the system (Honig & Coburn, 2008).

These various perspectives on how best to organize school systems will be the focus of the reform initiative in this study. The tension between top down approaches and site-based decentralization efforts could be interpreted to suggest that our educational systems need to make a choice between these two styles. The reform initiative in this study assumes this “either or” mentality as flawed thinking and instead applies a blended approach. Given that our historically underserved Latino English Learners have not systemically benefited from either of these approaches, this study considers a balance between the two positions to create conditions for school districts to actually behave in a drastically different manner and produce more equitable results.

The theory of action utilized within this reform framework demand that both district staff and school personnel remain reflective as a theory of action is implemented (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schon, 1987). The framework suggests that all stakeholders purposefully select when it is most beneficial to decentralize or centralize resources, decisions, and efforts. The study proposes that an equity-based reform effort consider engaging central support and guidance while simultaneously empowering the voices of individuals working closest to the communities we serve.

Additionally, it is important to consider reform initiatives that create mechanisms to gather information directly from the local sources serving the Latino communities that host our schools. The community input allows for the construction of a framework that will systemically address the gaps in achievement, language, and opportunities. The
personal counterstories that share how Latino students, parents, and communities experience the institution of schooling can inform how leaders redesign the system to meet their unique needs (Yosso, 2005). Although this study focuses on the human resources who serve the communities and not the students or families themselves, listening and learning from the voices in the field, the instructional coaches at the schools, could better inform district office work. This type of approach supports the alignment between intended outcomes and resource allocation. These types of alignment efforts may very well be necessary precursors to implementing and sustaining reform initiatives designed to close the English Learner achievement gap over time (Garcia & Mangewala, 2009).

Advocating for this change and designing how English Learner instructional coaches conduct their professional affairs daily within the cultures of their schools may simply not be enough. The literature on reform suggests that educational leaders will frequently emphasize the intended benefits of change efforts (Greene, 2007). These same leaders, however, often fail to consider the more ethical and pragmatic issues that reform efforts confront in phases of implementation (Noell & Gansle, 2009), especially when trying to transform adult behaviors that fossilize within the behavioral ecologies of schools. In fact, Fullan (2005) suggests that school culture, instead of school structure, impacts teaching and learning. He proposes that reform leaders need to focus on approaches that will “reculture” rather than “restructure” our schools.

Lastly, another final concept to consider is how effectively the coaching initiative embeds itself within the organizational culture of the district that consists of several
subgroups that need to collectively embrace the change. The local reformers in the department being examined espouse that the English Learner coaching initiative would be categorized as to what Taylor (2006) calls a sustained implementation reform type where the change effort is sustained and overtakes whatever was already in existence while being completely institutionalized as the norm. An examination of how the reform effort manifests across the school district in the selected contexts can inform reform literature as this research narrates the implementation story and its ability to impact teacher practice. The manner in which the change effort unfolds will provide some insight on the organization’s approach to change, leadership, organizational culture, and its ability to attain its target goals (Janger, 2006). This section has highlighted the context of systemic reform, organizational theory, and district leadership underlying this study. The section that follows describes the research that supports the reform initiative being examined.

Instructional Coaching as the Reform Initiative

The district that serves as the context of the study has selected to reform the use of its human resources by establishing instructional coaching as a tool to improve instruction for English Learner students. This choice requires a review of what the literature has to offer on the impacts of instructional coaching on teacher practice. In a study that examined the effects of coaching on teacher skills and efficacy, Licklander (1995) stated the following:

Neither feedback, observation of a colleague, nor learning via modeling may be enough to create changes in teacher behavior. Reflection, a dialogue of thinking and doing through which the performer becomes more skillful (Schon, 1987), is important in promoting transfer of learning. Peer coaching causes teachers to
reflect about their performance in two ways: first, they must reflect about their own teaching to prepare for receiving feedback and in engaging in dialogue about their own performance; second, they must reflect about the performance of a colleague within that colleague’s unique classroom context to prepare to give feedback and engage in dialogue about practice. When teachers prepare for a dialogue with a colleague about their own teaching, they must reflect about what they chose to do and why. They must also think about the effectiveness of their choice of behaviors and be ready to discuss the future uses of certain techniques or strategies. (p. 56)

The concepts of reflection and feedback embedded within this statement have made instructional coaching an attractive instructional reform strategy.

Instructional coaching has become a common method for improving teacher pedagogy and practice in the classroom (Knight, 2005). Given the current accountability structures that require increases in student performance, school organizations logically explore school improvement initiatives that will impact how a teacher delivers instruction for their students. Often, school systems will design professional development plans on a variety of instructional methodologies, frameworks, and strategies that claim to make a difference in how students learn content. Regardless of these intentions of large-scale instructional reform, the inadequate education of historically underserved students persists. The attempts of educational leaders at transformation of instruction continuously yield minimal change.

Joyce and Showers (1996) justify why powerful teaching strategies and professional development initiatives fail to systemically penetrate passed the classroom door. The researchers’ configuration demonstrates the results of professional development approaches as they attempt to change teacher practice. If teachers study a theoretical instructional framework, the research suggests that they will increase their
knowledge by approximately 10% with a minimal impact on their skills and minimal likelihood of implementation of that theory. The practice of demonstration often embedded within professional development increases teachers’ knowledge and skills, but continues to sustain an absence of implementation. Providing teachers the opportunity to actually practice their new learning will drastically improve results, but still only develop a 5% implementation rate. However, when professional learning is continuously supported through on-going instructional coaching, the research demonstrates that the knowledge, skills, and most importantly, implementation, increase to 95% and become absorbed as a norm within teacher pedagogy and practice (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

Table 2.1

*Teachers’ Knowledge, Skills, and Implementation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study of Theory</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research indicated that teachers in coaching relationships “practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked alone to expand their repertoires” (Joyce & Showers, 2002, p. 14).
Due to current federal and state accountability systems, the pressure to improve the quality of instruction impacts how school organizations operate. To respond to this urgency to close the achievement gap, schools across the nation are hiring instructional coaches and making substantial fiscal and human resource investments as they hire personnel to attain the implementation outcomes highlighted earlier. Knight’s (2005) studies of well constructed coaching programs also consistently generated implementation rates of 85% with some schools being able to get every teacher to utilize target instructional practices. This research also demonstrated that effective instructional coaching increases teachers’ fidelity to scientifically-based instructional practices beyond the coaching cycles they receive. In other words, teachers are more likely to internalize the target practices and embrace them as a teaching norm as a result of instructional coaching. Well-articulated instructional coaching frameworks promote positive and progressive conversations in school settings (Perkins, 2003). Although it remains challenging to attain the ideal conditions, instructional coaches can become a resource in constructing healthy, empathetic conversations among teachers that shift from blaming external factors like parents and administrators to interactions that focus on the processing of new knowledge and its implications for their practice and student learning (Fisher & Frey, 2003).

A longitudinal study (Bryk, 2010) conducted in 17 schools across eight states over three years provides concrete findings on how continuous instructional coaching in literacy practices over time impacts teacher practice and student reading performance. In exploring the work of coaches with 240 teachers, the researchers revealed three critical
findings (a) kindergarten through third grade students’ average rates of literacy growth increased by 32% after the third year of implementation; (b) teacher expertise increased substantially and the rate of improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received; and, (c) professional communication amongst teachers in the schools increased over three years and the literacy coach became more central in the schools’ communication networks. These findings demonstrate how instructional coaching can be a tool for increasing teacher expertise and changing how teachers operate in schools.

Additionally, Neufield and Roper (2003) contribute to the research through an explanation of coaching frameworks that include the concept of “coaching for coaches” where site coaches can receive feedback and reflect about their own coaching work with job-alike colleagues. In a case study of Bellingham School District, Baker et al. (2005) describe the initial implementation of a district wide coaching initiative where this “coaching the coach” structure was realized. District coaches, known as learning facilitators, worked side by side with site coaches and leaders to facilitate continued learning and job embedded professional development. These coach developers provided specific guidance for site coaches as to how to apply effective adult learning strategies. According to the authors, district learning facilitators played a pivotal role in ensuring the coaching initiative reached its full potential. In fact, all adults, from teachers to the superintendent, were expected to engage in some form of coaching to improve in ways that supported student learning.

In this same case study (Baker et al., 2005), the researchers shared that district leadership adopted policy requiring whole group, small group, and one-on-one coaching
to be implemented at all school sites to support the implementation of the district’s vision. Teachers received one-on-one support from their site coach while principals developed flexible schedules that allowed teachers and coaches the time to engage in dialogues about learning. The following excerpt demonstrates how instructional coaching was embedded within Bellingham’s organizational culture:

If you were to visit a typical second grade classroom in a Bellingham school, you would see what you might expect to see. What you might not expect to see when you enter this classroom are the two adults who are quietly observing the scene from the back of the classroom. When the lesson is over, the visitors get ready to leave, and one of the students asks the teacher, “Which one was YOUR coach?” The teacher replies, “The nice lady in green.” “Who is the other lady?” the student wonders. “That’s her coach,” answers the teacher. The students are accustomed to having adults observing their classroom, and they know the extra adults come in to help their teacher learn to be a better teacher. (pp. 66-67)

Bellingham School District provides an example of an organization that implemented coaching on a comprehensive level. This initiative “has provided some degree of consistency across the district for professional development and has resulted in a rigorous questioning of classroom practices and district policy” (Baker et al., 2005, p. 76).

Although all of these findings provide a rationale for moving forward with instructional coaching as a school improvement strategy, other researchers remind educational leaders of the struggles reformers may face as they implement a coaching framework to guide teacher leaders in their new roles. Evidence from research indicates that when the roles of instructional coaches are ambiguous and not clearly defined within the school culture, their positions can become inefficient, ineffective, and merely a reform fad (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). Historical attempts at creating resource staff and providing teachers professional opportunities beyond the classroom have often resulted in
a focus on managerial and administrative tasks (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). Such attempts at including teachers in decision making beyond the classroom door had the unintended impact of teachers focusing on the dimensions of the educational systems furthest away from instruction.

In the current era of accountability, teacher leadership in the form of instructional coaching is based upon the increased focus on instructional improvement and on the belief that teachers themselves play a pivotal role in the collective effort of improving practice and increasing instructional capacity (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010). In their case study exploration of formalized teacher leadership roles outside of the classroom, the researchers advocate that further studies must continue to explore how educational leaders can effectively and clearly define their teacher leader role design frameworks to avoid jeopardizing the potential gains these roles could attain.

In response to the advocacy to clearly define the role of instructional coaches, it becomes essential for reformers to think about how they can eliminate the challenge of role ambiguity. Datnow (1999) reminds us that informed decision making made on informed choice might ensure that our comprehensive instructional reform efforts are based on the authentic data generated by listening and learning from essential stakeholders. Clearly, teacher leaders need to be included in the dialogue as to how teacher leadership positions could be designed and implemented in a way that allows them to focus on the continuous improvement of instruction.

As the district being studied selects a systemic reform initiative such as instructional coaching, understanding how to effectively utilize instructional coaches as
district leadership seeks commitment from teachers becomes an essential component of the reform design. Building the relationships and the trust among the layers of the system may create the conditions necessary for a humanistic reform initiative like instructional coaching to succeed.

To attain successful implementation results, educational leaders seeking instructional reform must be aware that coaching on the surface may appear as a simple solution to improving teacher content knowledge and skills. However, leaders need to understand that instructional coaching is a complex innovation because it requires radical changes in the relationships among classroom teachers, support personnel, and administrators (Joyce & Showers, 1996). This understanding can support systems to effectively design implementation plans that will in turn support instructional coaching as a method for actualizing Fullan’s (2005) notion of “reculturing” schools as organizations attempt to impact the teaching and learning that transpires within the classroom, especially for underserved groups like Latino English Learners. The instructional coaching initiative is a direct effort to impact school culture. This literature suggests that the approach as to how the initiative is handled in its initial implementation is critical to learning about how reform will manifest (Knight & Erlandson, 2003).

Given the absence of English Learner pedagogy in the instructional coaching literature, it becomes essential to examine how instructional coaching that purposefully shifts the role of English Learner support services from compliance to instruction could impact the practice of teachers serving Latino English Learners.
Synthesis

The literature on the English Learner achievement gap, systemic reform, organizational theory, and instructional coaching presents themes for school districts to consider as they address the instructional crisis that inequitably shapes the Latino student educational experience. Cummins (2001) forces us to consider the question as to why our language minority students continue to experience low levels of academic achievement in spite of aggressive reform efforts over the last several decades. He claims that in order for reform efforts to attain success, educators must change the manner in which they relate to underserved students. He emphasizes that educators must redefine how they make connections with the students they serve and specifically connections to their culture. According to his empowerment framework, a fundamental transformation of the relationships that exist within educational organizations is an essential component to ensuring our students academic success. Although this study does not focus on the relationship between educators and students, the initiative supports Cummins’ (2001) concept given the assumption that teachers cannot change how they relate to students unless the adults begin changing the relationships they have amongst each other in the schools.

This study asserts that district leadership, as institutional agents, plays a role in transforming those relationships, and hence could potentially transform school cultures. As district leaders develop reciprocal relationships with site building personnel that work closest to the English Learner communities they serve through this initiative, the connections between centralized staff and the nucleus of the classroom can be
strengthened. Instructional coaches become brokers within the system who operationalize a macro-level vision within the school day. A collaborative relationship between district staff and teacher leaders outside the classroom could potentially create a hybrid approach to change where both administrative and pedagogical theories of action converge to support implementation of new practices in the classroom (Labaree, 2007).

The research outlined in this section has informed the current study in the following three ways (a) understanding the urgency that plagues the Latino English Learner achievement gap; (b) recognizing how reform trajectories operate and the complexities of systemic change; and, (c) identifying instructional coaching as a pathway to “reculturing” schools. The ultimate goal is to impact the instruction in a way that will benefit Latino English Learners academically, linguistically, and socially in addition to informing the system as to how we can more effectively provide them with consistent, high quality teaching in the classroom.
Chapter 3
Methodology
Research Approach and Design

*Introduction to Approach*

This study combined two methods that are grounded in the idea of collaboration between the researcher and the participants to inform a change effort. The researcher used Participatory Action Research and participatory evaluation to engage in a cycle of inquiry and action that promotes social change. These two methods advocate for listening to the voices from the field during implementation of a reform initiative. These methods also promote the notion that educators can find answers to their issues employing approaches that prompt collaboration, inquiry, and feedback. The following section will describe how both Participatory Action Research and participatory evaluation were appropriate methods for collecting and analyzing data within this study.

*Participatory Action Research*

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was used for this study to discern whether or not the intentional shift from compliance to instruction had an impact on the site coaches’ capacity to improve the quality of the teaching and learning within the district’s English Learner instructional programs. The nature of the study led to the selection of a PAR approach because of the salient features that define this methodology. According to Bucknam, James, and Milenkiewicz (2008), PAR is a dynamic research process that allows the people affected by the research to work together to solve local issues within their complex environments. This description of PAR has evolved from the
tradition of action science. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) define the goal of action science as the “generation of knowledge that is useful, valid, descriptive of the world, and informative of how we may change it” (p. x). Participatory Action Research (PAR) incorporates this idea that research can serve as a tool that inspires action and change. Through the use of a PAR approach, research is strategically designed to yield solutions that are capable of making the changes necessary to improve practice.

The participatory component of this research methodology emphasizes the collaborative involvement of participants in the research process. The work of Paulo Freire (1970) views research as a highly inclusive process where the research is seen as a form of inquiry and action that leads to social justice and equity. This approach purposefully involves the researcher and participants as co-investigators in a reciprocal process of inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and ultimately social change. The inquiry aspect focuses on asking questions that emerge through reflective dialogue and accepts the experiences and perspectives of the participants as valid truths that inform the work. This inclusive process implicitly values collaborative work and demonstrates a belief in human capacity to solve their problems. Anderson and Herr (2006) also discuss this methodology through terms that delineate the relationship between the researcher and the participants. This approach is explained through the notion of the researcher as an “insider” collaborating with the participants, as other “insiders”, in the decision making process where data from the field is collectively shared, analyzed, and used to force social change.
The reasons for selecting PAR for this study were two-fold. The two reasons were (a) the alignment between PAR and the concepts of social justice and equity, and (b) collaboration between the researcher and the participants. The following paragraphs describe the two reasons in further detail.

The first reason was that the PAR approach aligns with research grounded in a commitment to social justice and equity. Given the focus of this study on the transformation of the human resources that support historically disenfranchised English Learner students, the PAR approach allowed for the reciprocal inquiry that is necessary for educators to engage in as they reconsider how to attain transformational educational outcomes for a particular student population. The cycle of inquiry embedded within PAR inherently allowed for a scrutiny of how a district uses its human resources specifically allocated to impact English Learner instructional programs.

The Freirian-inspired PAR approach is firmly grounded in an emancipatory quality that has been used to support the liberation of historically disenfranchised communities and the transformation of their socially unjust realities (Freire, 1970). On a broad level, the reform initiative seeks to improve the quality of the instruction in the classrooms of Latino English Learners. This purposeful shift in the use of human resources to focus on instruction rather than compliance was implemented with the intent of dismantling the social injustices that have burdened this community of students partly due to a lack of access to high quality instruction. Alignment between the research approach and the intent of the reform initiative existed since both the district’s instructional coaching effort and the intent of PAR attempt to improve practice and
provoke positive social change for a systemically underserved student population. Lastly, although the application of PAR in this study does not directly require underserved students to engage in the inquiry process, the research conditions provided these “insiders” the opportunity to reflect and evaluate their roles in impacting the practice of teachers who directly shape the educational lives of Latino English Learner students. Since a social justice component drove the change effort, the PAR approach allowed for the educators in this setting to reflect and act as they began to implement the shift from compliance to instruction.

The second reason for using PAR was that this Freirian-inspired approach required the researcher to embrace a collaborative relationship with the participants. Given that the researcher wanted the voices of the field to inform the work guiding the central office department, PAR was the most appropriate research method for data collection and analysis. This commitment to engaging in side-by-side work with the individuals accountable for leading the change at the local sites naturally required that the researcher employ PAR. Within this type of research design, the researcher defied the more traditional subject-object relationship that was easily transformed into a subject-subject relationship through the dialogue and collaboration PAR elicits. Because the researcher had to pay close attention to building an inclusive relationship with the participants, PAR within this study created conditions where both research and action become one single process (de Schutter & Yopo, 1981).

Participatory Evaluation
A complete evaluation of this reform initiative would require the researcher to examine its entire trajectory from centralized district English Learner coaches, to site English Learner coaches, and ultimately to classroom teachers serving Spanish-speaking English Learners. However, the influence of the district coaches on site coaches during the shift from compliance to instruction is the focus of this study. Thus, collecting data on the experiences of both district and site coaches allowed for an evaluation of how site coaches responded to the support a district office department provided them as they begin to work with teachers on improving the quality of classroom instruction.

The research questions served as a guide for the evaluation of the support a district office department leading this change effort provided. Given these conditions, the researcher also sought to incorporate the essence of PAR described above to engage in what has been called participatory evaluation (Patton, 1996) of the reform initiative. Stake (1975) coined the term “responsive evaluation” to capture the shift from more traditional, bureaucratic methods that were criticized for being narrow and favorable to those who were in positions of power, to an evaluation model that includes and accepts the value-perspectives of stakeholders.

An assessment of the impact of the centralized support of the instructional coaching model inherently occurred as answers to the research questions were sought. The inquiry process focused on the extent district coaches influenced site coaches’ capacity to implement the instructional reform initiative. This provided evaluative feedback from the stakeholders that were directly held accountable for implementing the initiative. However, instead of using a strictly traditional program evaluation model, the
evaluation of the initiative was conducted with a participatory quality because of the PAR approach. Due to the nature of the study and the research design, the stakeholders, being the instructional coaches conducting the work, became highly involved in providing the feedback that was used to make modifications to the support structures that were set in place by the district office department personnel. District office staff gained better insight as to how they could best support implementation of the reform effort by engaging in knowledge construction with the individuals directly responsible for implementing the instructional coaching framework. The researcher and the district coaches collectively assessed their implementation of the instructional coaching initiative in order to respond to the needs of site coaches who were the individuals closest to the change being sought. An on-going engagement in this evaluation cycle continuously informed the district coaches as they supported site coaches with implementation of the instructional coaching model and allowed for its modification.

Investigating the use of the coaching model with the instructional coaches using PAR and elements of participatory evaluation allowed for the researcher and participants to collectively identify challenges and to engage in group problem solving while also celebrate successes. This ability to theorize, to inquire, and take action based on the personal experiences of those responsible for implementing the components of the instructional coaching framework, created conditions for district and site staff to co-construct knowledge on how to best support classroom teachers and the improvement of English Learner instructional programs across schools.
Context of the Study

The Longridge Unified School District is an urban school district in the heart of the Silicon Valley that serves approximately 33,000 kindergarten through twelfth grade students. The demographics by ethnicity are as follows: 26.7% White, 3.4% African American, 51.7% Latino, and 13% Asian. English Learner (EL) students make up approximately 25% of the student population in the school district. There are 8,495 English Learner students within the school district, and over 7,200 of them are Spanish-speaking students, approximately 22% of the district’s student population. There are currently 27 elementary schools in Longridge USD, and 14 of these schools provide Spanish bilingual alternative models.

The district was not identified under the state’s definition of Program Improvement until 2009-2010 where they now find themselves in their second year. Longridge USD has not met state Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) proficiency rates for its numerically significant subgroups for the past two years. In 2009-2010, 42% of the English Learner students in grades two through five were proficient in English Language Arts. Given that the state target was a 56.8% proficiency rate, Longridge USD fell short of meeting state accountability expectations. The same was true for English Learner student performance in mathematics. The state target proficiency rate was 58%, and 54% of Longridge USD English Learner students at the elementary level were proficient. These results portray the academic performance of English Learner students in Longridge USD.
Given that language proficiency is another important aspect of educating English students, it is also essential to examine Longridge USD’s English Learner students’ performance in English language development. Title III accountability requirements evaluate English Learner students’ progress in achieving language proficiency. Over the last six years, English Learner students in Longridge USD have met performance targets in annual progress in English language proficiency and progress in attaining English language proficiency. In 2009-2010, 56% of English Learner students in Longridge USD demonstrated one year’s growth in English language development as measured on the state’s California English Language Development Test (CELDT) while the state target was 53.1%. Twenty-two point two percent of English Learners who have been in United States schools less than five years attained proficiency as measured by the CELDT given that the state target was 17.4%. For English Learner students who have been in United States schools five years or more, the state target for progress in attaining language proficiency was 41.3% in 2009-2010. Forty-one point five percent of Longridge USD’s cohort of English Learner students who have been in United States schools five years or more were proficient on the CELDT last year.

The district at large did make gains in the state’s accountability measures, Annual Progress Index (API), as they attained a score of 792 in 2009-2010 that yielded a 12-point gain from 2008-2009. However, a significant achievement gap still exists. White students in the school district demonstrated an overall API of 874 while EL students earned an API of 694 this last year. Although the 178-point gap that existed between White students
and English Learners five years ago has been reduced to a 167-point gap, English Learners in Longridge USD are performing significantly below their White counterparts.

In response to these achievement results, and the fact that the district had entered Program Improvement status, the district leadership considered reform initiatives to address performance levels and the significant achievement gap. The Essential Program Components (EPC) (California Department of Education, 2011) provides districts with a framework for comprehensive improvement and systems alignment based upon effective, research based practices. Using this framework, the district implemented two reform initiatives (a) instructional coaching, and (b) direct instruction as an instructional framework. The district-wide instructional coaching initiative was grounded in one of the recommended EPCs (California Department of Education, 2011) which states the following:

Implementation of ongoing instructional assistance and support for R/LA, ELD and mathematics teachers through the use of content experts, specialists, and instructional coaches.
Possible options for providing support include trained coaches, content experts, and specialists who are knowledgeable about the adopted program, and work inside the classrooms to support teachers and deepen their knowledge about the content and the delivery of instruction.

