The Impact of Cognitive Coaching on High School English Teachers’ Implementation of Metacognitive Reading Strategies

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THE IMPACT OF COGNITIVE COACHING ON HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS’ IMPLEMENTATION OF METACOGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my late grandparents, Melvin McLaurin Jr. and Lula Belle McLaurin. They instilled in me the courage to dream, the belief that challenging work and tenacity are their own rewards, and the notion that education is not only important but essential. Thank you for always reminding me that “no one can take away what you get in your head.”

I also dedicate my dissertation to my late cousin, Kenneth McLaurin, who always treated me as his little sister. From the moment I shared with you the start of this journey, I could count on you for words of encouragement and a random text message reminding me that I would be the first in our family to meet this finish line. Although you are not physically here to see me complete this journey, I felt your presence in every chapter I wrote.

To my mother, that taught me to put God first in all my endeavors and to trust in the power of prayer. With God and prayer, I have conquered feats and battles that I never thought were possible.

Last, to my best friend and husband Will. Thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me when I have lost hope in myself. To my children Cyla and Christopher, thank you for cheering me on every Saturday morning. I love you all!
ABSTRACT

The problem that this action research study addressed was the ineffective facilitation strategies used in professional development for teachers. The purpose of the study was to determine whether reflective practices impact teachers’ instructional decisions. The study used Cognitive Coaching, a reflective coaching model, as its intervention. To gather data the study used classroom observations, coaching conversations, and an eight-question structured survey administered at the end of the study. This qualitative case study included three high school English teachers as its participants and the study was conducted at two different high schools in a suburban school district in the Southeast. The classroom observations, coaching conversations and survey was analyzed and coded. The data reflected the following broad categories: strategy implementation alteration, teacher agency, professional beliefs, student success, and teacher support which transcended to the following findings: (1) Cognitive Coaching has a positive impact on teacher’s depth of reflection, (2) Teachers learn by reflecting on their practice, (3) Teachers find that self-reflection supports implementation of instructional strategies, and (4) Cognitive Coaching fosters more intentional lesson planning. The findings in this study were (1) Cognitive Coaching has a positive impact on teacher’s depth of reflection, (2) Teachers learn by reflecting on their practice, (3) Teachers find that self-reflection supports implementation of instructional strategies, and (4) Cognitive Coaching fosters more intentional lesson planning.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

For the past eight years of my twenty-year career as an educator, I have worked in a role tied to supporting teachers. These roles have varied from being a model teacher, literacy coach, multi-tiered system of support coach, state transformation coach, and now a high school English content specialist for a school district. Despite the variations in names, and slight differences in job description, each position had one common goal: to improve teacher pedagogy as a route to improving student achievement. I selected these roles because I always wanted to support teachers because I earnestly believe that when teachers are supported, it improves outcomes for students.

In each of the roles mentioned, teacher support was linked to prescribed improvement of teacher instruction that leads to creating and delivering professional development for teachers. A myriad of top-down approaches dictated professional development offerings because of deficits in student achievement data. Despite the well-crafted presentations, elaborate resources, and various collaboration strategies used during these professional development sessions, I found little to no meaningful change in most teachers’ practice and in some cases was met with passive or blatant resistance to the idea of a change in practice.

While I walked away in disappointment because I knew I needed to go back to the drawing board, there were those few moments where a teacher considered a new idea,
posed a question related to her classroom, or sought more support that made me believe that change was possible. I often wondered what caused change in practice for some teachers and not for others. This same narrative repeated itself as I headed out to complete observations and feedback conversations with English teachers at one of my district’s high schools.

As I walked down the brightly lit corridor and through the crowded hallway filled with students, English teachers automatically noticed my entrance and responded with either a warm smile, an avoidance of eye contact, or with a blank stare. Shrugging off the less than welcoming gestures, I went ahead with clipboard in hand to enter classrooms, hoping to see teachers implementing the success criteria and learning goals alignment we had just visited during our last professional development two weeks before this visit.

Classroom after classroom, I took notes, watched students, listened to teachers, and looked at classroom walls for a sign of any of the ideas presented to them previously only to discover none. After I visited the last of six classrooms for the day, I crammed into my book bag my pens, note pads, clipboard, and failures while the teacher dismissed the students.

Just as I reached the classroom door, I turned to the teacher to thank her for allowing me to visit, all the while I sulked over the notion that nothing was carried out from the last professional learning session I facilitated. The teacher abruptly said, “I really enjoyed the last professional development the other week.” I was so astonished I found myself staring blankly at her until she continued by saying, “You know, the one with the Assessment Boundaries.” She then reached for the document I had shared with
teachers that day and showed me the notes she had taken to plan her next lessons. I found myself in sheer amazement because I was convinced that no one had gained anything from the session. She ended our conversation with, “Thank you for sharing that resource. It has really helped me to think deeper about each indicator and not miss key points students need to understand.” Still in a stupor, I managed a wry smile and a “You’re welcome. I am happy it helped.”

Looking back at that day to that professional learning session and others I have facilitated, I recognized that the most valuable learning for teachers is the learning they own and see as an investment. The challenge lies in creating opportunities for teachers to experience their own epiphanies because those moments translate into dynamic academic opportunities for all students.

**Problem of Practice**

The idea that “Every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design” (Fisher et al., 2016, p. 2) is an ideology that fueled the creation and continuation of professional development for educators, whether mandated or teacher selected professional development. With this ideology in mind, for the past three decades quality professional development for educators has been the topic of discussion among stakeholders and educational policy makers. Quality professional development for educators is a concern because the classroom teacher is one of the key factors in the academic success of students. Thus, “teachers’ professional development has become a major focus of school reform initiatives” (Choy & Chien, 1998, p. iii).
Educational policy and reform initiatives dominated professional learning for teachers as the reform initiatives look to improve the academic success and rigor of schools across the nation. The educational policies and initiatives are driven by the idea that well-trained and supported teachers will produce strong students (Corcoran, 2007). Many of today's and earlier educational policy and reform initiatives have been in response to that premise and the findings of the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Choy & Chien, 1998). In 1983, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* report presented the case that American students were not as prepared academically as students in other countries and noted the future impact this academic gap could have upon America’s economy (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

To improve the education of American students, the report recommended the nation seek to align its standards, curricula, and expectations with those of more advanced countries (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In response to the criticisms and recommendations reforms such as *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) and *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015) became America’s pathway to a stronger education system. Instead of only stressing more accountability via testing and more rigorous standards and learning expectations for all students, each act highlighted the need for professional development to support educators in meeting the more rigorous demands (*No Child Left Behind Act*, 2001; *Every Student Succeeds Act*, 2015).

However, although these educational reforms and initiatives acknowledge the need for professional development and support for teachers, the reforms did not supply a clear understanding of the elements and structures needed for effective professional
development (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).
Since professional learning varies in “the range of experiences that count as professional
development,” it is difficult to decide the effectiveness of professional development and
complex to develop a consensus around the elements of effective professional
development (Desmoine, 2011, p. 68).

In the past fifteen years there has been more research about teacher professional
development to include recommendations for “treating teacher learning as interactive and
social, based in discourse and community practice” (Desmoine, 2011, p. 60). For
example, researchers showed that effective professional development was “structured
professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in
student learning outcomes” (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017, p. v). Such effective
professional learning included “content focus, incorporates active learning, supports
collaboration, uses models of effective practice, provides coaching and expert support,
offers feedback and reflection, and is of sustained duration” (Darling-Hammond et al.,
2017, p. v-vi).

Moreover, if teachers are to create experiences for students that include “deeper
learning skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creative problem-
solving then this must be the type of professional learning that teachers experience too”
(National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2016, p. 17). Thus, effective
professional development provides an opportunity for teachers to implement the practice,
receive support and feedback with the implementation, and reflect upon the practice
(National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2016; Klein & Riordan,
2009).
Consequently, while there are districts and schools that are implementing professional learning as recommended, this is not the norm (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2016). For example, while research suggested that professional development of less than 14 hours has no impact on learning most teachers across the US receive a total of one to two days a year on various unconnected professional development topics (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2016). Additionally, research reports discovered that school districts across the nation spend between 74 to 181 million dollars a year on “workshop forms” of teacher professional development (TNTP Reimagine Teaching, 2015). Yet there is not any evidence that these sessions alter teacher practice from year to year and most teachers complain that such professional development is not personalized and does not meet their needs (TNTP Reimagine Teaching, 2015).

Bodies of research also show that professional development is often ineffective for teachers due to misalignment of professional development goals to teachers’ diverse needs which diminishes teacher agency, lack of implementation support, and professional development structures devoid of meaningful learning and reflection (Darling-Hammond et, al., 2017; Bowe & Gore, 2017; McElearnery et, al., 2019). Misalignment of professional development goals to teachers’ needs occurs as facilitators and creators of professional development develop professional development that isn’t responsive to the needs of teachers and students.

The professional development does not reflect the contexts of teachers and students (Darling et, al., 2017). This results in ineffective professional development because teachers’ unique needs are not addressed. Misalignment of needs is a system
level barrier that school districts face as they develop professional development to support the diverse needs of the many teachers employed within the district. One reason the misalignment occurs is there is a “lack of shared vision around what excellent teaching entails” (Darling-Hammond et. al., 2017, p. 21). Developing a shared vision of excellent teaching is challenging because teaching is complex and multifaceted. Therefore, creating a vision of “what constitutes good teaching at local level” is equally complex (Bowe and Gore, 2017, p. 353) because all the variations of teaching must be considered.

The inability to develop common language and understanding around effective teaching makes it challenging to develop professional development goals attached to teacher needs because a reliable criterion has not been set up. This often results in professional development that is misaligned to teacher needs and an inability to develop teacher agency in effectively articulating their current work and current needs. Teachers are unable to accurately reflect over the effectiveness of their practice because the vision is unclear to which to measure their practice.

Misalignment also occurs because there is a lack of “training and preparation for instructional leaders and principals in identifying and organizing needs based professional development” (Darling et. al., 2017, p. 21). Identifying and organizing needs based professional development is complicated because of “the situatedness of teachers’ knowledge” (Bowe and Gore, 2017, p. 353). Since teachers’ knowledge is contextual to the situation and each teacher brings a variation of knowledge there is a need to create less prescriptive learning that offers choice and addresses teachers’ varying knowledge (Bowe and Gore, 2017). Without careful organization of such professional development,
teacher’s agency is diminished because teachers receive generalized professional development not crafted to their current knowledge and current needs.

Another factor that creates misalignment is a disconnect between the professional development content and teachers’ current practice. The content of some professional development is “misdirected” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 2) because the professional development does not focus on the actual teaching knowledge and skills needed to support students’ learning. When professional development is devoid of a teacher’s current practice the teacher’s agency is diminished because goals are unclear in context to the teacher’s daily practice.

A third contributing factor to ineffective professional development for teachers is a lack of implementation support for teachers. Gulamhussein (2013), noted that implementation is the greatest problem when creating effective professional development for teachers. Teachers have trouble with implementing a new strategy learned during professional development into their classroom practice (Gulamhussein, 2013). The difficulty with implementation increased when professional development was delivered via a traditional one-time workshop model. The traditional workshop model assumed that the only challenge teachers face is a lack of knowledge and when they have the knowledge a change in practice will follow (Gulamhussein, 2013).

However, this idea does not follow how knowledge of a new skill advances into application. A focus on knowledge without application and reflective mediation in context causes “implementation dip,” which is a struggle in implementing a new skill despite learning information about a new skill (Gulamhussein, 2013). Research finds that
91.5% of professional development in 2009 was conducted via a workshop and only 10% of teachers could transfer skills into practice after attending a workshop style professional development (Gulamhussein, 2013).

Some professional development structures and initiatives are ineffective because they do not help teachers learn nor support substantial impact (Bowe and Gore, 2017). Learning and significant impact are absent when teachers’ context and teachers’ judgement through reflection are not addressed or used during the professional development. These items were absent when the professional development structure only facilitated information. Additionally, when professional development created a narrow scope of effective teaching it ignored the complexity of teaching and diminished the individuality of schools and classrooms (Bowe and Gore, 2017). Without a level of individuality, the professional development structure did not address the varying range of beliefs and experiences that each teacher brings to the learning environment (Bowe and Gore, 2017).

Locally, my current school district employed professional development in a traditional workshop format. For instance, the school year of 2021-2022, high school English teachers were able to attend a total of 14 different workshop style professional development sessions as a half-day session in August and a second half day session in October. The total required sessions for both days equated to six hours of professional development. While teachers shared their learning with peers, there was not any form of reflection with the supplied professional development in relation to each teachers’ practice (K. Templeton, August 13, 2021).
A similar structure for professional development also drove the professional development that I developed and facilitated for the high school English teachers in the district. In my role as high school ELA specialist for the district, I created professional development sessions for all teachers during district in-service professional development, facilitated benchmark review meetings that provided strategies for instructional change, lead school based professional learning to improve instructional strategies, supported English department chairs for each high school with building instructional capacity at their schools using a traditional workshop model. I ventured from a traditional workshop model to district instructional observations to determine instructional strengths and areas of improvement for English departments at each school and isolated areas of need for individual teachers when I modeled lessons for teachers.

Despite the various avenues of professional development I offered in this role, there was minimal change in teachers’ instructional decisions. For example, over the course of the first two months of school I observed a total of thirty-seven English 2 teachers across each high school in the district. A common concern was misalignment between teachers’ instructional strategies, students’ learning goals, and the intent of the indicator for assessment and learning.

This gave me pause and I focused all my professional development for teachers to strengthen alignment of instructional strategies with indicators for assessment and learning. The professional learning ranged from concentrated half-day and full day professional development at individual schools, small group book studies with groups of teachers, paired schools reviewing data and learning new instructional strategies in response to the data, and virtual hour sessions for large groups of teachers.
Yet there was only a slight change in teacher practice as noted through classroom observations. For instance, over the course of five months I completed seventy observations for English teachers across the five high schools. Based on the district’s walk-thru database system, the areas of instructional model, assessment, and instruction consistently scored as the three lowest categories with an average score of 2.59 to 2.77 out of a possible 4.0. A comparison of professional development supplied to walk-thru data showed a disconnect between professional development provided and classroom implementation.