In the past, Longridge schools had English Learner program coordinators, and the job description for this role was changed in the 2010-2011 academic year. The change in job description from English Learner program coordinators to English Learner instructional coaches shifted the position from a focus on mostly compliance with English Learner programmatic components to a focus on instructional coaching for teachers. The state recommended EPC provide the rationale for changing these coordinators positions that
provided minimal technical assistance to instructional coach positions that are expected to address the quality of the instruction in English Learner programs.

The specific reform initiative that was explored focused on the development of district and site English Learner instructional coaches funded across the district at target elementary schools. As previously mentioned, these positions have historically focused on compliance and accountability within the district being studied. The previous role of coordinator did not require pedagogical expertise and coaching skills from the individuals holding these school site positions. The centralized district coaches and administrators from the department provided professional development on instructional coaching approximately three years ago in transitioning the position from one of compliance to one with a focus on instruction. The department redefined the job using the concept of four pillars. The English Learner instructional coach position was built upon four pillars that guide the expectations for their work (a) leadership, (b) instruction, (c) coaching, and (d) compliance. Compliance remained a function of the position, but not viewed as the dominant priority of the personnel engaging in this work. The area of coaching served as the vehicle for the instructional coach to demonstrate leadership and instructional expertise as they worked to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

During the 2009-2010 year, three district level coaches provided on-going professional development while simultaneously providing weekly coaching sessions to 19 assigned site coaches during the first official year of the shift. These weekly sessions focused on how to be a more effective instructional coach with teachers serving English Learners. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the district office department
communicated the expectation that all site coaches were to engage in full coaching cycles with classroom teachers. At the end of the year, the department staff collected data to evaluate its work. The data revealed that expectations around instructional coaching cycles were not met that year. These results informed the development of the implementation plan for the upcoming year of the reform effort. The department began the 2010-2011 academic year with a more robust implementation plan in hopes of improving results.

The district defined a coaching cycle using the following sequential components: pre-planning, demonstration or observation, reflection for next steps, demonstration or observation, and lastly a post-conference between a classroom teacher and an instructional coach. The cycle focuses on continuous improvement of instructional practice. In 2010-2011, site instructional coaches were again expected to implement these cycles with a majority of the teachers at their schools.

Longridge USD has coupled this instructional coaching reform initiative with a second initiative, the implementation of an instructional framework using a direct instruction model. District office leadership decided to simultaneously train coaches and teachers on a common instructional framework for planning and teaching in hopes of systematizing the approach to teaching and learning across classrooms in the district. The instructional coaches who serve as the participants in this study were expected to support teachers in the implementation of this instructional framework by engaging in one-on-one coaching cycles that focus on the development and delivery of lessons using the direct instruction model.
The current district office department, known as Curriculum, Instruction and English Learner Services for the elementary level, employed eight district coaches. Each district instructional coach was assigned a set of schools that each had a designated English Learner instructional coach. District instructional coaches worked side by side with site instructional coaches in building capacity in the coaching framework and in their ability to support the direct instruction framework for teaching. Five of these eight coaches served as participants in this study.

There is a broad continuum of experience between both the district and site coaches. Some coaches are new to the position while others have been serving as resource teachers outside of the classroom for over a decade. All 20 sites that have an assigned English Learner instructional coach have numerically significant populations of English Learners at their schools. However, there is significant variance among the socio-economic status of the school populations, the numbers of English Learners at the sites, and the English Learner instructional programs implemented at each school.

Background of the English Learner Instructional Coaching Initiative

The reform agenda that was investigated was focused on transforming school cultures through the use of an instructional coaching model aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for historically underserved Latino English Learner elementary students. A description of the instructional coaching model allows for a general, macro-level understanding of the approach and the theories in use driving the change effort. It is important to note that the adopted coaching model is informed by various established coaching frameworks (Lipton, 2001; Knight, 2005) and essentially
incorporates the elements of two models to tailor the initiative to the specific needs and goals of the district.

The fundamental guiding principle of the framework insists that all individuals working within an instructional system need a reflective thought partner who provides feedback and opportunities for self-reflection in a structured manner in order to improve their practice. District coaches can potentially transform the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and readiness of site coaches as they engage in coaching cycles and professional learning sessions together. In turn, site coaches engage with teachers to accomplish a similar goal. District and site administrators must develop the operational structures, time, and space for this work to occur at the department and site levels while also providing feedback on the implementation of the initiative on a consistent basis.

The coaching initiative provided a framework for administrators and coaches to use as they work to improve instruction. The following nine components (Lipton, 2001; Knight, 2005) are essential to the development and implementation of this coaching framework:

- an articulated, shared instructional vision and focus for a school;
- continuous one-on-one coaching cycles between coaches and teachers;
- fidelity to the components of the coaching cycle (pre-conference, demonstration/observation, next steps, observation/demonstration, and post conference);
- learning focused relationships based on support, challenge, and vision;
- coaches take one of three stances based on teacher needs: consult, collaborate, or coach;
- attention to language usage that promotes dialogue and reflection;
• qualitative and quantitative data serve as a third point for reflective conversations; and
• a sense of urgency to create more equitable educational outcomes for Latino English Learner students.

These essential framework components provided the parameters for site administrators and coaches as they implemented the initiative at their schools with the district goal of improving instructional capacity across the organization. These guidelines served as the basis for the on-going professional development and support provided throughout the academic year for both site principals and their assigned instructional coaches. Although site instructional coaches will participate in many facets of supporting the leadership of the school, the department emphasized that none of that participation could supplant the one-on-one coaching cycles they were being held accountable to. The research indicates that effective coaching cycles have the greatest impact in changing teacher practice (Joyce & Showers, 1996; Bryk, 2010). These one-on-one interactions with teachers around instructional issues are most closely aligned with the district’s ultimate objective of changing teacher practice to improve student achievement, particularly for historically underserved Latino English Learner students.

Participant Selection

Five centralized coaches provided 11 site coaches with on-going support throughout the academic year. The Participatory Action Research and participatory evaluation approaches discussed in the previous section were utilized with both the district and site coaches to explore the impact of this support. Convenience sampling was used to select the district level coaches. Convenience sampling is a type of non-
probability sampling, which involves the sample being drawn from a part of the population, which is readily available, accessible, and convenient. In this study, this meant that the district level instructional coaches were selected conveniently because of their assigned positions as centralized instructional coaches and their role in leading the implementation of the initiatives.

Purposeful sampling, where subjects are selected based upon particular characteristics, was used as the means for selection of site English Learner coaches. These 11 site coaches were intentionally selected to ensure variability across the group using the following four criteria:

• teaching experience according to the number of years;
• coaching experience according to the number of years;
• language status: Spanish bilingual vs. monolingual; and
• varied school conditions based upon number of English Learner students, socio-economic status of population, geographical location, funding sources, and schools’ experiences with on-site coaching.

Table 3.1 summarizes the criteria used to select the site coaches identified for the study. Eight EL instructional coaches taught more than 10 years in the classroom while three had taught less than 10 years. Five EL instructional coaches had been teachers outside of the classroom for more than three years while six had been teachers outside of the classroom for more than five years. Six EL instructional coaches were Spanish bilingual while five were English monolingual. All schools where the EL instructional coaches worked had English Learner students. The table summarizes the size of the
English Learner population at each of the participants’ schools while also presenting the proportion of Latino English Learner students within each school community.

Table 3.1

*Summary of Site Instructional Coach Participants Meeting Criteria for Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site English Learner Instructional Coach</th>
<th># of Years Teaching</th>
<th># of Years in a teacher role outside of the classroom</th>
<th>Language Background</th>
<th>Number of ELs at school</th>
<th>Number of Latino EL Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aguirre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spanish Bilingual</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaz</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish Bilingual</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalez</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish Bilingual</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>English Acquired Spanish/English</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macias</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spanish Bilingual</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perez</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Languages Acquired Spanish/English</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosales</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish Bilingual</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitman</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish Acquired</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolff</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>English Acquired Spanish Acquired</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Portraits of Participants

Site Instructional Coaches

The site instructional coaches provided information about their professional histories through a participant questionnaire and interviews that were conducted during the first data collection phase. In this section, the reader is provided the opportunity to learn more about each site instructional coach. Following is a portrait of each site instructional coach that engaged in this reform effort and participated in the study. All participants were informed that a pseudonym could be used to identify them (see Appendix A). All of these participants chose not to exercise this option.

Emilia Aguirre

Emilia began her teaching career in East Los Angeles where she served a high poverty community as a bilingual fourth grade teacher. She taught in Boyle Heights, a community mostly of Latino English Learners. During that first year of teaching, Emilia completed her master’s degree in education. She used this professional opportunity to lead a project that focused on her fourth graders’ bilingual identities. Her research findings demonstrated that her bilingual students felt less than when they compared themselves to other students. She stated that these findings deeply influenced her teaching (E. Aguirre, personal communication, September 29, 2010). She worked diligently to ensure that her students felt enriched and empowered because they were learning in two languages.

Emilia left Los Angeles and moved to the Bay Area in northern California where she has been equally committed to serving Latino English Learner students. She taught
for three more years after relocating, but had aspirations of becoming a teacher leader focused on making change for English Learner students. She decided to become an English Learner Program Coordinator at the Title I elementary school where she had been teaching. She was able to build a small professional learning community with the bilingual teachers at her site. She assumed this position for three reasons. First, she wanted to have a greater impact on the English Learner student community at the school. Second, she was excited about working with teachers on the English Language Development of the English Learner instructional programs at her site. Lastly, she felt that this would provide her some insight as to whether or not she would want to become an administrator.

After spending five years at this school, Emilia decided to leave and become the English Learner instructional coach at another site in Longridge USD that was beginning a two-way bilingual immersion program. She is currently working with teachers on their mindset about serving English Learners, implementation of the direct instruction framework, and attempting to make instructional coaching a part of her school’s organizational culture.

Esmeralda Diaz

Esmeralda is a Spanish bilingual educator who served as a classroom teacher for seven years. Esmeralda is currently in her first year as an English Learner instructional coach and also in her first year working for the Longridge USD. She considered stepping out of the classroom because she thought it would be an excellent opportunity to be able to interact with teachers. After teaching across a variety of grade levels, Esmeralda
sought this position in order to share both her primary and secondary perspectives when discussing students’ pathways in the K-12 system with teachers. She was most excited about having the opportunities to communicate and share with teachers in a way that she was unable to in the past.

*Vanesa Gonzalez*

Vanesa, an immigrant from Colombia, was educated in her native country and also attained her initial teaching experience there. She studied linguistics during her undergraduate career in Colombia where she also taught English for six years at a bilingual school. She came to the United States in 2001 through the Visiting International Faculty (VIF) teacher exchange program. She was an elementary teacher in Longridge USD for three years and then returned to Colombia to serve as the English director at a bilingual school.

Vanesa returned to Longridge USD to teach one more year in the classroom before she became the English Learner Program Coordinator at the elementary school in Longridge USD with the highest number of English Learner students. She served there for two years where she worked extensively on training teachers on the content area of English Language Development. She developed resources and tools that she provided to classroom teachers to support them with English Language Development instruction. In her new role as an English Learner instructional coach at another school in Longridge USD this year, she stated that she was excited about using coaching as a method for ensuring that teachers actually implement the training and resources she provides (V. Gonzalez, personal communication, September 14, 2010).
**Grace Henderson**

Grace has been an educator for 38 years, and has spent 13 years outside of the classroom, serving as mostly a resource teacher and program coordinator. She is in her second year in this new role as an English Learner instructional coach. She has actually stepped in and out of the classroom several times. She believes that transitioning back into the classroom has kept her in touch with the realities of being a classroom teacher. She began her teaching career in Texas, and a few years later, she quickly stepped into a teacher leadership role as the supervisor for bilingual programs - preschool through high school in her first district of employment. She later also served as a magnet coordinator in Houston, Texas and shortly after, moved out to California.

Grace returned to the classroom one last time, and then became the English Learner resource teacher at her current school. She has worked at her current school in Longridge USD for 19 years. She worked as the resource teacher and English Learner program coordinator there for six years, before the position changed to English Learner instructional coach. Grace enjoys serving the bilingual families in her school community.

**Victoria Macias**

Victoria began her career as a two-way bilingual immersion teacher. She taught at the primary level and then moved on to become a middle school intervention teacher. In both these settings, she worked with predominantly English Language Learners. She later moved to Longridge USD where she initially served as a fifth grade bilingual teacher. She did that for four years at the highest poverty school in Longridge USD. All of her students were English Language Learners, and predominantly Latino, and while teaching
there, she decided to attain a master’s degree in Educational Administration. Her coursework motivated her to seek a leadership position outside of the classroom. She became an English Learner program coordinator. She worked in this role at another school in Longridge USD for two years and then has spent the last two years serving at the same school in the district’s new role as English Learner instructional coach.

*Lilian Miller*

Lilian has been an educator for 16 years. She began as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in North Carolina. After that, she returned to her home state of Texas and taught third grade. In 2000, she moved to the Bay Area in northern California where she taught for a short time and then became an instructional coach for the teacher induction program, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), in Longridge USD. In this position, she really enjoyed working with teachers and providing them support as they entered the profession. She demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that new teachers have a positive experience in their early years of teaching. After a few years, she was ready for a change and decided to assume the role of English Learner instructional coach at an elementary school in Longridge USD. Having a teacher leader serve outside of the classroom is a new concept for her particular school. As a consequence, instructional coaching is also new for her particular school community.

*Esmeralda Rosales*

Esmeralda shared that she never really wanted to leave the classroom (E. Rosales, personal communication, September 27, 2010). She was a preschool teacher for many years, and later became a kindergarten teacher in Longridge USD. She decided to attain a
master’s degree in literacy instruction because she thought it was critical to understand how children learn to read. After her principal encouraged her to assume a more formal teacher leader role, Esmeralda accepted the position as the English Learner program coordinator at her school. She served in this position for one year before the position changed to the role of English Learner instructional coach. Although she still wonders about the impact she has made outside of the classroom, she feels that this position is central to supporting the English Learner community, a community she has been deeply committed to throughout her professional career.

*Teresa Perez*

Teresa began her professional journey as an undergraduate who majored in Latin American studies, an area of study that provided her with a background in sociology. She has been committed to social service since the inception of her career. Early on, she taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship courses in San Jose, California. She quickly learned that she loved teaching, and most importantly realized that she wanted a job that impacted other people’s lives in a meaningful way. Given that she was a bilingual Spanish speaker, she quickly attained a job at a bilingual school and began the coursework to attain a teaching credential. She worked in a class designated for newcomers to the school system where she had to create many of her own materials in isolation. She did not feel supported as a new teacher, and decided to move districts. This is how she arrived at Longridge USD. She left the district to teach for a short while on the east coast where she also attained a master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She returned to Longridge USD where she has passionately dedicated herself to an English
Learner community. She stated that she agreed to assume the role of English Learner instructional coach because of the broader impact she could make in the lives of all the students she serves (T. Perez, personal communication, September 15, 2010).

Rebecca Quinn

Rebecca began her career with children working in a group home for over three years. She attained experience in building rapport with students who were facing a multitude of challenges in their lives. This served her well as she transitioned into teaching in Cajon Valley in the East County of San Diego. She worked at the lowest performing school in that district. Rebecca worked in isolation and never received feedback on her teaching practice. She desired feedback and collaboration, and was able to finally find a mentor who guided her early on in her career. Shortly thereafter, she also shared that there was a change in school leadership, and she began to work for a principal who then shaped her professionally. In addition, her school had attained an instructional coach on staff. In these new conditions, Rebecca began to thrive as a teacher. She was able to get the feedback she so desperately desired and finally had a place to go with her questions and reflections. This transformational experience with new leadership and instructional coaching allowed her to understand the benefits of building trustful, collaborative relationships within the school context.

Rebecca later joined Longridge USD after relocating to northern California. She taught fifth grade for one year, and then the English Learner instructional coach position became available at her current school. She was invited by her principal to assume the new role and quickly began to strategize how she could effectively provide her teacher
colleagues with the same transformational experience she had when working with a peer using an instructional coaching framework.

*Jill Whitman*

Jill is currently in her twentieth year as a bilingual educator, and she shared that instructional coaching has always been a part of her work as a teacher (J. Whitman, personal communication, September 30, 2010). Many of her principals and other mentors encouraged her to assume an instructional coaching role given many of her inherent qualities and skills. As a teacher, she experienced the benefits first hand of engaging in reflective dialogue with instructional coaches and peers. She quickly learned how valuable the coaching cycle could be in ensuring teachers are more effective in their practice. Jill also shared that she has a passion for serving English Language Learner students (J. Whitman, personal communication, September 30, 2010). Given that this position required this passion and a skill set for coaching teachers, Jill was encouraged by district staff in Longridge USD to apply for the new position at one of the elementary schools. In her first year as an English Learner instructional coach, she is working on building her school’s capacity to be receptive to change and instructional reform.

*Mae Wolff*

Mae taught for 13 years as both a migrant and bilingual classroom teacher. She later assumed roles outside of the classroom as a teacher leader. Mae has worked outside of the classroom for the last 25 years of her professional career. She was a bilingual resource teacher for several of these years. Mae started her career as a teacher leader outside of the classroom when Longridge USD began its first Spanish two-way
immersion program. She played an instrumental role in building this program through its early phases of implementation and later its sustainability. She stated that her role was focused on the promotion of bilingual programs and to monitor the needs of English Learners (M. Wolff, personal communication, September 13, 2010). She also stated that although the titles have changed, she feels her role has always been focused on these two tasks (M. Wolff, personal communication, September 13, 2010). Mae believes that examining the student achievement of English Learners has always been at the forefront, but the way in which the district offers that service to schools has evolved. Initially, she spent many years working directly with students that needed additional support within this specialized program. Mae is adapting to the new role as an English Learner instructional coach who no longer provides that service, but rather has to spend her time supporting teachers in a coaching capacity.

The District Instructional Coach Team

Antonia Miranda  
Kelly Miata  
Salvador Carillo  
Michelle Dobbs  
Karen Plumhoff

In this section, the reader will have the opportunity to learn more about the team of the five district instructional coaches who participated in the study as a collective unit. The following collective portrait of this team describes some of the personal and professional qualities of the district team responsible for supporting the site instructional coaches with the shift from compliance to instruction.
The district coaches all have served as bilingual educators and have always worked with the Latino English Learner population. They all have at least five years of classroom teaching experience. Michelle, who has taught the least, has six years of classroom teaching experience while Antonia, the coach with the most experience, taught approximately for 20 years in the classroom. Four of the five district coaches have served as site instructional coaches prior to joining the district office team.

The district coaches shared many reasons as to why they decided to leave the site and engage in district level work as a teacher leader. Antonia was working as a site resource teacher and was then recruited to support programs at the district level. Kelly stated that she transitioned to the district office after coaching at the site because she viewed this as an opportunity to systemically change the way the district office has traditionally supported school sites (K. Miata, personal communication, September 28, 2010). Salvador sought this as an opportunity to grow professionally while simultaneously working to improve English Learner instructional programs across the district. Karen also shared that her reason for coming to work at the district office was to impact instruction for English Learners district wide, specifically in the content area of English Language Development (K. Plumhoff, personal communication, September 3, 2010). Lastly, Michelle, in her first year working as a district instructional coach, stated that she was enthusiastic about working in a multifaceted position that would provide her with a chance of working with teachers across the district in improving their practice (M. Dobbs, personal communication, October 18, 2010).
Participants’ Rights

An alias name was used to discuss the school district where the study is being conducted. Alias names were used in order to protect the rights of the participants who work within the district. All participants were designated an alias name in order to ensure privacy. In addition, the researcher served as an administrator while all the participants within this study were teachers who served as either district or site instructional coaches. The researcher committed to not use the data collected for evaluative purposes of the individuals conducting their professional work.

Research Questions

The researcher used the Participatory Action Research design to answer the following empirical questions:

*Overarching Theoretical Question:*

1. What theories in use operated as a district office staff shifted its focus from compliance to instruction through the implementation of a district wide instructional coaching initiative?

*Primary Research Question:*

2. How does the support of a district English Learner instructional coach and the professional development they provide influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness of site English Learner instructional coaches?
**Secondary Research Questions:**

3. What do the site English Learner instructional coaches experience as they make this shift from a compliance-oriented role to an instructional reform role?

4. In what areas are district and site coaches experiencing successes in building instructional capacity? In what areas are they experiencing the greatest challenges?

5. What do the site instructional coaches deem the most valuable in terms of the district office department support?

6. What additional support do site coaches need in order to implement the instructional coaching framework?

Data Collection

The researcher collected data on the experiences site instructional coaches had as they worked with district instructional coaches in the following three contexts (a) one-on-one coaching sessions, (b) professional development on instructional coaching during instructional coach academies, and (c) professional development on an instructional framework with teachers. The researcher collected this data through digitally recorded interviews and focus groups. The interviews and focus group sessions were transcribed, and the transcripts were used for the data analysis.

*First Meeting*

An initial meeting was conducted with both district and site coaches to discuss the study. All participants were given time to complete an introductory questionnaire (see
Appendix B) that was used to inform questions for interviews and focus group sessions. At this initial group meeting, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss any potential questions they had regarding the nature of the study, its purpose, and the data collection process.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the district English Learner instructional coaches and the site English Learner instructional coaches in order to gain insight on the implementation of the coaching initiative early on in the school year (see Appendix C for interview and focus group protocols). District instructional coaches were interviewed in order to understand their perceptions of their role at the district level. The interviews with the five district instructional coaches provided an opportunity to learn about their plans and strategies for working with their assigned site instructional coaches. Next, site instructional coaches were interviewed in September or October for two purposes (a) to understand the type of support site coaches needed in order to implement the coaching framework, and (b) to understand the conditions coaches are conducting this work within. Interviews with each site coach provided the researcher an in-depth understanding of the strengths, challenges, and perceptions of the instructional coaching framework individuals were being asked to implement. In addition, this first session served as an opportunity to learn about the coaches’ first steps of implementation at their respective school sites after having attended an initial training and conducted a needs assessment for their schools.
All interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. The researcher employed a transcriptionist to transcribe each interview. Each participant was provided with a copy of the transcript for review. The researcher followed up via email with each coach to ensure accuracy and discuss any questions, concerns, or thoughts that may have arisen after the interview transcript was reviewed.

Focus Groups

Focus group sessions were conducted twice with the site coaches in both October and December after all the interviews had been completed. District office coaches were intentionally not included during the two focus group interviews so that their presence would not influence site participants’ responses during these sessions. The focus groups were pivotal in collecting information that informed the study and the design of the department’s support structures for the instructional coaching initiative.

During the first focus group, themes from the individual interviews were shared with the site instructional coaches and served as the guiding principles for the initial focus group interview questions. After this dialogue with the site instructional coaches, the general themes and de-identified transcribed excerpts from this first session were shared with district instructional coaches. The themes were reviewed during scheduled department meetings to inform any changes that needed to be made to the coaching model, the professional development, or any of the other structures that support implementation of the initiative. The researcher then coded the data. The coding system will be described in the analysis section.
During the second focus group, site instructional coaches were asked to engage in a dialogue specifically about each of the three support structures that the district instructional coaches designed. The three professional support structures were (a) one-on-one coaching sessions, (b) professional development on instructional coaching during instructional coach academies, and (c) professional development on an instructional framework with teachers. They were also asked specifically about the impact of these support structures on their capacity to make the shift from a compliance-oriented role to the instructional-coach role. After the second focus group, the data was shared with the district instructional coaches again to inform how they could strengthen their support of the initiative at the site level. The focus group transcripts were also coded.

Both focus group sessions were recorded using a digital recording device. The researcher employed a transcriptionist to transcribe the focus group session data for analysis. The focus group transcripts were shared with all of the participants.

Analysis

Transcripts of the interviews and of the two focus groups were analyzed. First, the themes were identified after multiple readings of each text to gain a general understanding of the data sets. Next, the researcher selectively coded the text with these specific themes in mind and sorted the data according to these categories. A coding system (see Appendix D) was developed in order to identify which statements from the transcripts supported the identified categories. The selective coding was conducted using the research software, HyperResearch. Broad categories of themes were identified, and within those categories, subthemes were also identified. For example, a broad theme was
identified as “barrier” and a subtheme within this category was identified as “compliance.” The coding system was applied to all of the text that was collected during the interviews and focus groups. Next, the codes that appeared with the highest frequency were extracted across the participants’ responses and examined more closely to inform the analysis. However, some isolated, outlier responses were also analyzed and used to inform the study as well.