Consideration of these gaps of professional development effectiveness, the problem of practice for this study was the current structure of professional development failed to supply opportunities for teachers to reflect over their current pedagogy and conceptualize new instructional strategies for their practice to meet the rigorous expectations for all learners.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study included two components: Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching model. Kolb’s experiential learning theory focuses upon the notion that learning is a process that changes based upon experiences (Kolb, 1984). Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching is a coaching model that allows educators to direct their own learning and improve their own instructional practices via self-reflection (Costa et al., 2015). Together, these theories guided this study that focused on impacting teachers’ pedagogical decisions using the reflective practices of Cognitive Coaching.
David A. Kolb’s experiential learning theory explains that “ideas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 28). Thus, learning is a process that occurs through examination and discussion of one’s experiences with others. Since each experience is different, learning occurs in cycles of new experience, reflection, and dialogue of the experience, and application of new concepts or understandings develop from the experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984; Kolb, 2015). Experiential learning theory views learning as a holistic process that merges “experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (Kolb, 1984, p. 31). Experiential learning theory is unique in its holistic view of learning, but theorists Lewin, Dewey, and Piaget had notable theories that Kolb adapted to create his experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984, Kolb, 2015).

Six principles ground Kolb’s Experiential Learning theory, and each principle connected to this study’s problem of practice. The first principle states that the process of learning and outcome of learning are equal and occur through experiences (Kolb, 2015). This study’s problem of practice reflected this principle because the study noted that current professional development structures do not support teachers’ learning because the structures do not supply an opportunity for teachers to connect the learning to their daily classroom experiences.

The second principle emphasizes the continuous learning process that includes meshing what we know and believe to be constant with elements that continuously change around us (Kolb, 2015). This study’s problem of practice acknowledged the continuous changes for educators and the need to create professional learning experiences for educators that directly correlate to their classroom experiences.
The third principle requires the learner to explain and reflect with a peer to make meaning and change (Kolb, 2015). This study noted the connection between professional development with self-reflection and teachers’ change in practice. The fourth and fifth principles involve adaptation to one’s environment and personal growth as result of one’s environment (Kolb, 2015). This study’s problem of practice stressed that professional development must meet teachers’ personal needs by connecting the professional development to teachers’ context. The last principle supported the idea that diverse types of knowledge require different types of approaches (Kolb, 2015) and is reflected in this study’s idea that teachers need professional development that allows them to connect the new knowledge into their current practice.

The second part of this study’s theoretical framework is Costa and Garmston’s (2016) Cognitive Coaching model which supports the self-reflection and continuous learning of leaders and learners. By definition, “Cognitive Coaching is a form of dialogue that provides a space for self-reflection, for revising and refining positions and self-concepts, where a colleague is invited to see him/herself in a new light” (Costa et al, 2016, p. 4). Cognitive Coaching stems from constructivist learning theory, Reuven Feurstien’s mediated learning experience, and Cogan and Goldhammer’s clinical supervision model (Costa et al., 2016). Cognitive Coaching is based in four assumptions: teaching is complex and requires contextual decision making, behavior is a product of individual perceptions, change in perception leads to a change in behavior, and coaching mediates perception and supports behavioral change (Costa et al, 2016).

Cognitive Coaching supported this study’s problem of practice because the study focused upon the disconnect between current professional development structures and
teachers not changing their instructional strategies because the professional development did not allow for contextual understanding or mediation of teachers’ thinking. Cognitive Coaching also supported the study’s purpose of deciding whether reflection over teachers’ instruction during a lesson affected their future decisions with metacognitive instructional strategies.

Experiential learning theory supported this study because the theory follows the idea that learning occurs through experience, learning is a process that is never the same due to these experiences, and reflection of these experiences with colleagues supports a change in current practice. When this theory is applied to professional development, teachers are supplied professional learning experiences that are contextualized to their daily classroom experiences with an opportunity for reflection. Participants in this study received professional development that considered their classroom experiences through the observations of their instruction. Participants in this study also received professional development that supported reflection on their classroom experiences via Cognitive Coaching. Cognitive Coaching meshed with the Experiential Learning theory because Cognitive Coaching employed a framework for reflection upon one’s experiences with the support of a peer. The participants in this study refined their ability to self-reflect by using the question stems of Cognitive Coaching which supported improvement of their instructional practices.

Both Kolb’s experiential learning (2015) and Costa and Gorman’s (2016) Cognitive Coaching focus on leading teachers to be self-directed and reflective over their own practices to build capacity (Costa et al., 2016). Kolb’s experiential learning theory addressed the need for learning to center on individual experiences, in teacher
professional development teacher’s individual classroom experiences. Costa et al.’s Cognitive Coaching model provided tools to reflect and plan for change based on personal reflection, in teacher professional development the focus centers upon visible teacher behaviors and teachers’ thought processes (Costa et. al, 2016). In this study experiential learning and Cognitive coaching worked together because experiential learning is learning through individual experiences and when combined with Cognitive Coaching, they create opportunities for teachers to combine experiences and reflection about what they are doing and why.

**Research Questions**

Developing effective professional development for teachers is essential to the success of school or curriculum reform (Desimone, 2011). While there are varying types and structures for professional development, professional development that most alters teachers’ pedagogy includes an opportunity for self- reflection (Schacter & Gerde, 2019). Thus, the intervention for this study involved a combination of professional development in conjunction with instructional coaching conversations framed by the Cognitive Coaching model. Throughout the intervention, teachers were supplied question frames and conversation maps to guide their reflections about their pedagogy related to metacognitive reading instructional strategies.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether reflective practices impact teachers’ pedagogical decisions. To decide the effectiveness of the intervention the study examined the impact of Cognitive Coaching as a means of reflection about pedagogical decisions through the following research questions:
1. What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?

2. How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?

Considering the problem of practice and the theoretical framework selected, the research questions provided the researcher with a clear understanding into which questions and phases of Cognitive Coaching affect teachers’ pedagogical decisions and whether teachers perceive Cognitive Coaching helpful when they self-reflect on a lesson.

**Researcher Positionality**

As an African American female, I grew up in a rural high-poverty town in South Carolina. Although I fared well academically during my K-12 years, upon entering college I noted skills and content that my peers learned throughout their public-school career that I did not. While this made my plight more rigorous, it also spurned my desire to become an educator. Thus, professionally I have taught high school English in large urban cities as well as in high-performing high-poverty schools. Additionally, I have worked in varying district levels in affluent and diverse school districts and as a change agent at the state department level. All these experiences have affected my belief that all students deserve rigorous and relevant instruction.

Additionally, as a parent of students that attend public schools, I expect the best educational experience for my children just as I assume all parents expect. These beliefs inspired me to accept my current role as a district level high school ELA content specialist. In this role I develop and provide professional development for high school English teachers, support teachers instructional delivery via informal instructional
observations and feedback, present model lessons, provide planning sessions for teachers, and develop curriculum.