In the Participatory Action Research process, the researcher and district instructional coaches reviewed the transcripts of the two focus group sessions to discuss the content after each data collection point. This on-going cycle of inquiry and action was conducted to try to ensure that district office resources were more responsive to the reform conditions at the school sites. The researcher and the district instructional coaches enacted the steps depicted below during data collection phases as they worked to support schools with their implementation of the initiative.
Figure 3.1. Cycle of Inquiry and District Action.

The figure demonstrates the cycle of inquiry and action the district office department engaged in during the early phases of implementation of the instructional coaching initiative. This provided the researcher with the opportunities for data collection and data analysis using the Participatory Action Research approach.

This is important to note because the district instructional coaches informed the researcher as they shared their initial reactions to the data sets and used these discussions to inform their upcoming work with site coaches. In addition, the site instructional coaches also played a role in making meaning of the data. These participants shared their
reactions to the initial themes identified after the interviews and those identified after the first focus group. Given the participatory nature of the study, it was critical for the researcher to collaboratively make meaning of the data sets with the participants always.

Lastly, a final focus group was conducted to discuss the findings from the research. The participants had the opportunity to react to the findings in this session. Again emphasizing the participatory nature of this study, the researcher asked the participants to make any recommendations for the district personnel to consider as they continue supporting the implementation of this shift from compliance to instruction during the upcoming academic year.

Discernment Statement

The researcher is currently a district office administrator leading the reform initiative being studied. The researcher supervised the centralized district coaches who support site coaches in the implementation of the instructional coaching framework. The researcher has 13 years of professional experience in the public schools and is currently completing her first year in the district where the study is being conducted. The professional experiences of the researcher include elementary bilingual teacher, district English Learner program specialist, assistant principal, principal, and district office administrator. The primary responsibility of the researcher in her current role is to provide support to English Learner programs at elementary sites across the schools. The researcher and her team selected instructional coaching as an instructional reform strategy for transforming the quality of instruction across English Learner programs and are primarily responsible for leading the implementation efforts of this initiative.
Consequently, the researcher had access to coaches during professional development, coaching institutes, site visits, and designated meetings on a regular basis.

As one of the administrators managing this change effort, it is essential to discuss that the researcher conducted this investigation from a position of power. As an administrator working with coaches who serve as teachers on special assignments, the role of the researcher had potential impact on how participants behaved and engaged. Participants may have perceived that the researcher was evaluating and judging their effectiveness at conducting their work. These power dynamics required that the researcher build a trustful relationship with participants so that they felt comfortable and confident in sharing their professional and personal experiences relevant to the work.

Lastly, I believe it is critical for readers to gain some understanding of her social and cultural background. Yosso (2005) discusses how racism has overtly shaped U.S. social institutions through the 20th century and continues to do so in more subtle ways during the 21st century. Racism has also shaped the construction of knowledge and some researchers have argued that the knowledge of the dominant culture is considered more culturally valuable (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The work of critical race theorists like Anzaldúa (1987), Yosso (2006), and Ladson-Billings (1995) have challenged this dominance in the literature as they create methods for ensuring that the voices of historically oppressed communities are considered valuable and necessary as knowledge is constructed. In the spirit of this tradition, I found it necessary to inform readers of her positionality within the context of this work and the society at large.
I entered this work as a woman of Latina and European descent. I am the daughter of immigrants, a father from Italy and a mother from Cuba, and was the first individual in my family born in the United States. Although I do not identify as a White woman, I recognize my White privilege because of my fair skin and physical features. I also recognize that growing up in the United States, I have adopted and assimilated many of the dominant culture mainstream values. I am easily accepted by the White dominant culture because I am often perceived as one of them. I spoke mostly Spanish in the home, and I learned English mostly in school. As a young child, I was an English Learner and to some degree, I have suffered language loss because of my English dominant schooling experience. I was the first in my family to attain an education beyond high school equivalence. My identity has allowed me to navigate across various political, social, and economic realities. These personal experiences have allowed me to experience social injustices first hand, and serve as my motivation to change the conditions that cause the inequities that continuously oppress language diverse communities. I believe it is important for the reader to know this about the researcher as I interact and engage with a variety of district personnel within the school system to conduct the study.
Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how the support of district English Learner instructional coaches influence the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and readiness of site English Learner instructional coaches responsible during this organizational shift from compliance to instruction. The second purpose was to describe what district and site English Learner instructional coaches experience as they operationalize this shift. Through an understanding of these experiences in the field, the district office department was able to modify the professional support they provided site English Learner instructional coaches based on the information gathered through the PAR approach. This section will allow for the reader to learn about the data collected during the initial phase of implementation of the reform effort.

This chapter is divided into three major sections based on the phases of data collection during this initial shift from compliance to instruction. The first section describes the perspectives of district and site English Learner instructional coaches during the first steps of this systemic change effort. In addition, the first section presents some of the common conditions at school sites as the reform was initiated. The second section elaborates on what the site English Learner instructional coaches confront as they implement this shift at their respective schools. Providing an understanding about what professional support these coaches desired as they began implementation also informs the reader. The third section presents the site English Learners instructional coaches’ evaluation of the three professional support structures the department employed for the
implementation of the instructional coaching initiative. This section also includes the perceptions from the site English Learner instructional coaches perceptions as they shifted from compliance to instruction after having some substantial experience in this new role. Each of the three sections is further divided into categories. These categories were developed based upon the questions asked of the participants and the themes that emerged from the participants’ responses.

Phase One: Informing the Reform Effort

This section reports data analysis of the 16 interviews that were conducted before any significant amount of professional support was provided to the site English Learner instructional coaches. The findings from the interviews are divided into two data sets: district instructional coaches and site instructional coaches. Each of these data sections report the themes that resulted from discussions with participants about the initial implementation of the reform, the upcoming professional support they were to give or receive, and the current conditions at schools as the shift from compliance to instruction was operationalized.

District English Learner Instructional Coaches

The following three themes guided the dialogue during the interviews with the district instructional coaches (a) role in supporting organizational shift, (b) systemic challenges when making the shift, and (c) strategies and approaches to supporting site instructional coaches. The themes in this section begin to respond to the two following research questions:
• Research Question #1: What theories in use operated as a district office staff shifted its focus from compliance to instruction through the implementation of a district wide instructional coaching initiative?

• Research Question #4: In what areas are district and site coaches experiencing successes in building instructional capacity? In what areas are they experiencing the greatest challenges?

*Role in Supporting Organizational Shift*

The five district English Learner instructional coaches described their perceptions of how to effectively support this organizational shift from compliance to instruction as they worked at a district office level in implementing the initiative. The district coaches articulated that it was important for them to support their assigned site instructional coaches in clearly understanding their new role that is significantly different from the previous position as compliance coordinators or resource teachers. When asked about how she defined her own role in providing her site instructional coaches support, K. Miata (personal communication, September 28, 2010) stated:

> As far as rolling out that initiative I think it’s understanding what a coach is and developing their skills as coaches instead of resource teachers, also moving them of course from the periphery to the core. So moving them from the roles that they’re comfortable with and kind of that they’ve been designed to do for a while. So that support and just helping them recognize what a coach is.

> After they get that I think support is defining and honing their skills, because just because they’re a good teacher or good resource teacher does not make you a good coach. So I think you really need to develop their skills as listeners, as collaborators and not tellers. So that kind of skill, working with difficult people, having them get the meat out of the teachers, not just telling them, observing with a critical eye but keeping it evidenced-based. And there’s so many things with coaching that I don’t think they realize, so kind of developing that in them as well.
Carillo’s description of his role in providing support from the district office captured the idea that site coaches need to understand that their new focus is now improving teacher practice and the quality of instruction, particularly for Latino English Learner students:

And I think as far as the way that this relates to the instructional coaching piece is that that’s a conversation I’ve had specifically with my coaches, so that when they go in and work with teachers they can talk to the point that you have to change practice, because our ELs are not meeting their target, so being really cognizant of the reasoning of why we’re going into coaching, why we want to look at the quality of our practice and meeting the needs of our subgroups, as in particular like our Latino English learners (S. Carillo, personal communication, September 30, 2010).

Carillo’s statement reminds us of the importance of what has been mentioned in the research about the ambiguous role definition that often plagues teachers outside of the classroom (Baker et al., 2005; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). These authors remind us of the importance of beginning with clear expectations around the role the coach is to play if a district expects this type of initiative to be successful. Carillo strongly advocated for bringing clarity to the rationale for this change in the site instructional coach’s role at a school.

Miranda claimed that her viable approach to providing support around the shift is by serving as the external lens for the site instructional coach who is expected to embrace this change. She provided this perspective when asked specifically about her role in providing support to her site coaches:

Bring some leadership and bring an outside lens, because sometimes the people that I work with are so entrenched in what’s happening at their site that they get lost in the minutia of what they do. So by bringing that lens, they can evaluate and reflect on their work from a larger perspective (A. Miranda, personal
The five district instructional coaches all had slightly different perspectives when defining their role as centralized support to the sites. However, it was clear that all five shared the perception that they could influence their site coaches’ capacity to assume the new role. As simply stated by Dobbs, it is the responsibility of the district office team to “improve their [site coaches] skills at coaching with teachers in the classroom” (M. Dobbs, personal communication, October 18, 2010).

*Systemic Challenges when Making the Shift*

The district instructional coaches identified the challenges they believed they needed to prepare their site instructional coaches to deal with as they began the implementation of the initiative at their schools. The following four potential challenges emerged during the interviews (a) school site leadership, (b) site instructional coaches’ lack of leadership and urgency, (c) teacher resistance, and (d) learner versus expert syndrome.

Three of the five district instructional coaches mentioned the school site leadership as a potential barrier to moving forward with the reform effort. Plumhoff shared that in early conversations with site instructional coaches, struggles with the leadership were mentioned (K. Plumhoff, personal communication, September 3, 2010). Plumhoff shared an example from a scenario at one of her sites where she had to guide her site instructional coach to work more collaboratively with the principal:

So I just kind of, I asked her [the site instructional coach] questions about that indirectly, like about her relationship with the principal, how things were going, and had she talked to her. And she seemed like oh, you know, kind of oblivious of what was going on.
I kind of just generally talked to her about it’s really important in your position as a coach to really support what she’s [the principal] saying. If you disagree with her maybe go in with a plan and why, but not in front of the staff, having a time with her and if she asks you to do something just follow through with it, kind of thing. And then we just had conversations, too, like I just talked to her about her style of communication. She was very, again, I think because of that relationship, she didn’t take it [Plumhoff’s suggestions] as a threat (K. Plumhoff, personal communication, September 3, 2010).

Carillo directly claimed the following about principal leadership and the implementation of the instructional coaching initiative:

One last thing, a common experience is the disconnect or misinterpretation of district policy by principals and the way it gets filtered back out to the school site. I know at one particular site that I worked with it was constant. The district’s telling me to do this and my principal is telling me to do this and they’re completely conflicting (S. Carillo, personal communication, September 30, 2010).

Carillo’s statement indicates that the instructional coaches are often forced to assume the role of bringing clarity about the rationale behind the shift. Often, the message the instructional coaches are given by the department and the message principals then articulate to their teachers are misaligned. He believes this creates a barrier for the instructional coaching initiative to thrive.

Even beyond the principal, leadership capacity remained a concern for these district coaches. Three of the five site coaches also identified a lack of leadership capacity and urgency within their site instructional coaches as a potential barrier. All three district instructional coaches drew from past experiences with supporting site personnel. These experiences led them to believe that there would be site instructional coaches unwilling or incapable of leading the shift at their site levels. M. Dobbs (personal communication, October 18, 2010) shared that in the past, when she removed herself
from conversations between key players at the site level, the necessary conversations about change did not occur. She indicated that she was wondering about how to build site capacity in a way that will ensure site instructional coaches will be able to lead the charge, even without a district coach involved.

Miranda shared an experience that demonstrated a similar lack of will and skill on behalf of the site personnel she was supporting from district office. She stated this example:

There was a sense of passivity like oh great, Antonia will do this for me, I don’t have to do it, because the principal has asked me to deal with this parent. She always had other things that the principal had assigned her to do, and that always trumped. So I don’t feel that it was her interest. She was not interested in that role (A. Miranda, personal communication, October 14, 2010).

This example demonstrates a common concern the district instructional coaches shared about some of the site instructional coaches potential struggle with taking responsibility for this new role and the instructional reform at their schools.

In addition to a lack of leadership amongst principals and coaches, four of the five district instructional coaches also shared that it was going to be critical to prepare their site instructional coaches to confront a common challenge: teacher resistance. M. Dobbs (personal communication, October 18, 2010) stated the following when discussing this particular challenge:

I think there are challenges that they're facing right now in terms of attitudes around the coaching, that teachers aren’t going to necessarily be open to it, that they will be resistant for different reasons. They don’t want somebody in their classroom. It is very private, and teachers themselves, depending on their confidence level, may push them out and not understand it. So they’re also going to have to walk that fine line and develop those relationships at the same time, and making a safe relationship so that they can challenge. It’s not easy.
Plumhoff elaborated on this challenge of teacher resistance in the following statement:

Well, they’ve got resistant teachers. A school that doesn’t even have that coaching culture or just the open-door policy in the classroom so it’s very on their own. They also have new teachers, really new teachers that need a lot of support. Then as well as they’re being asked to coach all teachers, to going in with those experienced teachers, what’s a way for them to get in and work with an experienced teacher and feel like they have something to give as well (K. Plumhoff, personal communication, September 3, 2010).

S. Carillo (personal communication, September 30, 2010) presented what he believes is a common experience coaches confront as schools begin to implement the district wide instructional coaching initiative:

I think the first problem or the common experience was teachers not knowing what to do with somebody else in the room. That was a huge piece at a lot of the schools. They were used to only having walk-throughs with administrators or people only came in to do evaluations.

These three statements support what the research on teacher resistance indicates (Jay, 2009). Jay believes that the type of teacher resistance mentioned by the district instructional coaches has two sources: discomfort and intransigence. She insists that discomfort is most common when the school has failed to be clear about the coach’s role. Teachers may assume that a visit from the coach indicates that they are doing something ineffectively in their practice. Teachers may be fearful of change and feel protective of their practice that they perceive works. Teachers may also be self-conscious about aspects of their teaching and feel fearful that the coach will evaluate their performance.

Intransigent teachers are more difficult to deal with. They may have pedagogical disagreements with the coach, maintain low expectations of students, or lack self-efficacy when it comes to change. They may perceive the instructional coach as an invasion of
their isolated classroom world that they desperately want to protect. Jay (2009) suggests that these types of teachers are suspect that instructional coaches will share what they observe with their evaluators - site principals. In order to be an effective instructional coach, the individuals in these new roles clearly will need support in problem solving this challenge.

Lastly, two of the district instructional coaches mentioned that site instructional coaches struggle with engaging cycles with teachers mainly because they do not perceive themselves as experts who have credibility with the teachers at their schools. K. Miata (personal communication, September 28, 2010) stated the following when discussing this struggle with the shift:

I think another barrier for some of my coaches, I’m thinking of one in particular, is that they don’t maybe see themselves as experts. They’re new to coaching. This is an RT (resource teacher) that shift, ELPC (English Learner Program Coordinator) that’s shifted to ELIC. They don’t see themselves as a coach so it’s a new role for them. And so that fear and that uncomfortable [feeling] with the role is kind of a barrier because they don’t portray themselves as that, and then teachers don’t see them as a coach. So I’ve had teachers come up to me and saying, this coach can’t do it. They’re learning it beside me and they don’t understand the role. But it doesn’t matter if they’re learning, it’s a collaborative partner, just another set of eyes, someone that can help you. So I think that’s another barrier for certain coaches.

K. Plumhoff’s (personal communication, September 3, 2010) statement also captured this concept of expert versus learner that site instructional face as they begin this work at their schools:

One of the ah-has that I’m having and I’m trying to impart to my coaches is if you think of athletes that have coaches or coaches that coach athletes, a lot of times the coach probably hasn’t been and doing that sport. We’re talking a long time. If you think about the Olympics, some of the ice skaters, some of these coaches are, they’re old people and they obviously don’t ice skate any more. But they’re
extremely good coaches and renowned coaches that people come to them to make
them better at what they do. So can we tap into that.

So it’s not necessarily about having to be this expert or this perfect teacher. It’s
about again creating that support, that challenge and that vision and keeping
ourselves abreast on what’s the latest research, what are the best things for
students, really understanding that role of the coach, and I think that’s important
and I think that will also just break the stigmatism.

Plumhoff’s statement supports some of the research (Baker et al., 2005) that
suggests that coaches do not need to be experts, but rather do have “to be able to establish
their credibility by forming honest and trusting relationships with their clients” (p. 113)
while also having “the ability to listen actively and empathetically, and they are skilled at
facilitating reflective thinking among teachers” (p.114). Effective coaches will move
beyond this syndrome, and will need to work with a district coach on how to obtain
credibility with classroom teachers as they shift into their new role.

Strategies and Approaches to Supporting Site Instructional Coaches

During the interviews, district instructional coaches also presented some of their
strategies to supporting their site instructional coaches as they began implementation of
the reform and faced some of the initial challenges mentioned in the previous section. All
of the district instructional coaches alluded to modeling strategies that the site
instructional coaches could also employ with their classroom teachers. However, there
were a variety of strategies shared across the five district instructional coaches. There was
not one common systematic approach to supporting the site instructional coaches with the
shift although there were some similarities. Four of the five assumed a more non-
directive, collegial approach while one of the coaches appeared to work from a more
directive, action oriented approach. The responses that follow demonstrate the various ways the five district instructional coaches approached their work.

A. Miranda (personal communication, October 14, 2010) discussed her approach to supporting site instructional coaches with this shift from compliance to instruction in the following manner:

Conversations mostly, inference, a lot of challenging and past experience. I share a lot of my own history with numerous people I work with. So in some ways I can get away with some challenges because I think ultimately they trust me and they respect my work.

We tend to have informal conversations about where is the school going, what do you see something that the school does really, really well, how can we tap into that to do it better and where do we start there, what is a major problem you see in the school? Just identifying and labeling and seeing where she is in that problem, because we all own it. And taking little baby steps.

Miranda also recognized that she directly discusses fears with her site instructional coaches and always demands action oriented next steps from them as she holds these conversations with them.

K. Miata (personal communication, September 28, 2010) indicated that developing action plans to support her site instructional coaches with the reform initiative were part of the support she would provide.

I think creating action plans has really helped, so we first kind of think of the problems and then we think of what gets in the way, and then we think of next steps that changes that. Because that’s more concrete for a lot of my coaches that are more linear. They need something like okay, if this then this, and this is how I can start. They need to be able to feel empowered to do something. A lot of the times it’s actually they need another set of eyes, so Kelly, this is happening, am I crazy? Am I, and then we talk through that.

Her statement here also articulates how she plans on problem solving with them:
I’m very solutions-oriented, so with every problem let’s think of two solutions. So what else can we do? What’s another way we can solve it? Maybe we don’t always come up with two solutions but I’m trying this year really hard to spin things in a positive light. So okay, yes, so okay that’s okay, this week you didn’t get to it but next week we really want to commit to that, so how are we going to do that? (K. Miata, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

S. Carillo (personal communication, September 30, 2010) identified questioning and modeling as his two strategies to coaching his assigned site instructional coaches as they embrace the shift. The following excerpt describes how he applies the strategy of questioning:

I do a lot of questioning. So trying to get them to really reflect on the situation and I think that was a learning for me was how to question, because I’m much more of a problem-solver, you have to do this, you have to do that. So restructuring my brain, so I was like okay, so tell me more about this and then getting them to go deeper and why is this causing a problem. So really trying to dissect the problem so that it’s really clear for the coach and for me, really, so that I understand the problem at many different layers or aspects...So again, I’ll ask questions or I’ll begin to probe and have them formulate their problem and walk them through maybe some problem-solving scenarios. Well what can we do.

In reference to modeling, he stated the following:

So I coached a teacher while she [the site coach] watched how I did it. And then she was coaching that same teacher that I had worked with; we transitioned over so that she would coach her, and I gave her feedback. And in my feedback, I’m like okay, you need this, there are certain points where you have to be stronger, you have to push, because you’re not going to get growth if you keep acting that. And she told me, I just don’t like confrontation (S. Carillo, personal communication, September 30, 2010).

Two other district instructional coaches also identified modeling or demonstrations of coaching teachers as a viable strategy to ensuring site instructional coaches embrace the shift from compliance to instruction. Demonstrating a coaching session with a teacher and debriefing that experience was mentioned as a way of triggering the instructional focus for site coaches in their new role. A. Miranda (personal
communication, October 14, 2010) stated the following about a previous experience that has provided her evidence that demonstrating for a coach works:

Basically for the first two, two and a half days, three days, she shadowed me. I took her role, as I went in and out of classrooms, talked to people, had lunch with them, sat down with her and thought out loud, this person needs this, that person needs that, this person this, dah, dah, dah. This is the way I would…, this is the way, that kind of thing. And then on the last two days on that Thursday and Friday, we turned it around and I shadowed her. And then she started doing the same thing.

Lastly, Dobbs identified the implementation of a non-directive approach to providing support from the district office level. She stated the following:

Either brainstorming with them [site coaches]. They’re incredibly resourceful in and of themselves and they have tremendous experience. So really kind of drawing on their experience and resourcefulness is one. If it’s something that my personal experience can add to it and professional experience, then I will offer that if it’s applicable (M. Dobbs, personal communication, October 18, 2010).

The district instructional coaches’ responses reflect the trend in a study (Baker et al., 2005) that has examined district wide instructional coaching initiatives. The research suggests that most coaches utilize strategies that reflect a constructivist or collaborative approach that lends them to be more non-directive in their perspectives and actions as they work with staff. On a continuum from non-directive on one end and directive on the other, the participants in this study mostly shared approaches and strategies that were more closely aligned to a non-directive approach.

Site English Learner Instructional Coaches

The following four themes guided the dialogues during the interviews with the site instructional coaches (a) barriers to implementation, (b) challenges to implementation, (c) desired support from district instructional coach, and (d) response to
the shift from compliance role to instructional role. The themes in this section begin to
respond to the following three research questions:

- Research Question #3: What do site English Learner instructional coaches
  experience as they make this shift from a compliance-oriented role to an
  instructional-reform role?
- Research Question #4: In what areas are district and site instructional coaches
  experiencing successes in building instructional capacity? In what areas are they
  experiencing the greatest challenges?
- Research Question #5: What do the site instructional coaches deem the most
  valuable in terms of the district office department support?

Barriers to Implementation

Barriers were identified as the obstacles that the site instructional coaches had
minimal control over. Although these are operational obstacles that the site instructional
coach could possibly not change alone, they are important to identify because these
barriers depict what has been confirmed in the research (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008) as
previously mentioned in Chapter 2. Historically, teacher roles employed outside of the
classroom have been used as peripheral support and absorb the inefficiencies of the
systems that plague school districts. The upcoming findings affirm the difficulty of
transforming an ambiguous role to a role that is directly responsible for engaging in
coaching cycles with teachers to improve instruction and learning in the classroom. These
findings regarding barriers also informed district instructional coaches of the conditions
at the school sites as they refined their support structures for the site instructional
coaches. These participants presented a variety of administrative, compliance-oriented duties during the interviews that they perceive make instructional coaching difficult to implement. The following three barriers are highlighted (a) compliance monitoring, (b) peripheral, administrative duties, and (c) school site principals’ perceived inability to lead the reform.

Seven of the 11 site instructional coaches claimed that the compliance components for the monitoring of English Learner instructional programs at their schools posed difficulties in executing the expectations of the instructional coaching initiatives. Although the focus of the position had shifted, the majority of the participants still feel that since compliance has not been eliminated as part of their job, it easily overwhelms their responsibilities during the day-to-day operations at their schools. However, it is important to mention that these interviews were conducted during the month of September. At this point in the academic year, districts are expected to administer the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and conduct their first round of reclassification of English Learners who meet identified criteria.