According to Herr & Anderson (2015), researcher positionality requires the researcher to address their position in reference to the participants in the study. It is essential for the action researcher to address positionality as it reveals bias that may affect the methods, questions, and practices used within the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As noted by Herr & Anderson (2015), one’s positionality is often complex, and my positionality is also complex. As the school district’s high school ELA content specialist, I am an outsider to each high school that collaborates with the staff of the school, thus my positionality is an outsider in collaboration with insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Although my role is not evaluative, because I am not a classroom teacher, I create and implement district expectations, and supply an expert lens, participants may view my position as one of power or hierarchy (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

During this study, my roles included those of a researcher looking to improve my practices and those of others. As the high school ELA specialist, I discovered techniques and practices to improve their instructional practices while noting which techniques were most effective for duplication with other teachers. Throughout the study the participants and researcher functioned in consultation because I asked for opinions but made all decisions (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Throughout the research I was instructional support, and participants had the choice to refuse this support. Additionally, I served as a teacher because I shared knowledge and strategies for teacher implementation as a district initiative via coaching sessions and professional development sessions.
Research Design

Efron and Ravid (2013) describe action research as unique because of the varied lenses the researcher applies during the research process. They indicate that action research follows a constructivist ideology because action researchers are generating knowledge through questioning and inquiry and situational because action researchers seek to understand and solve problems in their context. Action research is also practical and systematic because the results are applicable at once. The process of the research is planned, methodical, and cyclical because the process begins with a question that is answered but leads to new questions (Efron & Ravid, 2013). As noted by Efron and Ravid, this study used action research as its general design because my primary goal was to understand the phenomena of effective professional development that affects teacher pedagogy.

The study used a qualitative case study approach since it focused upon understanding the experiences of teachers in various high schools in relation to the phenomenon. The purpose of qualitative research was to inquire about natural events as they occurred and with people that exist in those settings (Efron & Ravid, 2013). With these ideas in mind, the setting of the study included two high schools across a suburban district in South Carolina. The participants for the study were three high school English teachers who taught a combination of English 1 CP, English 2 CP, and/or Reading Seminar, a course intended to support struggling readers and in which the district is adopting its first cohesive curriculum. Each case highlighted one of these teachers. Participant selection was based on teachers’ knowledge and use of reflective practices,
desire to support struggling readers, and reflected the range of classroom environments reflected across the varying high schools.

The specific methodological design of the study was a qualitative case study. While a qualitative case study has universal characteristics of a qualitative study, it differs in the notion that “a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 38). This study used the method of a case study because the “bounded system” is the case of each participant at each participant’s school site.

I gathered qualitative data through several methods, including two observations and two coaching conversations with each teacher, and one survey that all teachers completed. Using several methods for data collection allowed me to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon and allowed me to better compare information. The use of multiple data sources is known as triangulation (Efron and Ravid, 2013).

Observations are powerful tools for data collection because they provide the researcher with a first-hand account of the problem of practice in the natural setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study two structured observations allowed me to better understand pedagogical decisions the teacher made in real time as well as witness factors within the setting that influence those decisions. Moreover, the use of a structured observation using a code sheet allowed me to focus upon a set of focused instructional behaviors (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study used a checklist during each thirty-minute in person observation. Due to students in the setting, I did not video tape the observations. I recorded data from the observation by checking off procedures associated
with the instructional strategy that the teacher used. In a column beside the checklist, I recorded field notes to supply additional information for each action observed or not observed on the checklist.

In conjunction with observations, the study used structured coaching conversations after each observation. These coaching conversations were anchored to the observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The coaching conversations occurred virtually within four days of the observation. The conversations were virtual for easier recording and allowed for various time slots for me and teacher to meet. The coaching conversations were recorded and I reviewed the conversations later for any missed dictation during the coaching conversation. During the coaching conversations I transcribed by hand the teacher’s responses using a two-column form. One column reflected each phase of the coaching conversation and the coaching questions, and the other column had a space to record the teacher’s responses. The form ensured that I asked each participant the same question in the same order and maintained accurate notes in relation to each phase.

At the end of the study, each participant completed one online survey to gather their perceptions of reflection as used with Cognitive Coaching. Surveys are a resourceful way to gather large scale responses quickly and their structures can ask for closed and narrative responses (Efron & Ravid, 2013). The online Google survey in this study used structured responses. The survey had a total of eight questions that included yes/no responses, multi-select, and rating questions. The survey did not collect participants’ names or emails. The survey provided participants perceptions about self-reflection and the intervention, Cognitive Coaching.
In a qualitative study, it is imperative that the researcher analyze the data during data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since the study was a qualitative case study, I was meticulous in the organization of the data. As noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), I started by organizing each data set by case. To maintain confidentiality, each case and setting was assigned a pseudonym, and individual data for each case was organized chronologically. Since this was a qualitative case study, the data set was “a case study database” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 233) and I organized data so that I was able to locate the data for analysis. The data collected was housed on my personal computer. My computer was password protected and the data collected was kept in a Google drive account that was also password protected.

In analysis of the data, I used coding within each case to support the retrieval of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since the study had multiple cases, I employed “two stages of analysis — the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 234). In the first phase, I used open coding to develop regularities within each case. In the second phase of analysis, I used axial coding to look for categories and or regularities across cases with which to develop a master list that revealed patterns across cases (Merriam & Tisdell).

**Significance of the study**

This study examined the lack of reflective structures for teachers in current professional development. The high schools and high school teachers in this study were selected because they were representative of high schools within the state of South
Carolina and nation as all schools are now teaching college and career readiness standards that represent a national effort to improve student achievement, reduce variability across classrooms and schools, increase the rigor of student learning outcomes, apply lessons learned from other high-performing countries, and decrease the amount of remediation students need when they enter two- and four-year institutions (Killion et al., 2012, p. 2).

Additionally, the participants and schools reflected the ever-present demands of educating all students, accountability demands, and providing professional learning that reflects adult learning and supports educators “…to better face the challenges of higher standards and to improve student achievement” (Killion et al., 2012, p. 1).

The study provided me a deeper understanding in to how to effectively support teachers in their practice as the intervention required me to implement components of experiential learning theory and use reflection tools and frameworks with teachers during professional development. Additionally, the study was beneficial to the participants as the intervention supported them in reflecting upon their practice individually which “allows teachers to identify their own instruction related needs, improving the professional learning experience” (Schachter & Gerde, 2019, p. 56).

Action research allowed for structured inquiry that led to school improvement within my local context; this study used action research as an exploration to determine whether reflection techniques cause an adaption to teachers’ pedagogy (Efron and Ravid, 2013). Although the findings of this study were limited to three teachers and these
teachers’ classrooms, the study could be beneficial to teacher leaders, instructional coaches, administrators, and district level personnel who have the role of providing professional development for a varying array of teachers because it provided a frame to support teachers in developing reflective practices. This in turn allowed for alteration of teachers’ practices and thus provided instruction that best reflects the needs of all students.

**Limitations of the study**

Limitations of the study include timing and the length of the study, participation of the participants, and the methods of data collection. As the study’s focus hinged upon understanding the phenomenon within the setting and from a firsthand account, the methods of data collection are primarily interview and observation. While these methods used together supply a means for triangulation, these methods rely upon participants’ willingness to be transparent. Thus, a limitation of the study included participants comfortability with being transparent in their setting during the observation and with the candidness of their responses to interview questions.