T. Perez (personal communication, September 15, 2010), a first year English Learner instructional coach, stated the following:

I think that once all the compliance things are over with, I will be excited about this job. Because right now, it has been pretty dreary. And redundant, redundant, yes, just because I’m doing the same thing over and over again every day. I’m like what are you going to do today? Just CELDT test all day long. What are you going to do today? CELDT score all day long. But I think I’m really excited about that part being over.
V. Macias (personal communication, September 14, 2010) simply stated that “right now everything revolves around CELDT and reclassification and waivers and everything else.”

In addition, seven of the 11 site instructional coaches identified their responsibility as the administrative designee or their assignments too ambiguous, administrative tasks as a barrier to developing momentum with their new instructional coaching role during this phase of the reform. A multitude of peripheral duties were identified as barriers that consume their time.

Quinn described these peripheral duties in the following manner when asked about what gets in the way of instructional coaching with teachers:

Yard duty. Oh, can you just take this teacher’s class for a few minutes. I didn’t run into it a whole lot until probably after Christmas break where I was doing a lot of admin designee stuff, which is part of my job which is fine, but it was occurring when our assistant principal was on campus. And then it’s instead of me being with teachers it’s oh, can you handle this kid’s discipline and can you handle that kid’s discipline, and can you call this parent, and it was just absorbing so much of my time. I think people got used to using me in that manner, and so it just continued. And then CSTs roll around and then it’s I’m testing (R. Quinn, personal communication, September 21, 2010).

Rosales also described the additional expectations of her as a teacher outside of the classroom that do not allow for instructional coaching to always be the priority:

Again I don’t know, because as you know there are meetings to go, like this Thursday I’m going to go to the collaborative and then the ELICs (English Learner Instructional Coach meetings) and then the PIs (Program Improvement meetings) and then, so there are many days that we’re not on site. That’s number one. And then like there are compliance issues that are still responsibility, like the CELDT and the reclassification, and then some other commitment that we have now is to finish the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) which makes sense, because you want to have a baseline, concrete baseline that is school-wide. So I don’t think it’s a problem of ill intentions. It’s the problem that there is too
much to do and then the few people to do it. So at some point the administrator has to prioritize (E. Rosales, personal communication, September 27, 2010).

Henderson shared the purpose of her role within her school community up until this intentional shift from compliance to instruction had occurred. She discussed that her school community still expected the type of the support she had traditionally provided as she describes here:

Well, I didn’t work so much with the teachers. I worked for the teachers. I did things for them that would ease their load with the students, because I took groups but I wasn’t trying to, what’s the word, not empower, but I wasn’t trying to get them to be better at what they do. I was just trying to take off the load of what they had to do (G. Henderson, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

When directly asked about what pulls her away from addressing instruction with her teachers, G. Henderson (personal communication, September 28, 2010) also stated the following about her peripheral duties:

Being designee, parents who seek me out because I’m the only one who speaks Spanish at the school, the only teacher, having to go through CUM files, SST’s, IEP meetings. I mean, I could probably think of more.

These participants’ examples confirm that when teachers outside of the classroom experience role ambiguity combined with a tendency to be facilitative, rather than directive, they are often unsure of what tasks they should or should not attempt. The statements suggest that these site instructional coaches’ respective schools perceive that they are there to help in any way the school deems necessary, not mainly to coach classroom teachers.

Lastly, all of the participants described how school site principals inability to effectively lead the reform imposed barriers as they began the implementation of this shift from compliance to instruction at their schools. Given that site instructional coaches
cannot change whom their principals are, school leadership was identified as a barrier instead of one of the challenges that will be discussed in the next section. As the participants discussed the support they needed from their school site leaders, many inadvertently mentioned how the principals’ approaches to formalizing instructional coaching at their schools influenced their ability to move forward with this shift. The participants discussed two issues concerning the principal and the reform effort: the principals’ leadership capacity around the initiative and their use of time. These two barriers did not allow for reforming how schools perceive the site instructional coach role.

E. Aguirre (personal communication, September 29, 2010) stated the following about the principal’s attitude and messaging as a potential barrier in the initial implementation of the reform:

I feel the way they roll out the coaching initiative and think if you’re positive about it it’s going to come off as a positive thing. If you’re nervous about it when you present it, you’re going to come off as you’re nervous about it. Or you’re not sure and you don’t present it well because you didn’t really understand it but you’re now just throwing it out there because you know you have to.

Miller shared similar sentiments about how principal leadership around the initiative can either propel or slow down the change effort:

I’m going to need her to continue to work with me hand in hand to make sure that the whole staff’s on board. I can only do so much, but if it doesn’t come from her in the beginning I really don’t know how far I can get. And I don’t want her to just say okay, you’re an instructional coach, see you later.

I feel strongly in that at least for the first few months that she needs to push it, too, with the staff. It needs to come from her as well, not just me, because then if it comes from just me it’s just me being the bad guy or me trying to do something that they’re not ready to do. So I need her to take the lead (L. Miller, personal communication, September 13, 2010).
As for Miller, and most of the other site instructional coaches, it was very important that the principal set expectations with classroom teachers around their role, its purpose, and how it was going to move the school forward in meeting their student achievement goals. Hence, while participants had various interpretations of what the principal needed to do to make instructional coaching successful, they see the principal as the individual on the campus who establishes the conditions for instructional coaching to be absorbed within the school culture. The principal’s inability to do this directly impacts the pace of the reform. Knight’s (2005) perspective reinforces the idea that instructional coaches have the greatest impact where the principal and the coach are able to work in a partnership that is based on a shared, informed vision for what the coach can bring to a school.

The other principal influenced barrier mentioned by six of the 11 site instructional coaches was how principals structure the use of time at the school site. Six coaches shared accounts that indicated that principals were not consistent in understanding how the resource of time could be used to support the initiative. Many shared that if instructional coaching was to be made a priority, then it would be necessary for principals to rethink how they use established meeting time with classroom teachers. In addition, participants shared that principals needed to also demonstrate an understanding of how their coaches’ time needed to be valued in order to get the work done with teachers. Many participants shared that if established meeting time could be used differently, this might allow instructional coaches to engage in more pre-conferences, debriefs, or post conferences with teachers.
M. Wolff (personal communication, September 13, 2010) described the use of collective staff time at her school as follows:

But I think a lot of it is just busywork, just to get something down on the form, whereas if we were valued more as just get together with your team and use the benchmark data here as your third point, let’s look at what’s working and what isn’t and more in a conversation, and then we can either write up notes on our own or whatever and I know there’s that fine line of saying what we’re doing and then what goes to the administration.

Wolff’s comment indicates that what is done during collaboration is not valued and is merely promoting a response to mandates. This time that is apparently not being deemed valuable is time that could directly be used to support instructional reform through coaching.

V. Gonzalez (personal communication, September 14, 2010) also demanded that the principal strategize an effective use of time in order to remove obstacles from engaging in cycles with teachers:

I’m sure that I need, when we have those Tuesday meetings, I need time to train the staff on things, on strategies so that I can use that little knowledge they get at that staff meeting or training to build a one-on-one coaching cycles.

Aguirre and Perez advocated for another use of time at the schools. Both participants insisted that time with the principal to plan around the initiative was also necessary. Both site instructional coaches stated that they needed weekly meetings to discuss implementation with the instructional leaders of the school, and to ensure that instructional coaching remains on the school’s agenda.

In general, three barriers appear to influence the site instructional coaches’ ability to implement the reform effort: compliance, peripheral duties, and principal leadership. Site leadership seems to most prominently impact the instructional coaching initiative
through the principals’ ability to lead the effort and how they structure the use of time at their schools. Regardless of these barriers, site instructional coaches have been expected to move forward with initiative and engage in coaching cycles with classroom teachers. Identification of these barriers allowed for the district office department to be informed of the conditions within which the reform was being initially implemented.

Challenges to Implementation

Challenges were identified as obstacles the site instructional coaches confronted as they initially implemented the instructional coaching initiative at their schools. Unlike barriers, these challenges were defined as obstacles that the site instructional coaches could directly influence within the parameters of their role. Essentially, challenges presented issues that were within their sphere of influence to change. The following three systemic challenges emerged from the dialogues with site instructional coaches (a) resistant teachers, (b) perceptions of the previous coordinator role, and (c) the ability to complete full coaching cycles.

First, several of the site instructional coaches alluded to the teacher resistance (Jay, 2009) typically observed when instructional coaching is introduced at a school site. Four of the site instructional coaches specifically mentioned resistance from more veteran teachers.

Henderson described resistance from more veteran teachers in the following excerpts:

It’s hard for the older ones to change. I know that I’m supposed to be, I forget the words you used but something about an instrument for positive… an agent.
Yes, so whenever I get this resistance or this negativity, I try to challenge it or change it around and find the positives or just walk away and not be a part of it, because there is a culture of complaining. And it’s always been I was a safe person to complain to. And now that’s not my role (G. Henderson, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

Macias also shared an example of an interaction with a veteran teacher regarding instructional coaching that demonstrates some of the teacher mindset issues the site coaches are faced with:

I guess I’ll start with the challenge one because I think that’s right when I started and I think for any new coach it’s really intimidating when you have older teachers on your staff, veteran teachers. So it was really challenging for me to go into the classroom I was assigned to work with. So the challenge was to go in there because it’s two very veteran teachers in there. One is like could be my grandma, you know. So it was really challenging for me to go in there, and I remember just really struggling and giving her feedback. And she would say oh well, let me know, what can I do better, kiddo (V. Macias, personal communication, September 14, 2010).

Although veteran teachers were a concern to several site instructional coaches, all of the participants expressed that penetrating past teachers’ classroom doors would be a real challenge. The participants were well aware that they were going to need to develop strategies to be able to get into certain teachers’ classrooms who would rather be left alone, and have them remain in their previous coordinator role. V. Gonzalez (personal communication, September 14, 2010) addresses the challenges of teacher resistance and her coping strategy in the following manner:

I was sharing that with my principal yesterday, teachers by nature, teachers by nature, we are not open. We think of our classroom as our sacred kingdom and god forbid that someone dares to enter it. So I have seen it and people are not very open to me getting into their classrooms or to me asking them what are you doing, do you need any help.

But what I do in order to keep my positive energy is to think that happened to me at Washington three years ago or four years ago. People were not open to me.
People were like why are you here? What do you want? And by the end of the first year people were like come to my classroom, I want you to come, I want you to do this. So that’s what I keep on doing all the time when someone kind of closes the door on me. Like that happened to me already and I will say both to overcome it. So that’s one of the biggest roadblocks. People are really, they throw down images on others, so I don’t know who she is and I’m not willing to really knowing her, so I know that’s something I already went through and I was able to get over it.

In addition to teacher resistance, many of the participants shared that the perception of the previous coordinator role poses challenges for them to make this shift from compliance to instruction. As participants began to engage in the shift with their staff, it was clear that they were experiencing the remnants of classroom teachers’ expectations around the support they traditionally provided. Five of the 11 site instructional coaches discussed how the previous coordinator role was preferred at their schools either by teachers, administrators, or even themselves.

E. Aguirre (personal communication, September 29, 2010) alluded to the perception of the coordinator position posing challenges in the following way:

I think because like you said in the past your English learners or the coordinator has just been, we do the testing, we do all the compliance. So just having that shift of now, now this person’s going to be in your room, watching what you’re doing for these English learners, is probably threatening a bit. But I don’t think that our school leader has shared that or hasn’t made it a focus yet, where she’s mentioned coaching but she hasn’t pinpointed what subgroup we’re going to work with.

So I feel like that is the biggest… that’s what’s going to be the biggest challenge, that now this coach who was a coordinator before is coming in and observing and trying to help me with my English learners. So I think they were never held accountable.

Aguirre’s comment reminds us that classroom teachers perceived the coordinator as a resource at the school for executing the managerial, bureaucratic components of the
English Learner instructional programs, not necessarily the individual who addresses the instructional quality of those programs.

V. Gonzalez (personal communication, September 14, 2010) noted how she has embraced the change in order to support her whole school with understanding the shift from compliance to instruction.

I think that’s not even the answer I have here, but now that we were talking I think it’s important like people like me who are ELPCs and now are ELICs it’s important like for us to be really aware of the fact that it’s a total change. And it’s important to know, too, that you’re not an RT anymore in the sense that you’re providing materials, materials and materials, that you’re providing also the tools, the instructional tools for teachers to use everything. So I think that’s the most important, things that you’re sharing with people that came from the old model to the new one. And like in my case which I think is the worst case, I didn’t have that transition year which was last year. So for me a total change, but I’m really embracing it in the sense that I understand what I am required to do now or I’m supposed to do now.

In addition, some participants shared that in the past they were only assigned to work with teachers as instructional coaches if they were on an improvement plan as part of their evaluation cycle or if they were a brand new teacher needing support. This perception of the types of teachers that have historically received support from a coach in the classroom also poses challenges to making the shift. Wolff’s following claim describes this issue:

It is a big change, right. And I’ve been doing this for a long time, so I’m trying and change doesn’t come easy. But I am a professional. But as part of the piece of being in there working side by side with teachers, that excites me. I don’t know yet if teachers are going to perceive it that way and that’s another question that I have. Because in the past, you’ve always assigned coaches to either brand new teachers who were part of the BTSA model or teachers who administrators said I want you to work with so and so (M. Wolff, personal communication, September 13, 2010).
Coaching in the past has been used mostly as corrective action within this school district. The site instructional coaches in their new role are dealing with the previous role definition. In the previous role, instructional coaching was usually implemented when a teacher was not effective.

The third challenge that emerged from dialogues with the site instructional coaches was their inability to complete full coaching cycles with classroom teachers. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the district’s instructional coaching framework defined a complete coaching cycle to include the following components: pre-conference, demonstration/observation, next steps, observation/demonstration, and post conference. The instructional coach and classroom teacher engage in an on-going cycle and repetition of these steps until an established outcome has been attained. Seven of the 11 site instructional coaches identified the completion of a cycle as a struggle as they shift into this new role. For example, Rosales shared that a loss of continuity can be detrimental to attaining the goal of a cycle. She shared that she had felt unsuccessful whenever she was incapable of completing a cycle because of peripheral demands or because she was off campus due to meetings (E. Rosales, personal communication, September 27, 2010).

Apparently, not being able to fully complete the components of a coaching cycle does not allow for the instructional coach to gain momentum with the classroom teacher.

G. Henderson (personal communication, September 28, 2010) asserted her concerns about being able to complete conferencing with teachers:

I understand that we’re supposed to do like 25% periphery and 75%. But this is where I need help in learning how to do it, because how do you do all when and where do you do all the meetings with the teachers during coaching. Because some people will say I can’t do it before school. They don’t want to do it at
lunch. How many days after school can I have when I have cost meetings and these meetings, and then if I’m expected to teach a Voyager group after school, how do I do this. So I don’t really understand how that works, how you work that into it.

Macias shared a similar concern as to how instructional coaches were to find the time to conference with teachers in order to complete full cycles. She stated the following:

So just the time and getting everybody in. People busy with meetings, and so scheduling those. A lot of times it was like well, I can’t stay after school, I can’t do it before school, so I was trying to squeeze people in during the day. But it’s just hard to get people to want to meet all those times. So a lot of times it was through email, and so that was a challenge (V. Macias, personal communication, September 14, 2010).

R. Quinn (personal communication, September 21, 2010) elaborated on the difficulty of executing next steps with teachers in order to make sure the outcomes of the cycle are sustainable:

And then follow-through. Creating the next steps but then following through with them. It’s easy to follow-through when you’re in the middle of a cycle, but making sure to touch back with that person afterwards and making sure that they’re actually continuing on with the changes that they’re making.

These participants’ comments demonstrate that instructional coaches need to create structures within the school day that allow for the time necessary to complete cycles with classroom teachers. The department has not established common parameters for site instructional coaches school to school when it comes to conferencing with teachers. Not having a formal structure in place across the system has posed a challenge for the majority of these instructional coaches to implement complete cycles with teachers.
In summary, site instructional coaches presented three common challenges they faced during the initial steps of implementation of the instructional coaching initiative. Teacher resistance, typically from more experienced classroom teachers, appears to make it difficult for several site coaches to build a learning-focused relationship with them. In addition, site coaches shared that many teachers were comfortable with their previous coordinator role, and in fact, even deemed the support they have traditionally provided as valuable. The participants presented how shifting the role was difficult when schools have grown accustomed to coordinators providing peripheral support to programs instead of addressing instructional quality. Lastly, some site instructional coaches were actually able to move beyond teacher resistance and the perception of the previous role. However, site instructional coaches who had begun cycles with classroom teachers shared that completing full cycles posed a challenge given that it required teachers to sacrifice their most valuable resource - time.

**Desired Support from District Instructional Coach**

Understanding the type of support site instructional coaches needed at the inception of this reform effort was critical to informing the district coaches' approaches to conducting their work. Site instructional coaches expressed what professional support was most desirable for them as they engaged in this shift from compliance to instruction. The following three themes emerged when site instructional coaches were asked what professional support they wanted from their assigned district instructional coach (a) thought partner for problem solving, (b) provide feedback, and (c) push them to take next steps.
Six of the 11 site instructional coaches mentioned that the one-on-one sessions with their assigned district instructional coaches were beneficial when they were able to simply engage in reflective dialogue with them as thought partners. Perez and Quinn both explicitly stated that they used their district coach as a “sounding board.” They shared that district instructional coaches provided them with an opportunity for someone to simply listen to what was going well, what needed to improve, and what could be done differently. Whitman also discussed the role of their district instructional coaches in terms of a thought partner, but also specified that in this process of thinking together, she expected her district coach to support her with the formulation of solutions. Whitman stated that she expected her district instructional coach to help her “problem shoot around whatever comes up” (J. Whitman, personal communication, September 30, 2010).

Four of the 11 site instructional coaches also valued feedback on their performance in their new role from their district instructional coaches. These four specifically requested feedback on how they were doing as they interfaced with classroom teachers through cycles. Perez and Henderson directly requested that their assigned district coach observe them engaged in dialogues with teachers to provide support on how to organize those sessions and specifically comment on their use of language. Quinn also expressed that feedback after her district instructional coach observed her was critical to her professional growth in this new role:

But also I really enjoyed when she did shadow me on that coaching cycle last year, because it’s kind of like what I was talking about with my previous coach, having someone there, my principal, to come in and question you on things and make you grow. So I want that now. I want her to not just hear what I’m saying but to come in and see first-hand so she can say, okay, you’re having issues with
next steps, I see this is why you’re having issues, can you try this and having someone to guide me through that (R. Quinn, personal communication, September 21, 2010).

Some of the participants needed more than feedback. Three of the 11 site instructional coaches expressed that they needed their district instructional coaches to push them to implement coaching cycles in this new role. Essentially, these participants requested that their district instructional coaches needed to ensure they moved beyond their comfort zone.

Gonzalez expressed the need for her district instructional coach to challenge her so that she not merely support teachers, but also challenge them to engage in next steps towards instructional improvement. She reflected:

So probably if she challenges me to challenge teachers or gives me ideas on how to challenge them, that’s going to be valuable for me. Because it has to do with the kind of professional you are but also the kind of person you are. And I’m a lot into helping people, supporting people, and give ideas because I’m a very creative person so I have this idea, I have this idea, have this idea, but there’s a point where I see these or I hear it at the training that I say like I have to stop giving and I have to help people also be able to create. So probably Plumhoff’s piece would be like giving me ideas on how to challenge teachers (V. Gonzalez, personal communication, September 14, 2010).

L. Miller (personal communication, September 13, 2010) agreed with her district instructional coach pushing her towards next steps:

Right now I might need a push from her to say okay, starting October 1st this is what you’re doing, because I’m still working with CELDT and getting my feet wet with that and trying to learn as much as possible. But I think what I’m going to need from Antonia is to say okay, on Monday, you need to do this. Okay, just to kind of push me and get me started.

She also stated that she simply needs someone to hold her accountable.
Overall, site instructional coaches perceived that their district instructional coaches could influence their work if they assumed certain responsibilities as they “coached the coaches.” First, several participants believed their district instructional coach needed to think with them to address the challenges that arise when implementing the reform. Other site instructional coaches also felt that the district instructional coach needed to provide them feedback on their coaching capacity to ensure their continuous improvement in this new role. In addition, some site instructional coaches indicated that they looked to their district instructional coach to push them towards attaining next steps in the implementation of this initiative.

*Response to the Shift from a Compliance Role to an Instructional Role*

The site instructional coaches were asked about their response to the shift from compliance-oriented role to an instructional reform role that they were facing in this newly defined position. In this section, how the site instructional coaches were feeling about this shift early on in the initial implementation phase of the initiative is shared.

Eight of the 11 participants presented a positive response to the shift in roles. In general these seven shared that they perceived this newly defined role would make a difference for the students at their schools. The participants expressed their enthusiasm about their newly defined role in a variety of ways.

L. Miller (personal communication, September 13, 2010) expressed excitement about this new direction:

But I’m really excited to see that the thinking that’s coming in is fresh. It’s invigorating. I really think that the people here at the district office are getting it, and I’m excited to see where we’re headed.
From her perspective as a second year instructional coach, Quinn discussed how her new role was actually shifting the culture of her school:

I think it’s fantastic. Not being in that role before, it’s not really anything new to me as far as having to make that changeover and I’m glad that I don’t have to be the person to make that changeover. I think it’s wonderful. I think the climate of our school has changed because of it. I felt super uncomfortable just walking into teachers’ classrooms before, at the beginning of the year last year. And by mid-year, I didn’t. I felt comfortable walking into their classrooms. Sometimes I’d go sit down in the back. Most of the time I feel comfortable enough with teachers to run in and jump into their lesson. And they’re okay with that. So like I said, changing the climate (R. Quinn, personal communication, September 21, 2010).

V. Gonzalez (personal communication, September 14, 2010) noted that this change had the potential to impact teachers as she stated here:

For me, when I knew about it, it was a really positive change, and the way I perceive it is it’s something that’s really important and it’s something that is really needed. When I was working at Washington it was still the ELP [coordinator] model or role, and still I did lots of work on coaching teachers, and I realized that that’s what teachers need. I mean, like what we were talking about last time, it’s the peripheral tasks are needed, but that other piece is really key if you really want to impact teachers.

T. Perez (personal communication, September 15, 2010) agreed with the notion of this change effort serving as a vehicle to impact teacher practice as she asserts here:

So I’m thinking it’s a really bold but it’s also sort of you’re dealing with changing people’s paradigms and when you change people’s ways of thinking I think it’s very difficult for some people to think somebody’s going to come into my class and watch me teach and they feel intimidated and they feel threatened. If you don’t have the right personality I think it’s not going to be effective. So I think that it’s very bold and very valiente, but I hope that I think that if things haven’t been happening in the past in terms of people changing how they teach that this is definitely one, this is a vehicle to be able to get us there. This is a way, this is a road down which we can try and hopefully we will be successful.

Two of the site instructional coaches who had served as coordinators for a much longer period of time honestly recognized that the shift was incredibly challenging for
them. They presented more apprehensive, uncertain responses to the shift from compliance to instruction, and questioned who would assume their previous responsibilities. Both participants also valued their previous role and believed that it was important to their school communities.

G. Henderson (personal communication, September 28, 2010) stated that the change was very difficult for her:

My honest reaction was this is a difficult change for me.

Because I’m very comfortable in the role of a resource teacher. I have a good rapport with the community and with the teachers and I always help them do this. I did their translating, I did their calls, I did organizing different things and over the years I’ve gotten good at that. And then all of a sudden I’m told put that aside, you’re not going to work with kids or their families much anymore. Now you’re going to work with teachers who are pretty good teachers already. And I’ve had several teachers tell me, okay, what are you going to teach me? What are you going to do for me? And that’s a little intimidating because I like the Tiger Woods thing, even Tiger Woods has a coach and he’s got quite a bit.

Her response demonstrates the challenge of transforming into a new role when a school community has grown accustomed to the traditional, previous role regardless of its impact or outcomes for teacher practice or student learning.