Two added limitations included participation and time. The study sought out a sample of participants based upon a criterion. However, participation in the study was voluntary and may not be representative of a larger scale of participants. Additionally, with scheduling observations and coaching conversations with participants from two different schools and my current obligations to observe and coach the one hundred and twenty high school English teachers in the school district I had to limit my time to no more than five possible participants for this study.
Organization of the dissertation

Chapter one provided the overall components to set a direction for the study and grounded the study in the current context of the problem. Chapter two serves as a means for the reader to understand how the study added to, built upon, and reflected earlier literature in connection with the problem and intervention. Chapter three links the first two chapters with the last two chapters by outlining methods and procedures taken during the study. Chapter four summarizes the data and findings. Finally, Chapter five discusses recommendations based upon the findings from the study and suggest possibilities for additional research to expand upon this study.

Glossary of terms

Instructional coaching – a form of professional development/learning that uses listening, questioning, relationship building, and reflection to teach others specific instructional strategies (Knight & Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

Metacognitive instructional strategies- strategies that teachers use during instruction to support students’ thinking about their thought processes (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

Metacognition is one’s ability to think about their cognitive process as it relates to their learning (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

Metacognitive instructional reading strategies are instructional practices that teacher’s model and teach students to use to make meaning of a text (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).
Pedagogy placed the importance on the role of the teacher in education. The teacher decides what students should learn, how students are taught, and when the teaching and learning process will begin” (Chan, 2010, p. 26).

Professional development/learning – collaborative, on-going, and job-embedded learning experiences for teachers that increase their understanding of content and/or instructional strategies (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The drive to increase student academic achievement places emphasis on improving teacher effectiveness via teacher professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Most of this professional development stresses content or program information strategies and uses a workshop model as a means of presentation (Quinterio, 2019). While these professional development opportunities may better equip educators with a mutual understanding of effective instructional practices and general knowledge, professional development that uses these structures do not address the contextual nature of teaching (Entz, 2006). Research shows that without an element of reflection about current practice in relation to the supplied professional development, a change in practice is unlikely. For example, Argyis notes that teachers who reflected over their held beliefs/theories began to change their own practices to reflect their desires for effective instruction (Argyis, 1997, as cited Daniel, 2002).

Thus, this study focused upon the impact of implementing opportunities for teachers to reflect over their current practice and opportunities for teachers to conceptualize new instructional strategies into their current practice. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teacher’s instructional decisions with metacognitive strategies and to determine the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teachers’ perceptions about self-reflection.
In alignment with reflection and conceptualizing learning via one’s context, this study used Cognitive Coaching as its intervention with the primary purpose of building teachers’ capacity through self-reflection. Cognitive Coaching questions were used during the self-reflection and coaching conversations to lead participants to consider intended goals for lessons and instructional strategies that best supported those goals. Most pertinent to this study, Cognitive Coaching uses mental maps that facilitate planning, reflecting, and problem solving around the observation of a lesson (Costa et. al, 2016). Cognitive Coaching states that “human beings construct their own meaning through reflecting on experience and through interactions with others” (Costa et. al, 2016, p. 7). Cognitive Coaching places value on self-directed learning, continuous learning, and improvement.

Using the principles of Cognitive Coaching, this study looked to answer the following research questions:

1. What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?

2. How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?

A literature review supports a study as it places the topic or problem of practice in context to the current knowledge about the topic (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). The literature review also substantiates the study’s procedures, rationalizes the study’s question(s) based upon current research, and supplies insight into the best research methodologies for the study (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).
Following Machi and McEvoy (2016), the literature review methodology included scanning the literature for research that contained and supported the identified key terms of the study’s problem of practice including professional development structures and teacher learning. The search engines used were Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Find It @ U of SC. The databases used were JSTOR, Education Source and ERIC combined, and Taylor and Francis Online. The types of sources used were peer-reviewed journals, published dissertations, educational studies, books, websites, and educational briefs.

This process uncovered key researchers such as, Thomas R. Guskey, Darlene Opfer, Laura Desimone, and Linda-Darling Hammond, who have conducted many studies and written reviews and educational articles about the field of professional development. The next steps included skimming research abstracts to find sources that addressed Boolean key terms of professional development, effective professional development, origins of professional development, teacher reflection + professional development, and teacher professional development + student achievement. A third review of sources generated the themes types of professional development, instructional coaching, the complexity of research and evaluation of professional development, effective professional development components, and change in practice which were used these to create a map to decide the organization of the chapter and figure out where certain sources and authors best fit.

Chapter two’s organization includes the historical background on the focus of professional development, a description of the elements of effective professional development, the effectiveness of professional development, importance of effective professional development in schools with higher levels of poverty. This is followed by
discussion of Kolb’s Experiential learning theory and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching model as the theoretical framework, along with discussion about the impacts of Cognitive Coaching on teacher’s instructional practices and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

**Historical Perspectives on Teacher Professional Development**

Teacher professional development practices trace back to the fall teachers’ institute held in Hartford, Connecticut in 1839 (Lins, 1945). The first institute included twenty-six male teachers from Hartford school district with the purpose of providing the teachers with instructional practices and administrative organizational skills that would improve their current practice (Lins, 1945). Due to the institute’s success the following year the institute opened to female teachers in Hartford school district (Lins, 1945).

By 1862, such institutes occurred in most northeastern states for in-service teachers. In response to the growing demand, the institutes moved from the fall to a summer weeklong experience prior to the start of the new school year (Lins, 1945) and expanded their content to include discussions about the science of teaching, causes of failure in teaching, and student engagement (Lins, 1945). Not only did the institutes grow in scale, but they also developed a formalized structure. In 1921 thirty-states mandated attendance of local institutes; and three states created a policy that made attendance to the institute a requirement for an initial teaching certification and the continuation of current certification (Lins, 1945). Although in its infancy, the institute attendance requirement began the connection between educational policy and teacher professional development.
School Reform Policy and Professional Development

For the past five decades, organizing school structures and improving schools have created the agenda for teacher professional development (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). This trend has not changed but intensified as schools focus upon student academic achievement, meeting rigorous standards, and closing achievement gaps in response to educational policies, like No Child Left Behind and the Every Student Succeeds Act (No Child Left Behind: A Desktop Reference, 2002; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Thus, educational policy drives professional development for teachers which causes teachers to receive development that neglects teachers’ meaningful continued professional growth.

Ironically, the linkage between teacher professional development and school reform policy partially grew out of the ambivalence of qualifying teaching as a profession and the verbiage used to convey the learning experiences provided to teachers (Randi & Zeicher, 2004). For example, initially professional development for teachers used the phrase ‘staff development’ which implied that teachers were learning techniques to merely improve their perspective schools/organizations and not advancing their own knowledge like other professions (Randi & Zeicher, 2004). In response to this idea, the current term professional development was created; however, many argue that the current term still implies that teachers need to be fixed due to the usage of development (Randi & Zeicher, 2004). Despite, John Dewey’s (McMurray & Dewey, 1904) advisement, in the third NSSE yearbook, to not separate theory and practice via pre-service teachers learning educational theory and in-service teachers improving practice, the implementation of the distinction further supported the idea that professional
development ‘fixes’ teachers’ current practice instead of growing the body of research on teaching through the lived experiences of teachers implementing theory (Randi & Zeicher, 2004).