In conclusion, these findings from phase one informed the initial implementation of the instructional reform. Both groups of participants provided insight as to what support was initially necessary for site instructional coaches to transition into their new role. In addition, the findings allow for an understanding of the barriers and challenges that needed to be overcome in order for the instructional coaching initiative to attain success. The data exposed the reader to what the site instructional coaches are experiencing as they begin their work as coaches versus coordinators. Site instructional
coaches were provided the opportunity to describe their experiences in their new roles and the professional support they deemed most valuable as their schools were expected to systemically shift their understanding of this new role early during the school year.

Phase Two: Reform Progress

This section reports data analysis of the first focus group that was conducted after district coaches began to provide the initial professional support to their site English Learner instructional coaches. Site instructional coaches had attended the first sessions of professional development on instructional coaching, on direct instruction, and also had begun meeting with their district instructional coaches in one-on-one “coaching the coach” sessions. The following two themes are discussed in this section (a) defining the new role, and (b) implementation struggles. The themes in this section also respond to the following two research questions:

- Research Question #3: What do site English Learner instructional coaches experience as they make this shift from a compliance-oriented role to an instructional-reform role?
- Research Question #4: In what areas are district and site instructional coaches experiencing successes in building instructional capacity? In what areas are they experiencing the greatest challenges?

Defining the New Role

Site instructional coaches discussed their perceptions of this new role that was a direct result of changing the focus from compliance coordinators to instructional coaches. Site instructional coaches shared that the new role was complex and that it required them
to assume various perspectives as they worked to impact teacher practice. In this section, the participants provide insight about the multifaceted position they were asked to embrace. Knight (2005) defines the role of the instructional coach in this manner:

An IC is an on-site professional developer who teaches educators how to use proven teaching methods. ICs use a repertoire of effective instructional practices to collaborate with teachers, identify practices that will effectively address teachers' needs, and help teachers implement those practices. ICs use a variety of professional development procedures to encourage the widespread, high-quality implementation of effective teaching practices, including holding one-to-one or small-group meetings during which ICs can identify how to address their most pressing concerns; guiding teachers through instructional manuals, checklists, and other materials; collaboratively planning with teachers to identify when and how to implement effective instruction practices; preparing materials for teachers prior to instruction; modeling instructional practices in teachers' classrooms; observing teachers when they use interventions; and providing feedback to teachers. (p. 17)

The participants included some of these characteristics as they discussed their actions in this new position, but also mentioned concepts beyond Knight’s definition. The focus group data revealed that the participants defined their role as multifaceted and contingent upon ensuring they address collaboration, awareness, and the mindset of the teachers at their schools.

The concept of collaboration was discussed. During the focus group, participants affirmed that part of their role was to be able to build relationships and create a culture of collaboration at their schools. Participants shared that they believed it was their job to make sure teachers began to deprivatize their teaching, open their doors, and engage in instructional planning together. R. Quinn (personal communication, October 20, 2010) described how she believed facilitating a culture of collaboration could create more readiness for instructional coaching:
Because what I said was if you can promote a culture of collaboration of the teachers-when I first came to this school three years ago it was a very closed-door, teaching in isolation, and I didn't come from a school like that. So I was going, where are the people? Who's going to work with me? Who's going to give suggestions to me. There are no coaches here. My administrators never come in my classroom, ever.

So last year I really worked on changing that from a closed-door policy to an open-door policy and shifting so that now the teachers, they plan together. They never did that before. We implemented planning days after every benchmark, which is a lot of work on my part, but the teachers love it. So now they're all on the same page. We have peer observations going on. They've never seen each other teach before. They love it now. I can take, today I took a teacher, walked into three other classrooms, and nobody even questioned why are you in here. They said oh, there's a chair right there for you, have a seat. That wouldn't have happened before. And then sharing what's working with them, what isn't. People are open to videotaping right now, like you were saying.

In addition to the facilitation of collaboration, the site instructional coaches shared that this new role required that they raise awareness about practice, and specifically about how to effectively instruct English Learners. E. Aguirre (personal communication, October 20, 2010) reflected about her experience in two schools as she tried to implement change:

Mine was something similar but I chose raising awareness, I think because I've already been at two different school sites and now that I'm at a new school site, I can see the difference. So starting at a new site I see the dynamics and how-I don't think that it's teachers aren't aware of EL issues, it's just that they're not informed and maybe it hasn't been a practice at that school to really focus on progress that their EL's are making.

So like at the last school I was at for over five years, I look back now and change is slow. It comes but it takes a while. So I remember when I first started teaching there, there wasn't really ELD grouping. It didn't even exist. Teachers weren't even grouped. They just taught their own ELD component, if they even taught it. And now leaving that school I see how many things have changed over the last few years. So you see, okay yes, maybe I did impact that school after working with them for a few amount of years.
Site instructional coaches also discussed that part of their role required a focus on teacher mindset. Participants discussed that it was critical to address what teachers thought about how students learn in the classroom and how their teaching directly impacts student achievement. E. Rosales (personal communication, October 20, 2010) summarizes this facet of the position that continuously challenges her in the following excerpt:

To me it's the thing that most I guess intrigues me, and it's because of a thing that I don't think I'm capable of doing. I don't know how to do that. That is impact the mindset of the school, because I believe that if every teacher truly, truly believes that every child can learn, not just lip service, from your hearts, that every child can learn, and that the children don't learn by magic. They learn as a consequence of our practice.

Then I think our job would be easier and more efficient, because what I find in a lot of the conversations as a group is that people are talking about themselves. I cannot do this because I, I, and we have very little conversation about children. And so to me, if we can shift the conversation over us and the administration and the district and we start talking about children, real change would happen.

These three concepts (collaboration, raising awareness, and mindset) were the predominant themes of discussion when asked about the most important aspects of their role. M. Wolff (personal communication, October 20, 2010) described how all three needed to be interdependent if coaches were to expect to change teacher practice:

I also put down raising awareness. But I see it as encompassing, it goes along with collaboration and then it's going to impact the mindset. So I kind of see all three together.

And what I would like to see is basically what you're describing now, where we get to that point where teachers feel comfortable. We have a plan in place where if we're looking at benchmark data or whatever, we're really looking at it, you have important planning days and then people can go around and observe each other. And then that you truly do have this collaborative spirit and then that is going to impact, I do believe, the English learner in the classroom, because we're all sharing and looking at best practice.
Not one instructional coach mentioned the day-to-day features of this position. Instead, as the discussion about their new role transpired, the site instructional coaches discussed these broader concepts that address change at their schools.

Implementation Struggles

In order to understand what site instructional coaches were experiencing as they began implementation of the shift after some of the initial professional support, the participants engaged in a dialogue about what struggles they were facing in their new role. Many of the barriers and challenges discussed during the initial interviews were restated during this first focus group, but additional insight was gained for two reasons. First, the site instructional coaches had more experience with the new role because they were slightly farther along in the school year. In addition, the professional support they had attained during the previous month served as a catalyst for them to begin implementing the initiative that resulted in more experiences with the struggles of early implementation. In this section, the participants provide further insight about the struggle in this shift from compliance to instruction.

Many site instructional coaches discussed the demands on their time during the day. The site instructional coaches again identified the administrative, peripheral duties that are asked of them to support the operations of the school. The participants shared how these demands pose barriers to focusing and engaging in cycles with classroom teachers. E. Rosales (personal communication, October 20, 2010) synthesized this struggle when describing the peripheral tasks that make the change effort with teachers move more slowly:
And some of the roadblocks that I am finding are that I have too much to do. So although-and I think everybody relates to that-although I started cycles with three teachers and I'm planning with them and so it's a whole grade level to align to the practice. I feel that I never caught up and I don't have much time to reflect. However, for the people that I've been able to help them sort of on the fly, planning here or other little things, I think the perception is changing, but little by little.

Henderson discussed how the perception of the previous role that both she and the teachers at her school coveted also posed challenges for the school to move forward with the initiative. She shared that the execution of peripheral duties pleased everyone while the benefits of instructional coaching were not as clear yet to her staff:

I'll have to say that at my school the teachers really appreciate the support, peripheral support, and that's been a real challenge for me because I love that they love me. And they're always saying oh thank you for this or thank you for that, and now this year I have to step back from that support a little bit. I'm still doing some of it and I stay there 'til 6:00 like the rest of you, 'til 7:00 or whatever, trying to get all the peripheral stuff done. But that is one of the challenges because it felt good doing peripheral work. And this is harder, for me (G. Henderson, personal communication, October 20, 2010).

E. Aguirre (personal communication, October 20, 2010) elaborated on the peripheral duties as a barrier and identified how the school principal often contributes to her inability to manage her time for instructional coaching effectively:

Basically what you said, having too much to do. I feel overwhelmed as well, but partly because I think going back to the administrator, we've had a whole conversation of periphery work, yet I'm still doing a lot of it. So for example, yesterday our principal has newsletters that she sends out quite often and they're two pages single-spaced and will deliver it that morning and say I need it by the end of today.

Translating, right, which is fine and I don't mind if it's a couple days ahead of time. And so I went to her, because after going to meetings at the district and everyone has the same, you need to start learning to challenge your principal sometimes and having these hard conversations. So I'm like, I'm not able to do it by today; I have this and this and this. Like I have meetings and walk-throughs and just things that I had already planned and working with teachers. And then
the principal is like, well this is a priority. If you can't get it done then I'm going to be in big trouble. So it's kind of like what do you say to that, kind of thing.

Through the discussion about the demands on their time, the participants were able to identify another principal imposed barrier. Principals contribute to the role ambiguity that often plagues teacher leadership positions outside of the classroom. Examples of the principal impeding effective implementation of the initiative were cited. Quinn addressed the issue of the principal assigning to her a teacher to coach. Quinn believed that when instructional coaching is forced upon a teacher, the results of the cycle are less likely to impact practice. She claimed that if changes do occur, they are often not sustained because the teachers were not efficacious in the process:

But my issue has been last year, it hasn't happened this year, my principal would say go coach this teacher, she needs a coaching cycle. And it kind of relates back to what you were saying Teresa, and there was one teacher that I did three coaching cycles with and the teacher's not going to change. She just isn't. And that was my thing. I talked with Rosanna about him. My one-on-one is for me, I don't want to coach a teacher who has been assigned me to them. I want a teacher who comes to me and says I want you to coach me.

And that was a huge barrier for me last year because I felt like it was a big waste of time and it was frustration on my point because even when the teacher said oh wow, that did work, as soon as I was out the door it was gone. And one of the teachers that I coached twice last year, and my principal, I take that back, she did say this year go coach her, she switched her grade levels from 4th to 1st, and then she said you need to go coach her on how to run UA In her class, and I kind of looked at her and said, do you really think it's going to change? Well, you need to try. So that's my barrier (R. Quinn, personal communication, October 20, 2010).

Principals also assign instructional coaches to work only with one or two grade levels for long periods in the year. These grade level assignments severely limit whom the instructional coaches can work with. Although Knight (2005) identifies administrative referral as a strategy for getting teachers on board, he also reminds us that
these assignments need to be handled with care. When teachers are told they have to work with the coach or else, the instructional coach is instantly viewed as a threat or a punishment. In addition, when administrators assign instructional coaches to entire grade levels sometimes for the entire year, they are unable to start cycles with teachers seeking instructional coaching. Instructional coaches are more likely to attain results with these open, willing teachers that in turn can be foundational for embedding instructional coaching into the school’s culture. If principals assign coaches to grade levels because of deficits they observe, instructional coaching inherently is given a negative connotation. T. Perez (personal communication, October 20, 2010) describes her desire to spread the instructional coaching initiative beyond just her current principal’s assignment:

I was going to mention one little thing about being assigned to a grade level. Like in my case, I think it's great because I get to work with all the people that I am used to working with, my 2nd grade team. And I'm Teresa from Gardner. But I think what the challenge is going to be is that the teachers in 2nd and 3rd grade at my particular school, because we're the reason why our test scores went down, well, the 2nd grade and 3rd grade teachers know that, so we've been assigned 2nd, the literacy coach and I have been assigned 2nd, so they fully well know why we're there. They're not idiots.

And I think sometimes it is because I feel like I want to make myself eventually open to everybody. I'm starting, like the gateway, my gateway is to 2nd grade because they all know me and they have a great relationship with me and I have a great relationship with them and I feel like I can do a lot of good work. But I feel like I want to also be able to access kinder and 1st and 4th and 5th and not feel like I've been caged into this one particular area because test scores have to go up.

And I think that has a lot, and I'm sorry, this is the second time I'm mentioning, but it has a lot to do with the DAGT (District Alternative Governance Team), because every time my principal comes back from DAGT she's all of a sudden, you need to work with these SEI 2nd and 3rd grade teachers. They're the reasons why our test scores went down. And then I think to myself, well, that's not really, that's not the point of my job. My job is to help teachers that want to improve their instruction. And if they approach me, if a 5th grade teacher approaches me
whose test scores were fabulous, I should, but she wants to work on, I don't know, ELL strategies in her classroom, I should be able to do that.

Perez’s statement reminds us that instructional coaching is for all teachers who are willing to engage in a continuous improvement cycle of reflection and improvement, even if they are perceived as highly effective.

In summary, the findings from phase two provide more information as to what the site instructional coaches are experiencing as they make the shift from compliance to instruction. Site instructional coaches have focused on the redefinition of their role with principals and teachers. As they shift from coordinators to coaches, they are building their schools’ understanding of their new role. The site instructional coaches spoke mostly about defining their new role through an emphasis on collaboration, raising awareness, and mindset with their teachers in order to create a school culture that had readiness for the reform instructional coaching was to bring. Additionally, early implementation struggles persisted. These struggles were primarily grounded in the schools’ principals and teachers not fully embracing the shift from compliance to instruction; whereby, site instructional coaches in many ways were still being treated as coordinators who were more focused on bureaucratic, managerial tasks that support the schools’ operations. Principals also still utilize their site instructional coaches more as short-term strategies to eliminating deficits or performance issues rather than as change agents who can transform instructional practice across their schools.

Phase Three: Evaluation of the Professional Support for the Reform

This section reports data analysis of the second focus group that was conducted after district coaches had provided substantial professional support to their site English
Learner instructional coaches in the following three contexts (a) one-on-one coaching the coach sessions, (b) instructional coach academies, and (c) professional development on the direct instruction framework. This phase allowed for the participants to inform the district instructional coaches and the researchers as to how their professional support structure were impacting their work at the sites while they continued to shift from their compliance oriented role to their instructional reform role. Participants evaluated how the work of the district coaches was influencing their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness to implement their new role. The section is organized according to each of the three contexts for professional support. In addition, the final subsection reports what the site instructional coaches perceive about this shift from compliance to instruction and what additional support is necessary if the initiative was to thrive. The results of this evaluative focus group respond to the two following research questions:

- Research Question #1: How does the support of a district English Learner instructional coach and the professional development they provide influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness of site English Learner instructional coaches?
- Research Question #6: What additional support do site coaches need in order to implement the instructional coaching framework?

One-on-One Coaching the Coach Sessions

Participants discussed the influence the weekly one-on-one coaching sessions with a district instructional coach had on their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness to implement their new role as instructional reformers. The most prominent theme that
emerged referred to the concepts of accountability and being pushed to the next level of implementation. Participants shared that their district instructional coaches provided a structure to ensure they were moving forward in their new roles. District instructional coaches held site instructional coaches accountable to the implementation of next steps as the initiative was operationalized.

M. Wolff (personal communication, December 8, 2010) summarized the importance of the district instructional coaches providing on-going support during the early phases of implementation and during the shift from compliance to instruction:

On the one hand we all like our coaches and they're very encouraging for us. It's almost as if they come in, besides listening to us and nudging us along it's almost as if they come in, too, with a certain idea to take us to the next level. And somehow they get us to go there. And for those of us who have been in a resource position before, it's been particularly helpful to encourage us to make the switch over to coaching, and we kind of doubted if we would have been at this point if we didn't have that coach there coming. So they've been very supportive. Her statement suggests that without the district coach providing the one-on-one professional support, she was doubtful of her and others’ capacity to execute the shift.

J. Whitman (personal communication, December 8, 2010) also reiterated that the district instructional coach one-on-one sessions ensured that she and her colleagues were pushed to perform outside of their comfort zone:

I think one commonality also that popped out to me at the end was that it's pushing us to another level. It's that your ZPD, your zone of proximal development and then going, pushing us a little further. Here we are, this is where we want to get, and it gently nudges us to where we need to go by taking more risks.
Whitman’s comment confirms this idea that district instructional coaches support site instructional coaches taking their next steps in implementation even though they might feel discomfort in doing so.

L. Miller (personal communication, December 8, 2010) also confirmed that a district instructional coach forces the site instructional coach to take a next step in implementing the reform in a supportive manner:

She sets goals for me, so when we meet, I'll de-stress and talk about what's not working and we'll talk about instruction, we'll do walk-through, we'll come back, what have you at our meeting, but at the end of the meeting there's always a goal-setting. Like okay, what are we going to do for next time. It'll either be one big thing, one small thing, two things, whatever is it, it's always something that she has a brain that she can remember everything. Because she comes back and says so, what did we do? How did we do? How did it go.

Miller’s account demonstrated how the on-going professional support from a district instructional coach held her accountable in conducting her work as an instructional coach who is expected to take next steps with the classroom teachers at her school.

Lastly, Aguirre shared that as her district coach pushes her during the one-on-one coaching the coach structure, she attains knowledge that in turn affects her attitude. She claimed that this impact on her attitude influences how ready she was to engage in coaching cycles with teachers. Her colleague Whitman synthesized her small group discussion with Aguirre in the following manner:

Aguirre shared that they're all interrelated and by building our knowledge it changes our attitude essentially. And so as a result our skills increase and then we're more ready to conduct the work (J. Whitman, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

The participants affirmed that district instructional coaches impacted their capacity to implement the shift to instructional coaching mostly by pushing them to
implement next steps and holding them accountable to mutual agreements around the work.

**Instructional Coach Academies**

Participants discussed the influence the monthly instructional coach academies had on their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness to implement their new role as instructional reformers. The most prominent theme that emerged suggested that the academies served as the context where the participants gained knowledge from their district instructional coaches while simultaneously being provided opportunities to apply their new learning in a safe, simulated environment.

V. Macias (personal communication, December 8, 2010) described her experience as a participant in the instructional coach academy that she apparently deemed valuable and necessary to implement the shift from compliance to instruction:

> I think seeing the amazing work that's done at the instructional coach academy really helps me understand why they don't have as much time to be out at the school sites. Because they've been absolutely amazing. All the academies that we're attended, they're very well planned out, very thorough and allowing us to not just understand the content but to apply what we're learning.

> So I think it's really impacted all four areas: knowledge, skills, attitude, and readiness there. They provide us with a lot of knowledge. I really like the fact all the research that we receive there so that we can understand what it is that we're doing. Definitely affects the attitude, because if you're more knowledgeable about it your attitude is going to change. It's going to give you those skills and that readiness to go in and do what you need to do. So I really feel like that's the glue of it's really helping to make the coaching a lot more successful when we go back to the school site, that we have that one-up on the teachers, that little extra to go back and really help us do our jobs.
Her positive evaluation of the academies demonstrates that this professional support structure provided site instructional coaches a place to attain knowledge on how to be a more effective instructional coach at their schools.

E. Rosales (personal communication, December 8, 2010) also provided a positive evaluation of the instructional coach academies as she illustrates the academies’ role in impacting implementation of the initiative:

Yes, I want to contribute we all agree in our group-I think Victoria said she was a veteran coach but I am not. And I have exactly the same feeling about it. So I think the planning and the delivery of the academies were outstanding and it impacted, it had a big impact in veteran coaches and in new coaches. And it affects all areas. I think when you gain the knowledge your attitude change. You have better understanding. You feel more confident. You have a set of skills and you feel more ready to coach.

Whitman also shared that the instructional coach academies impacted her and her colleagues’ in a way that created a positive attitude about moving the reform forward. She demonstrated enthusiasm about the academies when asked to synthesize how the academies influenced her capacity to effectively coach at her school:

We shared just that we walk out so much more motivated. Someone had to restrain me practically after Thursday and Friday. I was so excited. Just gung ho about it. But I think all of us shared that experience (J. Whitman, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

The participants concluded the discussion regarding the influence of the instructional coach academies with a favorable sentiment. The participants offered positive feedback on the monthly academies affirming that this was the context that allowed for them to attain knowledge about effective coaching, practice their skills, and most importantly, develop an upbeat attitude that empowered them to implement the initiative.
Professional Development on the Direct Instruction Framework

Participants discussed the influence of the professional development, also known as the collaboratives, on the district’s direct instruction framework that their district instructional coaches provided. The site instructional coaches described the impact these professional development opportunities had on their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and readiness to implement their new role with classroom teachers. The most prominent themes that emerged were the following (a) coaching entry point, (b) aligned common language, and (c) increased instructional capacity.

First, participants affirmed that the simultaneous implementation of a new instructional framework, district wide, provided them an entry point into coaching cycles with teachers. The participants claimed that many classroom teachers depended upon site instructional coaches to support them in their new learning given that all classroom teachers in Longridge USD were expected to implement the direct instruction framework. The data suggested that this expectation naturally created conditions for more coaching to occur since teachers were seeking support in meeting this expectation and having to change their instructional practice. In answering questions about the influence of the professional development on the direct instruction framework, it became clear that the participants felt it forced teachers to open their doors to them and approach them for help. The participants agreed that they were often approached by groups of teachers at their schools after the collaboratives to request instructional coaching as a professional support structure for meeting implementation expectations. Whitman stated that the professional development provided by the district instructional coaches “primes the teachers to be
more receptive because there is a common language,” a common language that teachers need to make sense of (J. Whitman, personal communication, December 8, 2010). The instructional coach at the schools becomes the teachers’ on-site professional development support to begin making meaning of the framework and its implications for their practice.

Rosales described an example of how the direct instruction collaboratives prompted a teacher to ask for support. The teacher wanted support on how to implement the framework across content areas, and with her teaching style, through a coaching cycle immediately after the professional development opportunity:

I think that with sitting down with some teachers after the collaborative and after coming to the Academies, it really, yes, it does create that common language, but having to sit down with them and planning next to them, because last week was really powerful for one of the teachers and myself when we sat down. We actually did a PowerPoint together with the orientation and the presentation phases. And this teacher is more linear, and I felt that for her it was her ah-ha moment. Because she felt that this is how she had a buy-in, because now she can implement it in her style, because every teacher has their own teaching style, but for her it worked because now she didn't feel intimidated with all these steps she had to remember, but it was there and it was her slides and it was in order and it was step by step. So we came with that.

Then I modeled the math lesson with that, with the PowerPoint. She did an ELD lesson, and yes, it can work with ELD lessons because hers was still very interactive. She didn't rely on the PowerPoint, but for her that was that buy-in because now we knew that okay, this is what you do, but she worked it with her style. So planning with the teachers because now they're familiar because we do have that common language. Now it's how can we work it with your style and still keep the framework the way that it's supposed to be implemented (E. Rosales, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

Rosales’s comment demonstrates how an instructional coach was able to easily enter a cycle with a teacher that focused on making sense of the professional development they had both received.
T. Perez (personal communication, December 8, 2010) affirms that the direct instruction collaboratives motivate teachers to seek support from her as they attempt initial implementation of the framework in their classrooms:

I just feel like there's a ripple effect going on at my school that even though my school is very open as opposed to maybe some of the other schools to this coaching cycle, because we've always had people walking in our classrooms observing us because we are a professional development school, but I feel like people are really starting to come to us and saying you know I heard this lesson with meta-cognition and I have no idea what that is, would you come into my-so people are starting to talk now at our school about the fact that we've been out there, we put ourselves out there. And it's been a really, like I'm finally realizing that I'm really, this is just an amazing experience for me right now, I'm finding. I'm finding my whole attitude is starting to change a little bit about this position.

As classroom teachers make meaning of the direct instruction framework, some site instructional coaches like Perez, were automatically being sought by classroom teachers to further their learning at the site level. This desire to make meaning of the professional provided by the district instructional coaches created more optimal conditions for entering into coaching cycles with teachers.

G. Henderson (personal communication, December 8, 2010) shared how the direct instruction collaboratives provided her entry points with grade levels and even served as a tool to deal with resistant teachers:

Because working with a grade level as opposed to the individual teachers has given me more success because we always have some teachers who are gung ho and those that are just dragging their feet. So like for example 1st grade, when we got together, two of the teachers were sitting down so I went to the third one who wants no part of it and I said, well, are you going to come join us, because we're going to do it together. We're going to plan the orientation together and everything together. And she didn't want to but she did. So I think this is a real good way of getting people on board that are hesitant.
Bringing teachers together around a common instructional framework has empowered some site instructional coaches to confidently address even resistant teachers given that all teachers are expected to implement their new learning.

Several participants also alluded to how the direct instruction collaboratives were building a common language for instructional planning and delivery. The site instructional coaches mutually agreed that this common language influenced their capacity to implement their new role more effectively with the classroom teachers at their site. As teachers were making meaning of the components of the framework, site instructional coaches were organically provided ample opportunities to engage in discussions about instruction using shared terminology and definitions because of the common training they had received. The participants claimed that this also brought forth some ease for them as they shifted into this new role because the framework facilitated conversations about instruction using a common language.

E. Rosales (personal communication, December 8, 2010) also synthesized the group’s discussion regarding this theme of an aligned, common language in the following statement:

Some of the things that we were discussing I think this collaboratives provide a lot of common language and maybe an entry point, like Victoria was saying. And I think by themselves, I don't see a direct correlation in implementation. And that could be for a lot of factors. First of course the design of the work is that the PD comes or the collaboratives pair up with coaching, because by itself I don't see a direct result when teachers come back, they all know what I'm talking about or the framework but I don't see results in terms of implementation.

So I think it's a great tool for common language and beginning coaching and also the other thing is it could be because it's so new. And there are a lot of things that we don't know how to work out yet. We're trying it; the teachers are trying it.
The participants concurred that the direct instruction collaboratives provided a common language for them to coach on about instruction.

Lastly, the professional development the district instructional coaches provided to the site instructional coaches increased their overall instructional capacity. Participants discussed how they attained knowledge on lesson design and delivery and improved their skills to provide feedback to teachers since they could ground their observations in the essential components of the instructional framework. Essentially, the professional support provided through the collaboratives created a systematized approach to planning and designing lessons as they engaged in coaching cycles or grade level collaboration with classroom teachers.

L. Miller (personal communication, December 8, 2010) described how the increased knowledge motivated her to begin conducting her work differently at the site:

Since our last meeting I decided to do more demo lessons in the classroom, and I guised it as a way of, it was from my learning. I think because I took an interest in attempting to work around the DI (Direct Instruction) framework, they perked up a little and thought oh wow, you're getting your feet wet. And I told them, I'm not an expert, I'm learning this with you.

G. Henderson (personal communication, December 8, 2010) summarized the influence of the collaboratives on her work in this new instructional reform role:

I do believe that as we've progressed, it's really been more defined in how we're supposed to do all this. So I think the knowledge is really growing and I think the teachers are also, they're not getting as much as we are because we have all our extra stuff. But the knowledge is really, really coming along. Attitude, definitely the more you know the better you can do. And skills, same thing, definitely getting more skills.

The collaboratives apparently provided the site instructional coaches with a greater depth of understanding of effective instructional planning and delivery. This in turn impacted
their skills and attitude in conducting coaching cycles with teachers to continuously improve the quality of instruction at their schools.

Perceptions about the Shift from Compliance to Instruction and Desired Additional Support

Participants were asked to evaluate as to whether or not they perceived that the explicit shift from compliance to instruction would actually make a difference for the Latino English Learner students at their schools. In addition, participants were prompted to describe what additional support they would need from their district instructional coaches to be able to transform fully from coordinators to instructional reformers. In this section, the participants respond to these relevant questions as the individuals responsible for implementing this organizational shift on the ground level.

Four of the 10 participants present at the second focus group articulated a positive response when asked about their perceptions as to whether or not this explicit shift in their role would make a difference for the Latino English Learner students their position is intended to support. The participants who expressed confidence about the potential impact of the shift claimed that it was the alignment across the three professional support structures (one-on-one coaching sessions, instructional coach academies, and direct instruction collaboratives) that would make the impact possible over time.

J. Whitman (personal communication, December 8, 2010) discussed the strength of the interrelatedness of the three professional support structures her district instructional coach provides her and how the structures capacitate her to implement the instructional coaching initiative:
It didn't occur to me until after hearing people talk, it’s the common thread that goes through all those three-coaching the coach, the academies and the DI collaborative-is the common thread and I think within it the structure, and I'm sure this isn't a coincidence-it supports itself. Because the coach is supporting me with what I'm learning at the collaborative. The coach is supporting me with what I'm learning at the academies, and they're all related. So I think that-it's almost like the safety net that's holding me up because it's so related. And I'm hearing it in three different opportunities.

Macias also agreed that the shift would make a positive impact on student achievement given that they have been provided with the responsibility of supporting classroom teachers with a framework grounded in research. This research should support the idea that direct instruction is an effective approach to teaching English Learners.

But as far as the impact on student achievement, I think that the shift to instruction definitely will impact student achievement, because there is a lot of research out there that especially EL's, they need a lot of explicit, direct instruction (V. Macias, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

Aguirre agreed with her colleagues that the shift could yield positive results for the Latino English Learners she supports across her school. She asserted that compliance and the prior coordinator duties alone would never deeply transform instruction, and that this new direction had the potential to do so:

I agree that this whole shift is going to impact academic achievement. I feel that the whole shift will versus the compliance alone, because I have been a coordinator and I don't think giving the tests and doing the LAS and doing the SELAC is really making an impact for the kids in the classroom. I do believe it in theory (E. Aguirre, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

Six of the 10 site instructional coaches present at the second focus group articulated uncertainty about the impact of their new role. These participants simply were unsure about their ability to make a systemic difference at their schools. Some of these site instructional coaches still thought that the previous role did make an impact for the
Latino English Learners at their schools even though they were mostly providing peripheral support.

G. Henderson (personal communication, December 8, 2010) expressed her doubt as she wonders whether or not this explicit shift will positively impact the instructional programs at her school:

I'm not sure this is going to make a difference. It could be because of my own inadequacies or it could be because of other things. So I'm not sure personally if what I'm doing is going to make a difference.

And part of it, and I've said this before, I've been in this position for eight years, the ELIC, not ELIC, the resource teacher, coordinator, and I got really used to and good at the periphery. So people kind of expect it. Now that I'm not pulling groups and I'm no longer a resource teacher and I'm not pulling groups, teachers are feeling like they've lost something. The kids have lost something, but they're still coming to me for other things that I've always done for them.

Her own self-doubt and commitment to the previous coordinator role create skepticism as to whether or not the instructional coaching initiative at her school will yield the desired outcomes.

Gonzalez also expressed doubt about the impact of the shift from compliance to instruction. She reminded us that although compliance is not expected to be the focus any longer, it still exists. As a site instructional coach, she still feels a tremendous obligation to executing the compliance components of the English Learner instructional programs at her school, and consequently, she believes that this obligation makes it difficult to fully embrace the role of an instructional coach:

Maybe in the sense that even if compliance is not part of the conversation, compliance is there. We have CELDT. We have SELAC. We have reclassification. We have other things to do, and it's like the elephant in the room. No one wants to talk about it… there's a lot of things to do that are never
mentioned and we are focusing on the coaching part but we still as ELICs have a lot of things to do that have to do with compliance and that we have to do… besides whatever good intentions we all have and however we want to do really good coaching, there's that thing that is not being mentioned, compliance (V. Gonzalez, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

In addition to the persistent obligations to compliance, other participants felt that since the discussion with them had focused mostly on instructional coaching and the direct instruction framework, the conversations about English Learners had become more implicit as opposed to explicit. She shared that as coordinators, although the focus was not instructional coaching, their previous position allowed them to address English Learners more explicitly with their teachers. Gonzalez describes her perceptions in the following account:

So I think the way the model is will impact students, but what I think is really going to be affecting and already is, is the fact that it doesn't seem to focus on- EL's don't seem to be mentioned in anything.

Like now, before at least it was we're the ELIC's, you go in, you're looking at the big five, you're looking at engagement strategies, and now nowhere in any of this are we mentioning the EL's, and before like the teachers, I used to say I'm going to put a tattoo, pair-share, on my forehead, because as soon as I walked in the teachers are doing that. And now like that's not defined for us any more that that's our focus. And so I think that in order for it to really ensure that our EL's are not forgotten, there needs to be a shift in the whole initiative that needs to bring the EL's back to the forefront in all of this instruction (V. Gonzalez, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

In these accounts that describe the site instructional coaches attitudes about the shift, the participants provide insight as to what additional support they need to continue forging forward in their new role. Participants valued how the three professional support structures were aligned and related. However, their responses clearly advocated for support with finding ways to fill the void of the previous role responsibilities some of
them found influential at their school. Moreover, it is clear some felt that in order to effectively focus on coaching, compliance obligations needed to continuously be streamlined. Lastly, the participants suggested that the department consider a more explicit versus implicit focus on English Learners as they implement all of the professional support structures.

In addition to these suggestions, one other prominent theme that emerged throughout this dialogue was the need to eliminate some of the misalignment that is caused when demands from other departments impede the implementation of their new role. Some participants mentioned that even though they feel confident about their new role, other expectations at the site level impede their ability to implement this new role predominantly because of the misalignment that permeates the school system. Participants concurred that time and resources are diverted from focusing on instruction because of expectations regarding state accountability pressures and district assessments. The site instructional coaches felt that until the district works on eliminating misalignment between the instructional coaching reform initiative and program improvement requirements, the impact of the professional support structures being examined will never reach their maximum potential.

E. Rosales (personal communication, December 8, 2010) summarizes this concern in the following manner:

I think that's a point of stress because while the district coaches and as we're talking about practice and problem-solving and attitudes and knowledge, the system that pays us the salary and evaluates, the principals say where's your mini-quiz? Where's your data? How did you do the CST (California Standards Test)?
The participants claimed that they would feel more supported if they did not have to confront this misalignment on a daily basis as they engage in their work at the schools.

Summary

The interviews and the focus groups with the district and site instructional coaches provided relevant insights into the initial implementation of the shift from compliance coordinator to instructional coach for English Learners. Through Participatory Action Research, the researcher and the participants engaged in a reciprocal dialogue that informed the design and delivery of the professional support structures that were implemented to sustain this organizational focus on the quality of instruction. Through these conversations, the data revealed valuable information as to how the initial trajectory of this reform initiative had manifested at the schools. The voices from the field, being the site instructional coaches, provided information on what the frontline of the reform effort faced during the earliest phase implementation. The participants’ evaluation of those structures informed how the district office department could continuously improve the professional support structures while simultaneously work on eliminating the barriers impeding reform implementation.
Chapter 5
Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this Participatory Action Research study was to explore a reform effort grounded in transforming the human resources that have historically provided English Learner support services to schools. The reform effort intentionally shifted the traditional support staff personnel from focusing on compliance-oriented behaviors to embracing a new role that focused on instructional reform through coaching. The study provided an opportunity to examine how a district office department supported this organizational shift during the earliest phases of implementation of the new role. Former coordinators, who now serve as instructional coaches, provided insights on how the systemic reform was received at schools. Most importantly, site instructional coaches informed a district office department on how the established professional support structures influenced their capacity to engage in one-on-one coaching cycles with teachers.

Educational research claims that the bureaucratic use of our resources often impedes improving the root cause of the systemic failure in serving marginalized groups of students. The reform initiative examined within this study presumed that the root cause of this failure is the quality of the instruction in the classrooms where Latino English Learners sit. A second assumption of the department leading this effort was that compliance alone would never yield transformational outcomes for underserved students. Consequently, by examining a reform effort that explicitly intends to eliminate the sustainability of the bureaucracy and instead focus on instructional reform, we can better
comprehend how transforming the use of our human resources affects the continuous improvement of instructional practice.

Five district instructional coaches and 11 site instructional coaches served as the frontline in this reform effort and were the personnel held accountable for operationalizing the explicit shift from compliance to instruction. In order to deeply understand the impact of the shift these coaches were expected to implement, it would be necessary to examine student achievement in the classrooms of teachers they had coached over a period of time. Given the limitations of this study, that entire reform trajectory was not examined. Instead, this study focused on the initial phase of the shift through an investigation on how the district office department instructional coaches supported the site instructional coaches at school sites to transform the role of coordinator to coach. The findings provide insight for an organization considering the enactment of a similar shift in the use of human resources that are specifically targeted to support English Learner instructional programs within a district.

The 16 participants are all teachers outside of the classroom who are currently working as district and site instructional coaches in a large urban district in the bay area in California. It is also important to note that the researcher is the district office administrator who manages the initiative from a scholar practitioner perspective. The 11 site instructional coaches work at schools that serve English Learner populations across the district. An established criterion was used to select the 11 site instructional coaches. The five district instructional coaches were selected because of their role in providing support to the site instructional coaches who were required to implement the instructional
coaching initiative. The influence of the district instructional coaches work on their assigned site instructional coaches was explored. In addition, the conditions the reform effort faced as coaches began implementation were investigated in order to gain deeper understanding as to how the staff in these new roles could be more effective as they shifted.

Participatory Action Research methodology was used whereby the researcher, the district instructional coaches, and site instructional coaches became partners and co-investigators in the process of systemic reform. Participatory evaluation was also employed in order to provide the voices closest to the reform, the site instructional coaches, an opportunity to evaluate whether or not the professional structures they were provided were accelerating or impeding their ability to transform into reform leaders at their schools. Through a cycle of inquiry and action, the participants informed the design and delivery of the district’s professional support to them. The cycle also allowed for a district office department to better understand the conditions at school sites as the reform effort was initially implemented across varied school contexts. Through this reciprocal partnership in inquiry, data was collected, interpreted, and synthesized ensuring that a district office department worked with others to build data-driven decisions as they embarked in this shift from compliance to instruction.

The literature review provided background in the areas of education research that informed the actions being studied. First, the research on the Latino English Learner achievement gap was presented in order to understand this shift from compliance to instruction was a data driven decision. Secondly, given that the study focused on an
organizational shift across a district, it was essential to understand the nature of district wide, systemic reform. Lastly, since the shift specifically focused on transforming former program coordinators into instructional coaches responsible for improving the quality of classroom teacher’s instruction, the most current literature on instructional coaching as a school improvement strategy was reviewed.

Individual interviews were conducted with the 16 participants during the first phase of the study in order to gain insight as to how the coaches planned to approach this work. District instructional coaches interfaced with their assigned site instructional coaches in the following three contexts (a) one-on-one coaching the coach sessions, (b) instructional coach academies, and (c) professional development on the direct instruction framework. After the site instructional coaches had received the initial round of professional support from their district instructional coaches across the three distinct contexts, the progress of the shift from compliance to instruction was investigated within a focus group setting. Later, the site instructional coaches participated in a final focus group where they engaged in an evaluation of the professional support they had received while also sharing their perception of the potential this reform effort would have on teacher practice and student achievement over time.

The three opportunities to engage in inquiry and reflection with the instructional coaches generated the data necessary to answer the research study’s questions. Through the development of a selective coding system, the prevalent themes or categories of concepts were presented for each of the data sets. These categories of concepts were organized by implementation phases: informing the reform effort, reform progress, and
evaluating the professional support for the reform effort. Following is a summary of the concepts that emerged as the researcher interpreted the findings.

Interpreting Findings

The following section discusses the prevalent themes that emerged from the study. The themes are (a) need for systematic approach, (b) system misalignment, and (c) interrelated professional support.

Need for Systematic Approach

The district instructional coaches described their approach to coaching the coach and their role in leading this work with substantial variance. Baker et al. (2005) argue that organizations often fail to develop a strong theoretical model for their coaching programs which results in what they describe here:

Often times the coaching appeared to follow an eclectic “common sense” approach based on an individual’s own experience in a given setting. During our examination of written materials from coaching organizations we could find little in the way of theoretical models guiding such programs. Coaches themselves sometimes commented that they were left to “find their own way” in their work and would have appreciated more direction from the organization. (p. 114)

Although the district office department in this study developed a framework to guide their site instructional coaches as they worked with teachers, the lack of a systematic framework to guide the district coaches working with site coaches became apparent. This theoretical approach allowed for the district instructional coaches to “find their own way” with their site instructional coaches. As mentioned in the previous chapter all five shared one commonality, the belief that they had the potential to influence their coaches through the professional support they provided. However, when it came to their ways of confronting resistance or a lack of leadership capacity with their assigned site coaches, it
was clear that each district coach developed their own personally favorable strategies and methods to try to push the reform agenda forward. Often, given the one-on-one nature of the “coaching the coach” structure, their strategies and methods were created in isolation with minimal feedback, if any. This allowed district instructional coaches to employ an approach that they were most comfortable with, yet may not have been the most effective for supporting the shift from coordinators to instructional coaches.

In spite of the lack of a developed, systematic approach to “coaching the coaches,” four of the five district instructional coaches reflected a more constructivist, non-directive approach as they discussed their work. By default, most of the district coaches intuitively enacted collegial, less directive interactions with their site instructional coaches, which is often valued as appropriate when coaches are working with teachers. However, the fact that district coaches were expected to support the transformation of this previously bureaucratic, ambiguous role may have required them to be more directive and process-oriented in establishing deliverable outcomes with each of their site instructional coaches.

System Misalignment

The participants provided substantial evidence of the extensive misalignment within the school district that posed obstacles as they shifted from compliance to instruction in their newly defined roles. Given that the reform initiative was being directed predominantly from one district office department; state mandated requirements, other departments, principals, and even teachers struggled with accepting this new role as part of the organization’s culture. A systemic effort to support the initiative was not
launched on a broad enough level to eliminate misalignments that would impede implementation of the initiative. Regardless of the new definition for this layer of personnel, the bureaucratic layers that surrounded them did not allow the shift to happen with ease.

First, the site instructional coaches felt that the state required compliance components of monitoring English Learner programs at their schools had not changed. Since the site instructional coaches were still required to exist in the duality of compliance and instruction, even though the focus shifted, the participants voiced the challenges this dual nature posed. For example, during phase two of the reform progress, participants described how inundated they were with executing various compliance tasks like the school-wide administration of the California English Language Development Test and the reclassification process. These tasks must be accomplished early on in the school year, which posed a problem since the beginning of a school year might be the most optimal, critical period to establish a school culture receptive to instructional coaching. The misaligned state requirements do not allow for the site instructional coaches to begin the year intentionally defying their previous coordinator roles. In fact, their compliance-oriented focus the first few weeks of school only supports the misconception that their role has not drastically changed. Unless these processes were streamlined, the site instructional coaches indicated that compliance demands would continue to pose systemic challenges.

Secondly, participants communicated that the district’s responses to state accountability pressures also imposed barriers. Given that district leaders and principals
are faced with meeting accountability expectations, the participants discussed how the
common language around instruction they were hoping to build with teachers often is
derailed by other mandates like progress monitoring, data analysis, and standards
mapping. These other demands predominantly consume the time at the site that could be
used to focus on instruction as opposed to responding to district mandates around
accountability.

Another source of misalignment stemmed from the actions and expectations of
site principals. Given that the principals have not fully bought into using their support
staff in the way the district office department has defined the role, site leaders
continuously ask their site instructional coaches to employ practices that do not promote
instructional coaching as a school reform strategy for continuous improvement.
Participants cited the role of administrative designee - support with administrative,
peripheral duties; assignments mostly to ineffective teachers; and their inability to
effectively use time at the schools - as ways the principals impede viable implementation
of the instructional coaching initiative. At times, principals directly promote the previous,
traditional role through their messaging and the actions they take with their teaching staff.
Participants indicated that this misalignment would need to be minimized by principals.
District and site instructional coaches shared that principals’ needed further development
in building their capacity to believe in and lead the charge around the instructional coach
position.

Most importantly, all of the misalignment previously mentioned does not allow
the most valuable stakeholder group in the instructional coaching reform effort, the
classroom teachers, to clearly make sense of this new role. If the system is bombarded with misalignment, teachers remain confused about how the site instructional coaches are supposed to support them. If their role definition remains ambiguous to teachers, the instructional coaching initiative struggles to thrive.

Interrelated Professional Support

Participants confirmed that the three professional support structures provided by the district instructional coaches were all necessary in order for each of them to be effective in making an impact on them. The participants affirmed that each structure supported the other, and in isolation, they would be limited in their capacity to influence the district reform effort and their ability to implement the shift. The site instructional coaches provided an overall positive evaluation of the coaching the coach sessions, the instructional academies, and the professional development on the direct instruction framework.

In general, site instructional coaches perceived the three structures to be interwoven. The instructional coach academies provided them with the “how to” coach learning opportunity. However, participants shared that instructional coaching skills in isolation would not fully prepare them to be effective in their new role. Having the common language for instruction through the direct instruction framework, and the expectation that teachers would have to implement their new learning about the framework, provided most of the coaches with an entry point to engage in cycles. Since all the teachers at all the schools were receiving training on instructional planning and delivery, this created a systemic commonality. Teachers clearly needed support in order
to make sense of the instructional framework that became a common expectation across the district. The expectation for the implementation of the instructional framework provided a natural entry point for instructional coaches trying to penetrate passed classroom teachers’ doors, and in some cases, it was the content from the direct instruction training that provided the key.

Based on the responses in the participatory evaluation conducted during phase three, participants also confirmed that the interim support provided in between academies and professional development sessions in the one-on-one coaching sessions created an accountability system that better ensured they were shifting from compliance to instruction. The discussions reflected that the site instructional coaches looked to their district coaches as the change agents who would push them to take next steps in the instructional reform effort. Without this built in accountability system, some participants shared that the work would be progressing at an even slower rate. Some of the role ambiguity or even some of the site instructional coaches’ own attachment to the previous coordinator position would have further impeded the shift from compliance to instruction if they did not have someone following up with them as they assumed their newly defined role on a regular basis.

In conclusion, the three professional support structures triangulated in a way that did influence the site instructional coaches’ knowledge, skills, attitude, and readiness to do this work. Although the extent of that influence is unclear, based on the dialogues during the sessions, the participants indicated that the three structures were building their capacity to move forward with the instructional reform agenda. The participants insisted
that they would continue to need refined versions of the three professional support structures for the future.

Conclusion

Redefining the use of the human resources that provide English Learner support services to schools could become a viable systemic reform strategy for improving the educational outcomes for historically underserved Latino English Learner students. The traditional, bureaucratic nature of districts’ English Learner services personnel creates a justifiable distracter that does not allow these specialized human resources to address a root cause for the appalling inequities that exist within our schooling system: the quality of the day-to-day instruction in their classrooms. In Longridge Unified School District, 1.7 million dollars are spent annually on English Learner support personnel at 19 elementary sites. The coordinator role is common in most large urban districts, and similarly significant expenditures are made across the state of California, to sustain the compliance-focused mandates that school districts are required to comply. Although this study was unable to measure the impact of its reform effort on teacher practice or student achievement, it was able to engage in an initial exploration to drastically change what has not worked for Latino English Learners thus far. One point seven million dollars has greater potential than merely ensuring schools are complying with state requirements.

Implementing English Learner support services from a predominantly compliance perspective leads to systemic faulty thinking. With a compliance focus, district personnel at all layers, from district office to the classroom, will perceive that English Learners are “served” if we are to just do enough to comply with mandates and stay legal. Mandates
and legalities are foundational and necessary, but their long-term implications are superficial at most. Redefining these English Learner support roles requires districts to develop approaches as to how to address the root of our problems: the quality of instruction. If our Latino English Learner students will need to complete their K-12 educational experience with the skills and knowledge required to now compete in a global marketplace, it is absolutely necessary for schools systems to employ capacity building reform strategies that will enable our human resources to address this fundamental issue. We will need to address the issue in a way that will transform what happens in the English Learner classroom every day.

This study provided an early exploration of a district attempting to rethink how it uses a costly resource. The most profound conclusion drawn is that school systems are deeply entrenched in how they support their English Learner instructional programs. We have engrained in all layers of our school district that compliance-oriented behaviors are deeply important, and the task of reforming that faulty thinking remains challenging. District office departments embarking on reform efforts like the one examined in this study must examine what all layers of the school system need to do to make an organizational shift like this one possible.