To end the developing trend in professional development, in 1957 Stephen Corey, the dean of the Teacher’s College at Columbia University, expressed the need to change the perspective of teacher professional development (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004). Corey advocated that professional development work on using problem solving to solve issues within schools in conjunction with continuous improvement of teachers and other staff while allowing teachers to take an active role in the process (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004).

Despite Corey’s advocation, professional development continued in the same fashion. In the 1970’s professional learning became more intertwined with school reform and teacher development reflected teaching strategies and behaviors that would increase student learning (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004). The model used during professional development followed explanation of theory and demonstration of an instructional practice (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004). As this model continued throughout the 1980’s, the Holme’s Group Report of 1986 highlighted the need for teachers to have support in understanding how to teach children, the subject content, learning and schools, and the community in which they teach (Randi & Zeicher, 2004).

In the early 1990’s Shulman expressed the need for professional development to add reflective practices as teachers need to consider the impact of their practices and the
varying needs of their students (Baker & Rosendal, 2019). This idea continued throughout the nineties as professional development educators sponsored a moving away from skills-based “staff development” linked to various reforms to professional development that focused on five new reforms of

1) subject matter standards, curriculum, and pedagogy; 2) equity issues among diverse student populations; 3) the nature and uses of assessment; 4) social organization of schools; and, 5) the professionalization of teaching. These reforms demanded a different form of teacher professional development—one that developed in teachers the capacity to study, investigate, and invent new teaching practices. (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004, p. 188)

Also, during the nineties, teachers were viewed in charge of their own learning and as reflective practitioners. These ideas led to the need to change school culture with the hope that such an alteration would affect teachers’ thinking and beliefs and in turn teachers would value professional learning as a part of their practice (as cited in Popkewitz et. al, 2009; Randi & Zeicher, 2004).

Current Professional Development and Evidence

Currently, most teacher professional development connects to school-improvement efforts with an emphasis on supplying more frequent professional development that increase content knowledge, improve instructional practices, and increase student academic achievement (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). In comparison to historical professional development, today’s professional development
focuses upon collaboration, job-embedded practices, facilitation and inquiry practices, and teachers taking a lead role in their learning (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). While there has been improvement in the strategies and purposes of teacher professional development, there is a need to gather more research on which practices produce the strongest outcomes for student learning because of teacher learning (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). There is still a gap between the amount and quality of professional development in comparison to the change in teacher practice and the impact on student learning (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010).

**Defining Professional Development**

A common theme that appears in literature with structuring teacher professional development is defining its meaning, scope, and purpose. Experts in teacher professional development argue that without a shared meaning, scope, and purpose it is difficult to develop measurements and components of effectiveness (Desimone, 2011). Desimone (2011) defines teacher professional development in a broad sense noting that teachers learn in various settings that may or may not have structure, such as conversations in the hallway, teaching together, reflection over lessons, mentoring relationships or even information derived from teacher resources. This definition places emphasis upon teacher growth which includes an opportunity for interaction and discourse among a community.

Desimone’s (2011) definition further implies that teacher learning is natural and occurs within the context of a teacher’s daily experiences within the classroom as the teacher reflects upon his/her practice or seeks resources to support his/her instruction. Desimone’s definition supplies a rationale for this study’s intervention, Cognitive
Coaching because Desimone’s professional development purpose places emphasis upon teachers using their current context and reflecting upon that context to improve their practice. Cognitive Coaching places emphasis on reflection, analysis of the experience and self-directed course of action. Desimone’s purpose for professional development leads to an improvement in student learning because the teacher is owning his/her professional learning through current experiences and reflection.

However, there are different perspectives on the purpose of professional development. Other researchers, such as Guskey (2002) express that the purpose of professional learning is to improve student learning by changing teacher practice. Guskey’s (2002) definition of professional development confines professional development to a structured experience that focuses upon the alters teachers’ instructional practices, beliefs, attitudes, and student’s academic learning outcomes. Whereas Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) view the scope of professional development as a variety of job-embedded and outside experiences that purposes to develop teachers’ knowledge, change teachers’ practice, and improve learning outcomes for students.

Although one may argue that the alternate perspectives of professional development are minimal, these slight variations decide the structure and strategies that teacher educators use when facilitating professional development. Without recognizing that teacher’s learning is a process that “…is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38) there will continue to be a disconnect between effective teacher’s professional development and academic outcomes for students.
Effective Professional Development

There has been and continues to exist the idea that if teachers’ professional development is effective, student learning will improve (Oper and Pedder, 2011; Desimone, 2011). This idea becomes of more concern as we move further into the 21st century (Darling-Hammond et.al, 2017). In the 21st century, students need skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and independence; but students can only develop such skills if teachers receive effective professional development that encompasses these strategies (Darling-Hammond, et.al., 2017).

Identifying the effectiveness in professional development has been a challenge for scholars. There is a need to develop more research on the elements of effective professional development in conjunction to student academic outcomes, and not merely teacher satisfaction; however, there has been consensus in the research of characteristics that are most effective in conducting professional development for teachers (Desimone, 2011; Darling-Hammond et.al, 2017). Desimone (2011), found from her research analysis that there are “common features” of professional development that are “…associated” with a change in teacher pedagogy (2011, p. 69). These features include professional development that is content focused, includes active engagement, supplies coherence in relation to their current context and other professional development, includes duration instead of an isolated event, and encompasses a learning community (Desimone, 2011; Peneul et. al., 2007).

Guskey and Yoon (2009), also found the same components as effective; however, they stressed the importance of ensuring the extended time of the professional
development reflected goals and strategies that were essential and meaningful to teachers. Darling-Hammond et.al, (2017) also included Desimone’s common features of effective professional development in their study but added that effective professional development supplies models of effective instruction, offers coaching and support after the learning, and feedback and reflection occur in a cyclical process (Darling-Hammond et.al, 2017).

Evaluation of Professional Development

Although the elements of professional development help to show effectiveness, having these traits does not guarantee effectiveness (Desimone, 2011). The effectiveness of professional development nests within the components of professional development, teachers’ knowledge, teachers’ beliefs, and teachers’ instructional practices, and student academic achievement outcomes; thus, it is difficult to evaluate professional development (Desimone, 2011). Professional development evaluation adds another layer of complexity to this study’s problem of practice because the study notes that most professional development structures do not meet teachers needs which may stem from facilitators inaccurately assessing their professional development sessions.

Based upon Desimone’s (2011) analysis of research consensus in the field, she argues for a conceptual framework to professional development that includes: “teachers experience professional development, the professional development increases teachers’ knowledge and skills and changes their attitudes/and or beliefs, teachers’ instructional changes boost their students’ learning” (Desimone, 2011, p. 70). After setting up common characteristics of professional development, and a framework for professional
development scholars then must select the best means of measurement (Desimone, 2011). Measurements should gather data from “…teacher experiences, learning, and instruction” (Desimone, 2011, p. 70). Although some researchers question the validity of observations, surveys, and interviews, these methods when done methodically provide a means to measure professional development across all areas (Desimone, 2011). In a similar fashion, this study will measure the impact of reflective practices used in professional development by observing teacher practice and interviewing teachers during and after the implementation of Cognitive Coaching intervention.