Participants validated that interrelated, comprehensive professional support structures provided through centralized guidance are a non-negotiable facet in this process of intentionally shifting the focus of a role. Learning how to coach, being given the content to coach via an instructional framework, and one-on-one coaching for themselves, allowed for some of the capacity building that needed to occur in the initial
phase of implementation. Nevertheless, it is clear that concentrating on building the capacity of only the frontline of the reform issue becomes problematic. That sole focus allows for a saturation of system misalignment that poses substantial barriers to implementing this work. The organization at large would need to understand the purpose of the instructional coaching initiative so that all individuals within the organization understand how their decision-making processes and outcomes can impede or accelerate the shift from compliance to instruction.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this study reflect those provided through the collaborative conversations with district and site instructional coaches. First, districts willing to embrace a shift from compliance to instruction with their English Learner support personnel need to outline all the systems and processes across the organization that are necessary to support the organizational change. Districts must look just beyond the role and should pay additional attention to how other expectations and mandates within the system either promote or impede the transformation. Understanding what the coach should and should not be expected to do is not enough. District office personnel need to understand how their other mandates and expectations might force site instructional coaches to absorb the inefficiencies that plague the system. This most likely means that the coaches will have to execute the non-instructional tasks because they are out of the classroom and perceived as available to do so. Clear processes need to be in place to avoid sabotaging the espoused outcome of a shift from compliance to instruction.
Secondly, district departments leading the change effort need to strategically design a framework as to how district office personnel interface with site instructional coaches responsible for implementing the new role. Although professional support structures are critical, the activities and interactions within these structures need to be clearly articulated through the development of a systematic approach. District office coaches who support site instructional coaches need to be provided deliverable expected outcomes by which they can measure their own effectiveness in pushing the reform agenda forward. A systematic approach to “coaching the coach,” systematizing the non-negotiable concepts they coach on, and on-going professional development on changing adult behaviors, is required in order to more effectively maximize their professional support.

In addition, after approximately two years of conducting this work, it has become critical to pay close attention to the qualifications for instructional coaches. One reality districts potentially implementing this shift will confront is whether or not personnel, so deeply entrenched in the characteristics of the more traditional coordinator role, can assume the new responsibilities of being an instructional reformer amongst classroom teachers. Individuals entrenched in the faulty thinking that compliance is the most high leverage strategy to making a difference for English Learners will struggle in this work. School districts should ensure that both district and site instructional coaches not only have the practical experiences, the will, and the skill necessary for success; but rather, they must demand that they have the mindset to correct faulty thinking about English
Learner instructional programs and also understand how to engage in changing adult behaviors on behalf of students.

Lastly, the study revealed how influential school site principals are when implementing a district wide reform effort. Although principals in this district received some training, the data clearly demonstrated that principals needed more continuous, explicit professional development as to how to lead a reform effort of this nature at the site level. District office leadership needs to provide extensive support, coaching and monitoring for principals who ultimately ensure whether or not instructional coaching is effectively implemented with classroom teachers. In fact, the shift from compliance to instruction might be more effectively implemented if district office administrators leading the initiative supervised and evaluated the site instructional coaches instead of the site principals. Changing who supervises the site instructional coaches could potentially eliminate the perceived tension that site instructional coaches presented given that their principals’ leadership often imposed barriers to making the shift from compliance to instruction more seamless.

Recommendations for Further Research

The first recommendation for further research is an extension of this study. This study was limited because of the constraints on time. This study only focused on the initial influences of the professional support a district office department provided to site instructional coaches. In order to gain deeper insights on the influences of the professional support, more research could be conducted after the site instructional
coaches had more experience in working with their district instructional coaches across the various contexts.

A more comprehensive study would then proceed to examine the impact of the site instructional coaches on teacher practice. It would be ideal to learn about the impact of coaching cycles on classroom teachers as instructional coaches work with them over time to improve the quality of their instructional programs. Employing the PAR approach with classroom teachers would provide tremendous insight into the initiative’s effectiveness in transforming the quality of instruction in the classroom. Following that investigation, it would be essential to examine achievement data for Latino English Learner students who are in the classrooms of teachers who have been engaging in ongoing coaching cycles with the site instructional coach.

Reflections on Participatory Action Research for Educational Leaders

According to Bucknam et al. (2008), PAR yields the following methodological outcomes for research practitioners:

• PAR practitioners can expect to develop their professional capacity through critical reflection.
• PAR promotes a level of focus on the issue being studied that results in long-term engagement with the issues. This bodes well for any school reform effort.
• PAR studies develop local expertise.
• PAR studies leave the practitioners more motivated and energized about their work than when they began the project (p. 11).

As I formally conclude this research study from a scholar practitioner perspective, I think it is essential for me to share about the personal and professional growth I experienced as a result of employing the PAR approach.
The four outcomes outlined above all were actualized for me during the research process. Using PAR allowed for the participants and me to engage in critical reflection of the reform effort we were attempting to implement. This reflection led to professional growth because the continuous cycle of inquiry and action with the voices in the field instigated a sense of empowerment and ownership of the change effort. Secondly, PAR allowed for the participants and me, as the educational leader, to focus on the shift from compliance to instruction in a structured forum that promoted deep analysis and engagement with the issue. As we employed this process, the participants and I became experts on the complexities we faced as we initially implemented the systemic reform effort. Our consideration of this complexity spawned a depth of understanding of the problems and the potential solutions that could help us attain our intended outcome - continuous improvement of instruction for Latino English Learners. Lastly, my engagement with the voices from the field that was responsible for the on-the-ground implementation of this effort increased my levels of energy and motivation to continue pushing the reform agenda forward. I literally gathered energy, insight, and motivation after interfacing with the participants during interviews and focus groups. The voices from the field directly informed my department’s decision making, forced us to adapt along the way and guided next steps beyond the data presented within this study.

As an educational leader working in a district office position, I learned the value of using the PAR approach to study our systemic struggles. I learned that conducting our work in this fashion should be part of our regular operational reality. PAR created a structured environment to deeply evaluate our department’s work by gathering authentic
data from those closest to the classroom, a practice we fail to employ in the complex, overwhelming day-to-day district environment. In moving forward with this change effort, I cannot perceive continuing the work without the application of PAR. Using the approach allowed for valuable information to flow through our department that greatly informed each next step of the change process. Without this information, we could not be responsive, adaptive, or synchronized in our efforts as we embark in a systemic shift with the intention of transforming instruction for our Latino English Learners.
References


Noell, G. H., & Gansle, K. A. (2009). Moving from good ideas in educational systems change to sustainable program implementation: Coming to terms with some of the realities. *Psychology in Schools, 46*(1), 78-88.


Appendix A

Consent to be a Participant

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY
HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH PROTOCOL

Use of this template (outline) is suggested when submitting a research protocol to the IRB. Your responses should be in terms which may be understood by a non-specialist.

Please complete all sections of this template. If any section is not applicable, list the heading and simply indicate “N/A”.

Instructions are bracketed and in italics. Please remove instructions prior to submission.

I. PROJECT TITLE: FROM COMPLIANCE TO INSTRUCTION: REFORMING ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

II. DATE OF SUBMISSION: JULY 14, 2010

III. STARTING AND ENDING DATES OF PROJECT: AUGUST 2010- FEBRUARY 2011

IV. INVESTIGATORS AND STAFFING

Primary Investigator: Rosanna Mucetti
Department: Educational Leadership
Phone number: (510) 813-8250
Email address: china1274@comcast.net
If P.I. is a student, then complete next line:
Advisor’s name: Dr. Ray Garcia

Please list all personnel (including P.I.) who will assist in conducting research in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF INDIVIDUAL</th>
<th>QUALIFICATIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosanna Mucetti</td>
<td>Doctoral candidate; district office administrator; manager of elementary curriculum, instruction &amp; English Learner services in SJUSD</td>
<td>Develop instrumentation; recruit subjects; collect data; transcribe data; analyze data; report findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A - continued

Consent to be a Participant

V. FUNDING SOURCES

- Funding may be required if teachers will be provided an hourly stipend to participate in interviews and focus groups outside of their contractual hours as agreed upon with the school district.

VI. INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Not applicable

VII. HYPOTHESIS

Historically, specialized personnel within school districts designated to supporting English Learner Programs in the schools have focused on compliance and monitoring. This study will focus on an initiative that has drastically changed the focus of these positions at both the district and site levels. District and site teacher leaders supporting English Learner programs are now designated as instructional coaches requiring instructional leadership capacity and pedagogical expertise. These site English Learner instructional coaches are expected to engage in one on one coaching cycles and professional learning with classroom teachers at their schools with the goal of improving the teaching and learning for Latino English Learners who have historically been denied access to equitable educational outcomes. Centralized district English Learner instructional coaches and professional development provide the support to the site coaches as they engage in this change process at their schools with classroom teachers. Using a participatory approach, this study seeks to investigate the trajectory of this reform initiative from district coach, to site coach and to classroom teacher. The study will deeply analyze the relationship between the central office staff and the site coaches in order to inform how central office resources can best support site English Learner human resources to attain implementation and sustainability of the initiative’s strategic goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning that occurs within English Learner instructional programs across various schools in the district. The study will serve as an evaluation of the reform initiative in order to assess whether this shift of focus from compliance to instruction will impact how site coaches conduct their work and whether or not teacher practice has, if at all, been impacted by the instructional coaching efforts during the beginning of the implementation phases.

VIII. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

- The study will utilize a Participatory Action Research approach in order to present findings as to whether this shift from compliance to instruction has implications for improving English Learner instructional programs within the district. This approach will involve participants as co-investigators in a reciprocal process of inquiry, reflection, dialogue and ultimately action. The design will provide participants the opportunity to reflect and evaluate their roles in impacting the practice of teachers who directly shape the lives of Latino English Learner students. This approach allows both the researcher and participants opportunities to identify challenges in implementation and to collectively problem solve.
- The study will be conducted within a large urban school district in the South bay area. All interviews and focus groups will occur either at the district office, the elementary sites or another location if selected by the participants within the school district being investigated.
Appendix A - continued

Consent to be a Participant

- An initial meeting will be conducted with both district and site coaches to discuss the nature of the study, its purpose and its design. Five district coaches and 10 site coaches will be involved in the participatory research design component of the study. 15 interviews will be conducted in September, one with each of these participants, to explore the theory of action at play and to understand the type of support site coaches need in order to implement the coaching framework. All interviews will be recorded using a digital recording device and transcribed. Each participant will be provided with a copy of the transcript for him or her to review.
- Focus group sessions will later be conducted twice for both the district coaches and the site coaches separately in both October and December. Emerging themes from the individual interviews will be shared with each cohort and will serve as the guiding principles for the focus group interview questions. In January, a final focus group will occur in order to conduct a participatory evaluation of the work accomplished thus far with both groups together. These sessions will all be audio recorded using a digital recording device with the permission of the participants.
- Observations of the on-going EL instructional coaching professional learning sessions will also serve as data to understand implementation issues that arise and to what extent coaches feel capacitated to engage in the expectations proposed by central office.

IX. HUMAN SUBJECTS INVOLVEMENT

A. DESCRIPTION

- Recorded interviews will be conducted in August and September with district and site coaches. All transcripts will be shared with participants for accuracy and reflection. Each interview will be approximately an hour long and will be conducted at a facility within the school district.
- Focus Groups will be conducted in October and December with site coaches in order to discuss implementation and better understand the type of support they need from centralized resources. These sessions will be audio recorded with the participants’ permission. Each focus group session will be approximately 2 hours long and will be conducted at a facility within the school district.
- Observations of the participants during all professional development sessions will be conducted throughout the research. The researcher will take anecdotal field notes in order to record her observations and will be conducted at a facility within the school district.
- A final focus group will be conducted with both district and site coaches in February. This session will serve as a participatory evaluation of the implementation of the coaching initiative and an assessment of what is needed in order to strengthen implementation of the reform effort. This session will be videotaped if the participants allow for this. This focus group session will be approximately 2 hours long and will be conducted at a facility within the school district.
- For each site coach, the total hours of participation is seven hours.
- For each district coach, the total hours of participation is three hours.
Appendix A - continued

Consent to be a Participant

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

- All participants are employees of the San José Unified School Districts. All district coaches and site coaches are adults. Five district coaches and ten site coaches will participate in the interviews, focus groups and observations. Four are female and one is male. Three district coaches are Latino/a, one is Asian and one is White.
- The ten site coaches will be selected in order to ensure variability across the group. The site coaches will be selected based upon attaining variability using the following four criteria: 1) teaching experience according to the number of years 2) coaching experience according to the number of years 3) language status: bilingual vs. monolingual 4) varied school conditions based upon number of English Learner students, socio-economic status of population, geographical location, funding sources, and schools’ experiences with on-site coaching. The sex and race of these participants is still not known because selection will occur in August.
- As a district office administrator who manages the English Learner instructional coaching initiative, I have direct access to the district and site coaches.
- A rationale for the involvement of vulnerable populations is not applicable within this study.

C. RESEARCH MATERIAL

The following methods will be used to obtain information from the participants:
- Interviews
- Focus Groups

The interview protocol and focus group questions for instructional coaches are attached. These may later be amended given that participants will be provided the opportunity to co-construct questions with the researcher.

D. RECRUITMENT PLAN

Subjects will be recruited through an introductory meeting that will explain the purpose of the study, the goals of the study and the commitments involved if they agree to participate.

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

All participants will be provided meals/snacks during focus group sessions.

F. POTENTIAL RISKS

There is no physical risk involved with participation in this study. There is a risk of a breach of confidentiality. There is also a risk of data being used for an evaluative purpose of the employee’s performance as an instructional coach. Lastly, there is a risk of loss of privacy if the participant chooses to remain anonymous as they share data regarding implementation of the initiative being examined.
Appendix A - continued

Consent to be a Participant

G. RISK REDUCTION
District and site coaches who will serve as participants will decide if they wish to remain anonymous within the study. When participants request for anonymity, an alias name will be used to protect their privacy and respect their request for anonymity. The transcripts of interviews will also be provided to each participant for review. The generative themes that emerged during each focus group will also be shared with the participant groups. Participants will be informed that the data collected for the purpose of the study will not be used to inform the personnel evaluation process.

H. CONFIDENTIALITY
Data will be coded for anonymity whenever necessary. Only the researcher and the participants will have access to the data. Findings will be reported using anonymity.

I. RISK/BENEFIT
The findings will be used to inform how to best support coaches and teachers with the implementation of the reform initiative. In fact, this study provides site personnel the opportunity to be involved in identifying strengths, challenges, and potential solutions to increasing the implementation and sustainability of the initiative. This allows for school site staff to be involved in the evaluation of the framework and to make contributions as to how to modify the model to meet their needs.

J. CONSENT ISSUES

1. CONSENT PROCESS
The researcher will obtain consent/assent from the 15 coaches that will participate in the study. Consent/assent will be obtained in English, and will obtained during an initial meeting that will serve as the introduction to the research study in August. Please see the attached consent/assent forms.

2. SPECIAL CONSENT PROVISIONS
   Not applicable.

3. Not Applicable
   4. Not applicable: documentation of consent is not being waived.
   5. Not applicable
   6. Not applicable
   X. OTHER
      Not applicable
Appendix B

Participant Professional History Questionnaire

SITE ENGLISH LEARNER INSTRUCTIONAL COACH
PROFESSIONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Research on Instructional Coaching Initiative
From Compliance to Instruction: A Participatory Action Research Study of an
Instructional Coaching Initiative for English Learner Programs

Please complete the following questionnaire to provide information regarding your
professional history as a means for creating a pool of participants to invite to
participate in the study.

1. Name:____________________________________________________

2. School:____________________________________________________

3. Preferable phone number to contact you:________________________

4. How many years did you teach as a full time classroom teacher?________

5. How many years have you served as a teacher on a special assignment outside of the
classroom?____________________

6. Were you an ELP Coordinator? (Please circle one) YES  NO
   If yes, how many years?______________

7. How many years have you been in this role of EL Instructional Coach?________

8. Were you an English Learner during your own K-12 schooling experience or do you
   still consider yourself an English Learner?_______
      If yes, what was your native home language?____________________
Appendix C

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

**District English Learner Instructional Coach Interview Protocol**

*(New Coach)*

**Introduction**

- How are you today?

- I expect this will take approximately 1 hour.

- **Purpose of the Interview:** I want to listen and discuss with you your thoughts about this coaching initiative. I want to discuss our work as a department in general, but I would also like to hear about your experience as a site coach working with district coaches and how those experiences will influence your work in your new role.

- Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches? Given your centralized coaching and teacher leadership role, I am looking forward to learning about your experiences and perspectives with this as a district coach supporting the work.

- I’ll be taking notes during this interview. I will also be recording the interview. I will transcribe the recording and later provide it to you for review to ensure accuracy. As you know, the themes that emerge from these interviews will be shared with site coaches during focus group sessions. I will be using a dialogue approach, so at times I may share my thinking with you as I listen to your responses. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them.

- Provide a little tour of what we will be doing.

- Do you have any questions for me at this point?

**Section I: The Role of a District EL Instructional Coach**

1. What do you see as your role in conducting this work around instructional coaching and creating more equitable educational experiences for Latino English Learners?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

2. Tell me about a time you had a success as a site coach. Tell me about a time that you faced a challenge with a site coach.

3. How will these experiences influence how you operate in your new role as a district coach?

4. How do you plan to approach challenges and problem solve with site coaches?

5. What are some of the common experiences you think the site English Learner Coaches confront as they coach teachers at the school level? How do you plan to support them through those experiences?

6. What did you find most helpful from your school’s assigned district coach last year?

Section II: Role of the District/Department

7. What do you need from district leaders and other department coaches in order to conduct your work as a district coach?

Section III: Conclusion

8. What is it that you would like to learn from this study?

9. I would like to invite you to share anything else that you may feel would be pertinent to the purpose of this interview.

10. Is there anything else you would like to add before we close?

District English Learner Instructional Coach Interview Protocol (Returning Coach)

Introduction

- How are you today?

- I expect this will take approximately 1 hour.
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

• **Purpose of the Interview:** I want to listen and discuss with you your practices with site coaches. I want to discuss our work as a department in general, but I would also like to hear about your work in particular with the site coaches you have worked with during the last year. I know we have already had a lot of conversations about your thinking and experiences with this initiative, but I would like to use this as an opportunity to gain a deeper knowledge of your role.

• Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches? Given your centralized coaching and teacher leadership role, I am looking forward to learning about your experiences and perspectives with this as a district coach supporting the work.

• I’ll be taking notes during this interview. I will also be recording the interview. I will transcribe the recording and later provide it to you for review to ensure accuracy. As you know, the themes that emerge from these interviews will be shared with site coaches during focus group sessions. I will be using a dialogue approach, so at times I may share my thinking with you as I listen to your responses. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them.

• Provide a little tour of what we will be doing.

• Do you have any questions for me at this point?

**Section I: The Role of a District EL Instructional Coach**

11. What do you see as your role in conducting this work around instructional coaching and creating more equitable educational experiences for Latino English Learners?

12. What is your approach to engaging with your assigned site coaches?

13. Tell me about a time you were successful with a site coach. Tell me about a time you confronted a challenge with a site coach.

14. How do you approach challenges and problem solve with site coaches?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

15. What are some of the common experiences you think the site English Learner Coaches confront as they coach teachers at the school level? How do you plan to support them through those experiences?

16. What was your greatest learning from coaching coaches last year? What will you do the same and what will you do differently as you engage in the work this year?

17. What is it that you would like to learn from this study?

Section II: Conclusion

18. I would like to invite you to share anything else that you may feel would be pertinent to the purpose of this interview.

19. Is there anything else you would like to add before we close?

Site English Learner Instructional Coach Interview Protocol

New Site Coach

Introduction

- Introduce myself and thank the interviewee again for agreeing to take the time to talk. I am so excited to learn more about you and your thinking!

- How are you today?

- What time do you need to conclude? I expect this will take approximately 1 hour.

- **Purpose of the Interview:** I am trying to develop a deep understanding of how you perceive your role in the district’s implementation of the instructional coaching initiative for EL programs. I am interested in learning about what support you need in order to effectively coach classroom teachers so that they are reflective and effective practitioners in serving Latino English Learner students at your school. I want to know what you deem valuable in terms of support in order for you to make an impact on teacher practice at your school and what might be some of the barriers you face and discuss how our department could help you in strategically overcoming those barriers.
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

• Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches? Given your centralized coaching and teacher leadership role, I am looking forward to learning about your experiences and perspectives with this as a district coach supporting the work.

• I’ll be taking notes during this interview. I will also be recording the interview. I will transcribe the recording and later provide it to you for review to ensure accuracy. As you know, the themes that emerge from these interviews will be shared with site coaches during focus group sessions. I will be using a dialogue approach, so at times I may share my thinking with you as I listen to your responses. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them.

• Provide a little tour of what we will be doing.

• Do you have any questions for me at this point?

Section I: Background Information

20. Please tell me about your professional path that led you to taking on this role as a site English Learner Instructional Coach.

Section II: The Role of a Site EL Instructional Coach

21. What do you see as your most important work as a site based instructional coach?

22. What are your reactions to the district policy that defines the role of site based instructional coaches?

23. Tell me about one experience you have had with the coaching.

24. What are some of the experiences you think you will or have confronted as you begin to coach teachers at your school?

25. Let’s take a look at the components of the coaching framework. Do you have anything you would like to share about any of the components now that you have had some training on the framework?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

Section III: Role of the District/Department

26. What do you need from your district coach in order to be effective?

27. What do you need from your principal in order to be effective?

Section V: Conclusion

28. I would like to invite you to share anything else that you may feel would be pertinent to the purpose of this interview.

29. Is there anything else you would like to add before we close?

Site English Learner Instructional Coach Interview Protocol
Returning Site Coach

Introduction

• Introduce myself and thank the interviewee again for agreeing to take the time to talk. I am so excited to learn more about you and your thinking!

• How are you today?

• What time do you need to conclude? I expect this will take approximately 1-1.5 hour.

• **Purpose of the Interview:** I am trying to develop a deep understanding of how you perceive your role in the district’s implementation of the instructional coaching initiative for EL programs. I am interested in learning about what support you need in order to effectively coach classroom teachers so that they are reflective and effective practitioners in serving Latino English Learner students at your school. I want to know what you deem valuable in terms of support in order for you to make an impact on teacher practice at your school and what might be some of the barriers you face and discuss how our department could help you in strategically overcoming those barriers.
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

• Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches? Given your centralized coaching and teacher leadership role, I am looking forward to learning about your experiences and perspectives with this as a district coach supporting the work.

• I’ll be taking notes during this interview. I will also be recording the interview. I will transcribe the recording and later provide it to you for review to ensure accuracy. As you know, the themes that emerge from these interviews will be shared with site coaches during focus group sessions. I will be using a dialogue approach, so at times I may share my thinking with you as I listen to your responses. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them.

• Provide a little tour of what we will be doing.

• Do you have any questions for me at this point?

Section I: Background Information

30. Please tell me about your professional path that led you to taking on this role as a site English Learner Instructional Coach.

Section II: The Role of a Site EL Instructional Coach

31. What do you see as your most important work as a site based instructional coach?

32. What are your reactions to the changes in district policy that define the role of site based instructional coaches?

33. Tell me about a time where you were successful as a coach. Tell me about a time you confronted a challenge as a coach.

34. Let’s take a look at the components of the coaching framework. Which components are working well for you? With which components do you need more support?

35. Over the course of the years that you have been a resource teacher outside of the classroom, how, if at all, has your role changed?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

36. What are some of the pressures that have not allowed you to implement?

37. How are you balancing the administrative, task oriented demands and the new expectations around focusing on the quality of the teaching and learning in the classrooms at your school?

Section III: Role of the District/Department

38. What do you need from your district coach in order to be effective?

39. What do you need from your principal in order to be effective?

Section V: Conclusion

40. I would like to invite you to share anything else that you may feel would be pertinent to the purpose of this interview.