Borko (2004) also notes that while there have been great advances in the field of professional development there are still gaps in the research on how teacher learning impacts student learning. Borko poses that teacher learning is situative and to understand the effectiveness of teacher professional development, researchers must consider teachers’ individual learning and the added societal and contextual components that affect that learning. Thus, Borko (2004) proposes using three phases to measure the effectiveness of professional development. These phases require the researcher to analyze a single study of professional development, then compare that professional development and facilitator to the previous, and finally comparing multiple professional developments and facilitators as well as learners (Borko, 2004). Throughout the analysis the four common elements are the professional development program, the teachers, the facilitator, and the context of the professional development (Borko, 2004). Although Guskey and Yoon (2009), do not provide a suggested strategy for gathering evidence on professional development they note the need for validated evidence and data that supports what works in professional development in correlation to student achievement.
A review of the literature found that few research studies were able to pinpoint that only one factor, led to a change in teacher practice or any set strategy leading to a change in teacher practice. The literature review offered in many cases a review of different professional development studies with an analysis of those overall findings as well as an inability to supply a linear path that one professional learning strategy led to a change in teacher practice.

The study conducted by Dogan and Adams (2020), supports the notion that there is a gap of research that addresses professional development in relation to changes and or impact to teacher practice and student outcomes. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationships between quality professional development, professional communities, and effective teacher instruction (2020). The final sample of the study included 1475 teachers from 122 schools that taught grades 7, 8, and 9. The study was a quantitative study that used a large-scale survey study. The study found that teachers who experienced multiple components of professional development, “…content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge, active learning, collaboration, time span, and collective participation” (Dogan & Adams, 2020) teachers were more likely to implement best instructional practices such as group activities and problem-based activities in their instruction. The study also found that using professional learning communities in conjunction with professional development gave teachers an opportunity to share and reflect over practices that were used within teachers’ classrooms. The study recommends future research on professional development to consider multiple experiences over the course of 12 months with professional development instead of viewing one professional development event.
Like Dogan and Adams (2020), Valiandes and Neophytou (2016) found that multiple factors contributed to the impact of professional development on teacher practice. The purpose of Valiandes and Neophytou study (2016) was to examine which characteristics of the teacher development program supported change in teachers’ attitudes, instructional practices, and student achievement. The study was a mixed-methods study that included fourteen elementary teachers. The results of the study found that teachers who were successful with implementing the differentiation strategies modeled during the professional development had a positive change and attitude.

Participants in the study noted that the content quality of the professional development, the ability to observe other teachers, and the dialogue after the observations and professional development were most influential to their change in attitudes and beliefs and improve their instruction (Valiandes and Neophytou, 2016). Similar to the findings in Dogan and Adams (2020), the study found that pedagogy and content knowledge, time, and collaboration and community were professional development structures that impact teacher pedagogy. However, Valiandes and Neophytou (2016) also noted that on-site support and development of teachers’ self-evaluation and reflection skills contributed to change in teacher pedagogy and beliefs.

In contrast to the findings in the two previous studies, Quablan’s (2019) study found that even with effective professional development teachers struggled to implement instructional practices taught during the professional development. Quablan’s (2019) study evaluated the impact activities used during a professional development designed for science teachers had on their instructional practices in their classrooms. The qualitative
study included a total of eighteen science teachers that taught a range of middle school and high school science courses (Quablan, 2019).

In the same way Dogan and Adams (2020) and Valiandes and Neophytou (2016) studies noted the impact of time and support on teachers change in practice, Quablan’s(2019) study uncovered similar findings. The study noted that while ninety-one percent of participants noticed an increase in student engagement after implementing the strategies presented in the professional development but only five percent of participating teachers reported an increase in student higher-level thinking and engagement with the science curriculum (Quablan, 2019). Unlike the earlier studies, this study also noted change of teacher practice is difficult and requires a change in teacher beliefs that stem from teachers seeing the strategies from the professional development effective in their classrooms (Quablan, 2019). The study noted that only focusing upon science teachers provided a limitation as it is not certain that a varying content may have had different outcomes (Quablan, 2019).

In conjunction with the findings of the other studies in this review, the Sun et. al. (2013) quantitative study found that high-quality professional development used collaboration. However, the study also discovered that spillover effects of professional development via teachers receiving quality professional development and sharing this with their peers is also an effective professional development strategy for change in teacher pedagogy. The study that included English teachers from 39 middle and high schools, also found that such spillover led to an improvement in instructional practice (Sun et. al., 2013).
Since the literature review sights the importance of viewing professional development over time and across different contextual settings, two studies in the literature review analyzed many professional development programs and reviewed previous research in professional development to decide trends in structures used in professional development. In Guskey and Yoons (2009) review of the study conducted by American Institute for research they uncover the need for additional research on professional development. The study reviewed is considered one of the largest studies as the study reviewed a total of 1343 studies of professional development. Out of the 1343 studies, only nine studies were considered to produce substantial research to support the effectiveness of their programs. The number of teachers in these studies ranged from five to 44 (Guskey & Yoons, 2009). Even this review of studies supplied similar findings as the other studies in this literature review. There were not set strategies that were consistent across the nine schools deemed as effective, but all nine schools’ professional development were rooted in well-crafted content, active learning, and outside experts (Guskey & Yoons, 2009).

Structured in a comparable manner, Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) reviewed thirty-five studies that have proven to have a link between teacher professional development and student outcomes. The purpose of the quantitative study was to identify the common characteristics of the thirty-five studies and identified seven common design elements for PD, indicating they are content focused, incorporate active learning strategies, and engage teachers in collaboration; use models and/or modeling; supply coaching and expert support; include time for feedback and reflection; and are of sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2017). The limitations of this study included
the researchers not naming all relevant studies and that some of the elements may overlap (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2017).

As outlined in the review of the literature, previous research studies note that professional development that impacts teachers’ instructional decisions are connected to teachers’ classroom context, focus upon content, and offers an opportunity for reflection and feedback. The studies did provide a direct correlation between teacher professional development and student achievement but offered promising results. This study will add to the body of research on professional development by supplying additional research on upon the use of teacher reflection with coaching as a means professional development.

**Professional learning dismantles Pedagogy of Poverty**

Teaching is a multi-faceted complex task that requires the manipulation of content knowledge, instructional skill, classroom management, and continual decision making. Adding to this, “Teaching is a political act” (Ehrenworth, Wolfe, and Todd, 2020, p. iv) because teacher’s actions and words reflect their own beliefs and biases that intentionally and unintentionally uplift and dismantle students. Teachers work in diverse school settings because students come from a range of backgrounds, various cultures, a myriad of beliefs, a range of abilities, and varied experiences. This diversity coupled with the complexities of teaching requires professional development that incorporates reflection and a direct connection to classroom practice (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & Lopez-Torres, 2003).