41. Is there anything else you would like to add before we close?

Focus Group #1 Protocol

Introduction: Logistics 10-12 minutes

- Thank the participants again for agreeing to participate in the study. I am so excited to learn more about everyone’s thinking!
- How is everyone today?
- I expect this will take approximately 2-2.5 hours.
- Discuss guideline for food, bathroom breaks, etc.
- Remind participants about their important role in the study and how appreciative we are that they are willing to support the work.
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

- Discuss guidelines about **confidentiality and anonymity**. Discuss the potential risks. Explain my role as an administrator and my commitment to confidentiality and trust and my non-evaluative role when conducting this research with them.

- Maybe remind them of the Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches?

- I’ll be taking notes during the focus group. I will also be recording the focus group. The recorded conversation will be transcribed the recording. Remember that emerging themes and de-identified data excerpts will be shared with district coaches, department staff and us in future focus group sessions. I will make sure that data is discussed in general terms and not identified by school or coach. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them. If at any point you want me to turn off the digital recorder, please let me know.

- **PLEASE MAKE SURE TO IDENTIFY YOURSELF WHENEVER YOU SPEAK**

- **Objectives:** 1) To share some initial findings and construct deeper meaning of those findings by listening to your reactions and responses; 2) To understand how we can better meet your needs to move forward with this work; and 3) To capture any changes you might or might not be undergoing while doing this work.

- Provide a little **tour of the structures** we will use to meet the objectives:
  - Quick Write
  - Partner Shares
  - Whole group focus group
  - Reflection about today

- Do you have any questions for me at this point?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

**Quickwrite (to be collected) (10 minutes)**
Take a moment to write about where you are with the Instructional Coaching Initiative today. How are you feeling about the work? What actions are you taking? How is your site staff reacting to those actions and your work?

**Partner Share (5 minutes)**
Partner up and share your reflection with a fellow colleague.

**Expected Outcome:** Capture transcribed text that communicates your thinking through this collective dialogue and your quickwrites.

**Guiding Questions: Focus Group (100 minutes)**

42. Does anyone want to share a success they are excited about? Any reactions to that? (5 minutes)

43. Does anyone want to share a challenge they are facing and how they are problem solving to overcome it? Any reactions to that? (5 minutes)

44. Question about your **role** and your **most important work:**  
**STICKY NOTE ACTIVITY**


2. Which one of these themes resonates with you and why?

3. **15 minutes**

45. **Implementation:** Successes, Challenges and Barriers  
**STICKY NOTE ACTIVITY**

1. **Successes:** Changed Teacher Attitude, Change in Teacher practice, Sustained change after Coaching, Teacher requesting help, Reflection on practice, Paradigm shifts, Colleague “side by side learner” approach, trustful relationships.

2. **Challenges (could still exist):** Teachers appreciation of Periphery, Fear of Challenging teachers, Lack of expertise across grade levels/curriculum, Inability to implement FULL Coaching cycles instead of partial cycles, Comfort with Coordinator position.
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

**Barriers (could go away; controlled by others):**
Compliance, Other Duties and Meetings
mandated by the principal, Administrative Designee Role,
Assignment to Lead Grade Levels, Perceived as the
available resource on campus

3. What are your reactions to these successes?

4. What are your ideas or ways that you have or could ensure these barriers
don’t get in the way of instructional coaching?

5. What are some of the ways you could overcome or confront these
strategies?

6. **20 minutes**

**SMALL GROUP FIRST THEN SHARE OUT**

46. Given your current circumstances, what do you need to change in order to be able
to engage in FULL one on one coaching cycles with a critical mass of teachers at
your schools? 5 teachers a week to start? (10 minutes) **SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE**

47. What are some of the actions you could take to help create these conditions at
your schools? (10 minutes) **SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE**

48. What do you need from the next 2 day academy to support you in moving the IC
initiative forward? (15 minutes)

49. **Support:** District Coach **WRITING ACTIVITY**
   1. **Findings:** Observation of coaching, Answers, Thought Partner, Problem
      Solver, Accountability.
   2. What additional support could your district coach provide in order to
      better meet any of these needs?

50. How has taking on this new role and being on the frontline of this initiative
changed you professionally and/or personally? How about those of you who feel
it has not changed you? Tell me about that. (10 minutes) **ALSO WRITE AND SEND TO ME**
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

51. Is there anything you would do differently in your work tomorrow as a result of today’s focus group conversation?

52. Anyone else like to share anything that would be pertinent to the purposes of the focus group?

Focus Group #2 Protocol

Introduction: Logistics 5 minutes

• Thank the participants again for their continuous participation in the study

• How is everyone today?

• I expect this will take approximately 2-2.5 hours.

• Discuss guideline for food, bathroom breaks, etc.

• Remind participants about their important role in the study and how appreciative we are that they are willing to support the work.

• Remind them about the guidelines for confidentiality and anonymity. Discuss the potential risks. Explain my role as an administrator and my commitment to confidentiality and trust and my non-evaluative role when conducting this research with them.

• Maybe remind them of the Guiding Research Question: How, if at all, does the support of a district English Learner Instructional Coach and professional development on both coaching and English Learner pedagogy influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and readiness of site English Learner Instructional Coaches?

• I’ll be taking notes during the focus group. I will also be recording the focus group. The recorded conversation will be transcribed the recording. Remember that emerging themes and de-identified data excerpts will be shared with district coaches, department staff and us in future focus group sessions. I will make sure that data is discussed in general terms and not identified by school or coach. If at any point you have questions, please feel free to ask them. If at any point you want me to turn off the digital recorder, please let me know.
• PLEASE MAKE SURE TO IDENTIFY YOURSELF WHENEVER YOU SPEAK

• Objectives: 1) To learn about the impact (on your knowledge, attitude, skills or readiness) of your assigned coaches on your work; 2) To learn about the impact (on your knowledge, attitude, skills or readiness) of the professional development on coaching and the instructional framework is having on your work; 3) Share some findings since our last session and capture reactions to these findings; and 4) To learn about where you stand on the shift from compliance to instruction.

• Provide a little tour of the structures we will use to meet the objectives:
  o Quick Write
  o Partner Shares
  o Small groups
  o Whole group

• Do you have any questions for me at this point?

Quickwrite (to be collected) (10 minutes)
Take a moment to write about where you are with the Instructional Coaching Initiative today. 1) What actions have you taken since we last met?, 2) Any changes that you notice in your school’s staff, culture or leadership?

Partner Share (5 minutes)
Partner up and share your reflection with a fellow colleague.

Expected Outcome: Capture transcribed text that communicates your thinking through this collective dialogue and your quickwrites.

Guiding Questions: Focus Group (110 minutes)

  53. Does anyone want to share their responses to the quickwrite with the whole group? (10 minutes)

DEFINE A-D
WRITE FIRST TO COMMIT TO PERSONAL IDEAS/THOUGHTS
SMALL GROUP FIRST THEN SHARE OUT
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

54. How has your coach influenced your a) knowledge b) attitude c) skills d) and your readiness to be a more effective instructional coach (20 minutes) SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE and then WHOLE GROUP; go through a-d

55. How has the professional development on instructional coaching (academies) influenced your a) knowledge b) attitude c) skills d) and your readiness to be a more effective instructional coach (20 minutes) SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE and then WHOLE GROUP; go through a-d

56. How has the professional development on the Direct Instruction framework (collaboratives) influenced your a) knowledge b) attitude c) skills d) and your readiness to be a more effective instructional coach (20 minutes) SMALL GROUP STRUCTURE and then WHOLE GROUP; go through a-d

57. District Coach Support Themes: Your District Coaches shared the following when asked about what their role, strategies and problem solving methods are as they conduct this work with you:
   1. PUT ROLE/STRATEGY/PROB SOLV FINDINGS Here
   2. Here are what you identified as what you need from them: PUT FINDINGS Here
   3. What are your reactions to what has been identified by both groups?
   4. 15 minutes

58. Effectiveness of District Coach: Here are some of the themes of the successes and challenges district coaches shared that they have as they engage in their work. Put findings here:
   _______________________________________________________
Remind participants of primary research question
STICKY NOTE ACTIVITY and THEN SHARE (Need Chart)

1. PLUSSES: What are your district coaches doing that you feel is making you more capable of engaging in effective coaching cycles?
Appendix C - continued

Interview and Focus Group Protocols

2. DELTAS: What are the areas of growth amongst district coaches that would increase your capacity to engage in effective coaching cycles with teachers? What do you need from them to make you a better coach?

3. **15 minutes**

59. Do you believe that the department’s centralized shift in focus from the compliance components of English Learner programs to a systemic approach to instruction will make a difference for our historically underserved Latino students? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not. What do we need to do to make this shift more beneficial for Latino EL students? **(15 minutes)**

60. What will be your indicators that your work in this new role is actually making a difference in the quality of the instruction the teachers are delivering to our Latino EL students? **(5 minutes) CHARTING BRAINSTORM POPCORN STYLE**

61. Anyone else like to share anything that would be pertinent to the purposes of the focus group?
Appendix D

Coding Dictionary

From Compliance to Instruction Coding Dictionary

Introduction

The From Compliance to Instruction Coding Dictionary has been divided into distinct sections that reflect the data sets. Within each section is a range of codes and subcodes that were used to categorize the content of the interviews and the focus groups. These categories have been divided into the distinct sections that reflect the major questions guiding the research. The following sections define each of the codes and describe the subcodes that were categorized within each of the broader codes. Given that there were different data source types, the following organizational structures were employed: 1) Coded interview data that was collected through interviews with site English Learner Instructional Coaches was not tagged with any special code, 2) District Instructional Coach interview coded data was tagged with the code DIC, and 3) Focus Group coded data was tagged with the code FG. Following each code in parenthesis is exactly how the text was coded using the software HyperResearch. At times, codes were verbatim and other times codes were abbreviated phrases.

Structure of the Coding Dictionary

1) Site Coach Interview Data Codes

- **Barrier** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of operational barriers that they have minimal control over, yet still present obstacles in their implementation of instructional coaching
  - Administrative Designee Role (Barrier Administrative Des Role)
  - Coaching Team Roles (Barrier Coaching Team Roles)
  - Compliance (Barrier Compliance)
  - Meetings Trainings (Barrier Meetings Trainings)
  - Peripheral Duties (Barrier Peripheral Duties)
  - Principal Coaching Assignments (Barrier Principal Coaching Assignments)
  - Single Coach (Barrier Single Coach)
  - Teaching Groups (Barrier Teaching Groups)

- **Challenge** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of the challenges they face as they implement the instructional coaching initiative. Unlike barriers, these challenges are more within the site coaches’ sphere of influence.
  - Ambiguity Role (Challenge Amb Role)
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- **Closed Doors (Challenge Closed Doors)**
- **Coaching Effective Teachers (Challenge Coach Eff Teachers)**
- **Conferencing (Challenge Conf)**
- **Evaluative (Challenge Eval)**
- **Fear of Challenging (Challenge Fear of Chall)**
- **Lack of Confidence (Challenge Lack of Conf)**
- **Lack of Expertise (Challenge Lack of Exp)**
- **Lack of Understanding of Language Acquisition (Challenge Lack Und Lang Acquis)**
- **Partial Cycle (Challenge Partial Cycle)**
- **Perception of Old Role (Challenge Percp Old Role)**
- **School Culture (Challenge School Culture)**
- **Teacher Appreciation of the Periphery (Challenge Teacher App Periph)**
- **Veteran Teachers (Challenge Vet Teachers)**

- **Framework** Captures the instances in which the interviewees identify components of the framework that they either feel confident with or that they need more time to work with in order to feel more effective with its implementation
  - **Coaching Cycle (Framework Cycle)**
  - **Equity (Framework Equity)**
  - **Attention to Language (Framework Language)**
  - **Learning Focused Relationship (Framework LFR)**
  - **Focusing on Third Points (Framework Third Point)**
  - **Urgency in Creating Equitable Outcomes for Historically Underserved EL Students (Framework Urgency Outcomes)**
  - **Creating an Instructional Vision for a School (Framework Vision)**

- **Instructional Coach Academies (IC Academies)** Identifies instances in which interviewees mention the Instructional Coach Academies they are required to participate in as part of their continuous professional development

- **Loss of Continuity (Loss of Cont)** This is an outlier code shared by one participant that cited examples of how loss of continuity impacts her work. The interviewee identified the several causes that have triggered this loss of continuity in her work.

- **Most Important Work (MIW)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of what they perceive as their most important work in this role of site English Learner Instructional Coach.
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- Advocacy (MIW Advocacy)
- Change Practice (MIW Change Practice)
- Collaboration (MIW Collab)
- Equity (MIW Equity)
- Impact Mindset (MIW Impact Mindset)
- Inspiration (MIW Inspire)
- Professional Learning (MIW Prof Learn)
- Raising Awareness (MIW Raising Aware)
- Reflection (MIW Reflection)
- Role Model (MIW Role Model)
- School Improvement (MIW Sch Improve)

- Personal Growth (Pers Growth) Identifies instances where interviewees shared experiences or reflections about their own personal growth that they have experienced being in the site English Learner Instructional Coach position.

- Position (Pos) Identifies the pathway that led the interviewees to attaining the site English Learner Instructional Coach position.
  - Applied to be a Coach (Pos App Coach)
  - Recruited to be a Coach (Pos Rec Coach)
  - Volunteered to be a Coach when a Request was made by an administrator (Pos Volunteer Coach)

- Response to the Change in Policy regarding Resource Teachers versus Instructional Coaches (Response to Shift) Captures the general reaction of interviewees to the change in district policy regarding their positions.
  - Positive (Resp to Shift Pos)
  - Negative (Resp to Shift Neg)
  - Unique (Resp to Shift Unique)

- Self Evaluate (Self Evaluate) Identifies instances where the interviewee evaluated their skills/abilities in implementing the instructional coaching initiative

- Strategy (Strategy) Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of strategies they employ to confront challenges as they engage in the implementation of instructional coaching initiative
  - Acceptance of the Shift in Policy (Strategy Acc Shift)
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- Confronting the Principal and Blocking their Attempts to Deter Focus on Coaching (Strategy Block Principal)
- Building Relationship (Strategy Build Relat)
- Coaching the Effective Teachers (Strategy Coach Eff Teachers)
- Establishing Conferencing Times (Strategy Confer Time)
- Establishing Credibility (Strategy Credibil)
- Curriculum Mapping with Teachers (Strategy Curr Mapping)
- Developing Expertise across Grade Levels and Content Areas (Strategy Dev Exp)
- Flexible Preplanning (Strategy Flex Plan)
- Organizing Peer Observations (Strategy Peer Obs)
- Maintaining Positive Attitude (Strategy Pos Attitude)
- Designing and Delivering Professional Development to Staff (Strategy Prov PD)
- Developing a Schedule (Strategy Scheduling)
- Tapping into Teacher Leaders (Strategy Teacher Lead)
- Videotaping Teachers’ Instruction (Strategy Videotaping)
- Absence of an Identifiable Strategy (Strategy Void of)

- Success (Success) Captures descriptions of the experiences where interviewees’ felt successful with instructional coaching
  - Changed Teacher Attitude (Success Ch Teach Att)
  - Changed Teacher Practice (Success Ch Teach Pract)
  - Colleague Learner Approach (Success Coll Learner App)
  - Paradigm Shift (Success Paradigm Shift)
  - Professional Discourse of Teachers (Success Prof Disc)
  - Reflection on Practice (Success Refl on Prac)
  - Sustained Change (Success Sust Change)
  - Teacher Request Coaching (Success Teach Request)
  - Established Trustful Relationships with Teachers (Success Trustful Relat)

- Support Additional (Support) Captures instances where the interviewee identified support that was not provided by either the district instructional coach nor the principal
  - Cross Site Collaboration with ELICs (Support ELIC Cross Site)
  - Instructional Associates (Support IAs)
  - Training across all Organizational Layers on Instructional Coaching Initiative (Support Training Org Layers)
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- **Support from District Instructional Coaches (Support DIC)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of the support they hope to receive from their assigned district instructional coaches
  - *Answers (Support DIC Answers)*
  - *Feedback (Support DIC Feedback)*
  - *Focused Plan (Support DIC Foc Plan)*
  - *Observations of Coaching Teachers (Support DIC Obser)*
  - *Work with Principals (Support DIC Principal Work)*
  - *Solutions to Identified Problems (Support DIC Problem Solver)*
  - *Push to Implement/Next Steps (Support DIC Push)*
  - *Develop a Relationship (Support DIC Relation)*
  - *Resources (Support DIC Res)*
  - *Thought Partner (Support DIC Th Partner)*

- **Support from Principal (Support Princ)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of the support they need from their principal to implement the instructional coaching initiative
  - *Attitude Towards IC Initiative (Support Princ Attitude)*
  - *Use of Authority to Set Coaching Expectations (Support Princ Auth)*
  - *Structures for Conferencing (Support Princ Conf)*
  - *Consistency in Continuously Supporting Coaching (Support Princ Consist)*
  - *Developing an Informed Focus for the School (Support Princ Inform Focus)*
  - *Messaging around the Initiative (Support Princ Messaging)*
  - *Not Assigning Grade Levels (Support Princ No Assign)*
  - *Clarity around New Instructional Coach Role (Support Princ Role Clarity)*
  - *Time (Support Princ Time)*
  - *Reciprocal Relationship based on Dialogue (Support Princ Two Way Rel)*

2) District Coach Interview Data Codes

All the coded data that was collected through interviews of the District Instructional Coaches begin with the District Instructional Coach (DIC).

- **Approach (DIC App)** Captures descriptions of the interviewees’ approaches to working with their assigned site English Learner Instructional Coaches
  - *Assess Needs (DIC App Ass Needs)*
  - *Building Relationships (DIC App Build Rel)*
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- **Building Trust (DIC App Build Trust)**
- **Collaborate (DIC App Collab)**
- **Demand Next Steps (DIC App Demand)**
- **Establish Expectations (DIC App Expect)**
- **Understand School Conditions (DIC App Und School)**
- **Validate (DIC App Validate)**

**Challenge (DIC Challenge)** Captures descriptions of the interviewees’ experiences where they faced challenges with instructional coaching either as site coaches or district coaches.

- **Lack of Leadership (DIC Challenge Lack Leadersh)**
- **Personality (DIC Challenge Personal)**
- **Principal Issues (DIC Challenge Princ Issues)**
- **Positive Relationship (DIC Challenge Relation)**
- **Responsibility of Role (DIC Challenge Role Resp)**
- **Sustain Coaching (DIC Challenge Sustain)**

**Learn from the Study (DIC Learn)** Captures what the District Instructional Coaches have learned from their experiences with coaching at the district level and what they hope to learn from the Participatory Action Research study.

- **Impact of District Support (DIC Learn Sup)**
- **Next Steps (DIC Learn Next Steps)**
- **Potential Impact the Initiative has on a School (DIC Learn Pot Impact)**
- **School Structures (DIC Learn Sch Structures)**
- **Measurable Outcomes (DIC Learn Meas Outcomes)**

**Problem Solving Methods (DIC Prob Solv)** Captures interviewees’ descriptions of the methods they employ as they seek solutions to problems their site coaches are facing.

- **Developing Action Plan (DIC Prob Solv Act Plans)**
- **Finding Strengths (DIC Prob Solv Find Streng)**
- **Model (DIC Prob Solv Model)**
- **Brainstorm (DIC Prob Solv Brainstr)**
- **Foreshadow Issues (DIC Prob Solv Foreshadow)**
- **Role Play (DIC Prob Solv Role Play)**

**Role (DIC Role)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of what they perceive their role to be as they engage in work with their assigned site English Learner Instructional Coaches.

- **Advocacy for ELs (DIC Role Adv)**
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- **Alignment (DIC Role Align)**
- **Courageous Conversations about Change (DIC Role Cour Conv)**
- **Define Coaching Roles (DIC Role Def Roles)**
- **Develop Coach Skills (DIC Role Dev Skills)**
- **Provide External Lens/Perspective (DIC Role Ext Lens)**
- **Impact Coach Practice (DIC Role Imp Prac)**
- **Support Provider (DIC Role Sup)**
- **Provide Support for Direct Instruction Framework (DIC Role Supp DI)**
- **Provide Vision and Challenge (DIC Role Vis Chall)**

- **Share (DIC Share)** Captures instances where the interviewees’ shared information or reflections beyond what was asked in the interview questions.
  - **Collect Feedback on District Support (DIC Share Col Feedback)**
  - **Direct Instruction Framework (DIC Share DI)**
  - **Human Resource Issue (DIC Share Hum Res)**

- **Perceptions of Site Coaches Experiences (DIC Site)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of what they perceive site coaches face as they attempt to implement instructional coaching at their schools
  - **Closed Doors (DIC Site Close Door)**
  - **Fear of Being Disliked (DIC Site Fear of Dislike)**
  - **Lack of Instructional Vision (DIC Site Lack of Vis)**
  - **Learner versus Expert Syndrome (DIC Site Learn vs Exp)**
  - **Demands of Peripheral Duties (DIC Site Periph Demands)**
  - **Resistant Teachers (DIC Site Rest Teach)**
  - **Struggle with Starting Point (DIC Site Start Point)**

- **Strategy (DIC Strat)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of the strategies they utilize as they support site English Learner Instructional Coaches
  - **Develop Structures for Coaching (DIC Strat Dev Struct)**
  - **Discuss Fears (DIC Strat Dis Fears)**
  - **Goal Setting (DIC Strat Goal Set)**
  - **Hold Hard Conversations (DIC Strat Hard Conv)**
  - **Practice Coaching with Site Coach (DIC Strat Prac Coach)**
  - **Preplan for Meetings with Coaches (DIC Strat Prep Plan)**
  - **Questioning (DIC Strat Questioning)**
  - **Support Relationship Building with Resistant Teachers (DIC Strat Relat Rest Teacher)**
  - **Share Personal Experiences (DIC Strat Share Pers Exp)**
  - **Walkthroughs (DIC Strat Walkthroughs)**
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- **Create 2 Solutions for Every Problem (DIC Strat 2 Solutions)**
- **Record Plans and Next Steps (DIC Strat Record Keeping)**

**Success (DIC Suc)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of successes they have experienced with their assigned site English Learner Instructional Coaches

- **Acceptance of Role (DIC Suc Acc Role)**
- **Changed their Role (DIC Suc Changed Role)**
- **Implementation of Cycle (DIC Suc Imp Cycle)**
- **Preparing for Debriefs (DIC Suc Prep for Cyc)**
- **Share Fears (DIC Suc Share Fears)**

**Support Provided (DIC Supp)** Captures the interviewees’ descriptions of the support they provide or plan to provide to their assigned site English Learner Instructional Coaches

- **Attack Challenges (DIC Supp Attack Chall)**
- **Differentiate for Teachers (DIC Supp Diff for Teachers)**
- **Inspire Change (DIC Supp Insp Change)**
- **Organizational and Time Management (DIC Supp Org Time Manag)**

3) **Focus Group Data Codes**

All the coded data that was collected through the focus groups with instructional coaches begin with the code.

**Focus Group (FG)**. **FG1** was used for all the codes that were applied during the first focus group. **FG2** was used for all the codes that were applied during the second focus group. The following codes were used during both sessions:

- **Alignment Common Language (AL CL)**
- **Attitude (Att)**
- **Barrier General (Bar Gen)**
- **Barrier Misalignment in System (Bar MS)**
- **Barrier Principal (Bar Princ)**
- **Challenge (Chall)**
- **Collaborative Coaching Common Language (Collab CCL)**
- **Collaborative Coaching Entry (Collab CE)**
- **Collaborative Knowledge and Application (Collab KA)**
- **DIC Coach Push (DIC CP)**
- **DIC Coach Relationship (DIC CR)**
- **DIC Feedback and Changes (DIC FC)**
- **Instructional Coach Academy Attitude (ICA Att)**
- **Instructional Coach Academy Knowledge and Application (ICA KA)**
Appendix D - continued

Coding Dictionary

- Interrelatedness (INTER)
- Role Collaboration (Role Collab)
- Role Mindset (Role Minds)
- Role Raising Awareness (Role Aware)
- Role Sense of urgency
- Role Success
- Shift EL Focus
- Shift Negative
- Shift Positive