Research shows that the need for quality professional development is even more important in schools with concentrated levels of poverty (Klein & Riordan, 2017;
Wickham & Mullen, 2020). As noted by Martin Haberman (1991), students in schools with concentrated levels of poverty can experience, “a pedagogy of poverty” (Klein & Riordan, 2017). Pedagogy of poverty reflects pedagogical practices that use instructional strategies to control students’ behaviors instead of allowing students to construct deeper meaning and connect their learning to their world (Klien & Riordan, 2017). Such practices create issues of equity, as students of color, English language learners, students with low-income households, and students with special needs, are given low-level instruction that does not address the rigorous demands needed for high stakes test and college requirements.

Many teachers fall victim to pedagogy of poverty because they were not trained to circumnavigate these practices, experienced these practices as a student, or currently experience professional development that uses the same practices as a means of facilitation (Klien & Riordan, 2017). Klien & Riordan tracked two urban high schools that were successful at creating equitable learning spaces, classrooms that did not use pedagogy of poverty practices. During their small-scale qualitative study, the researchers conducted classroom and professional development observations, interviews with teachers and school administrators, and focus groups with students to gather participants insights about the professional development that connected to their practices and students’ experiences in classrooms. Across both schools their findings indicated that the professional development centered upon building and exposing teachers to content relevant to their courses, strategies that promoted thinking with the content, and an opportunity for ownership through reflection and feedback over the curriculum and
strategies the teachers implemented within their classrooms as a result of the professional development.

Over the past five decades, teacher professional development has become an area that many educators and stakeholders find of interest. Teacher professional development is the center of student academic achievement because policy makers, school districts, and researchers across the nation link student academic success to teacher effectiveness (Desimone, 2011; Dogan & Adams, 2020; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2002). Policymakers and educators alike recognize that an educator’s effective use of instructional strategies, planning, and assessment will affect the quality of instruction students receive; thus, deciding the academic achievement of students (Guskey, 2002; Opfer & Pedder; Dogan & Adams, 2020; Desimone, 2011).

Despite the noted link between student achievement and educator effectiveness, there has been little consensus in historic and current educational research on how to supply professional learning for teachers that reflects the intricacies of teachers’ learning processes and that directly correlate to improving teachers’ daily practice (Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2002). As professional development continues to reflect educational reform that is devoid of teachers’ classroom context and teacher reflection, professional development continues to be a mismatch to teacher need and student academic progress.

Theoretical Framework

As noted by Grant and Osanloo (2014) the theoretical framework serves as the foundation of a research study as it is the lens through which one views the problem, generates the purpose of the study, supplies the basis for the research questions, and
suggests the study’s intervention. This study viewed learning as a continuous process that occurs through individual experience and collaborative reflection. Thus, this study’s problem of practice noted the need for reflection and individual context during professional learning for teachers. The study’s purpose was to figure out the impact of reflection when reflection is used as a structure in professional learning for teachers.

Consequently, this study’s theoretical framework centered around David Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching Model. Kolb’s experiential learning theory states that learning is a continuous process that formulates from experience and structured reflection (Kolb, 2015); thus, the theory supports the study’s view of learning, and the development of the study’s research questions. Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching Model gave the study a framework for reflection, a method to answer the research questions, and a logical intervention because Costa and Garmston’s coaching model have questions and planning, reflecting, problem-resolving, and calibrating mind maps to facilitate self-reflection. This coaching model reflects the tenants of Kolb’s theory and allowed me to put Kolb’s theory into practice (Costa & Garmston, 2016). Together Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching Model supported the development of the study’s theoretical framework.

Experiential learning theory

David Kolb’s experiential learning theory explains learning and knowledge as a process that occurs through experience, by questioning one’s experience, and with “critical reflection” by learning from one’s experiences (Kolb, 2015, p. xxi).

James’ idea that knowing exists through not understanding and comprehension of one’s experience and Dewey’s progressive education philosophy that student-centered learning experiences are essential to learning provided the base of Kolb’s Experiential Learning theory (Kolb, 2015). In similar fashion, Piaget’s articulation of child development places emphasis on knowing through knowledge gained from previous experiences and merging that knowledge with new experiences and knowledge and Jung’s ideology of moving from unconsciousness to consciousness as a means of learning, support Kolb’s theory that learning is a constant process that reflects experience and examination of those experiences. Kolb’s theory stresses that “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49); this idea follows Follett, Rogers, Vygostky, and Freire’s ideas that the educator must construct learning in relationship to the learner’s current knowledge (Kolb, 2015).

With experience being central to the Experiential Learning theory, the theory is described through six key characteristics and the Experiential Learning Cycle.

Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes, learning is a continuous process grounded in experience, the process of learning requires resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaption to the world, learning is an holistic process of adaption to the world, learning involves
transaction between the person and the environment, and learning is a process of creating knowledge. (Kolb, 2015, p. 37-48)

The Experiential Learning Cycle further explains the notion that learning includes transformation through experience and reflects the theory’s idea that “knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 51). To expound, there are four phases of the learning cycle: the concrete experience, the reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and the active experimentation. The concrete experience and abstract conceptualization phases represent grasping the experience because during the concrete experience the learner is first acknowledging that there is an experience to make meaning of and the abstract conceptualization requires the learner to make meaning of their reflections of the experience based around research and other resources to determine if a change is needed (Kolb, 2015; UCD Learning, 2017). The learner is “taking in information” (Kolb, 2015, p.51).

The phases reflective observation and active experimentation represent transforming via the experience because the learner is “interpreting and acting on” the information (Kolb, 2015, p.51). During the reflective observation the leaner uses the data collected from the experience as a source of reflection and during the active experimentation the learner uses the research and resources from the abstract conceptualization to plan for their implementation of innovative ideas or strategies (Kolb, 2015; UCD Learning, 2017). It is important to note that the cycle represents a recursive process that follows concrete experience-reflective observation-abstract conceptualization-active experimentation and the learner experiences each phase (Kolb, 2015).
Cognitive Coaching Model

Arthur Costa and Robert Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching is “a model of interaction that helps others take action toward goals that are important to them while developing their capacities for self-directness” (Costa & Garmston, 2016, p.23). The model uses dialogue as a source of self-reflection and for self-mediation in reference to altering one’s current beliefs/ideas and changing one’s practice. While the model is informed by brain research, the constructivist learning theory, Carl Roger’s Humanistic theory, and Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need theory the model most reflects Morris Cogan, Robert Goldhammer, and Robert Anderson’s clinical supervision model (Costa & Garmston, 2016).

Cogan and Goldhammer’s clinical supervision model was created out of a desire to formulate a process that allowed teachers and teacher supervisors to work collaboratively and for teachers to think analytically about their own practice (Costa & Garmston, 2016). Like the Cognitive Coaching model, the clinical supervision model aspired to build sustainable capacity of teachers through development of their “self-appraisal, self-direction, and self-supervision” (Costa & Garmston, 2016, p. 8). While both the clinical supervision model and Cognitive Coaching model are framed as a cyclical process, the clinical supervision model uses an eight-phase process that includes conferring before a lesson, seeing the lesson, and conducting a post-conference to reflect upon the lesson (Costa & Garmston, 2016). The Cognitive Coaching model not only focuses upon observable behaviors but also draws attention to one’s thought processes (Costa & Garmston, 2016).
Since its start in 1984, Cognitive Coaching has evolved to a form of coaching support in various arenas, such as the business world, mentoring programs, and most commonly as a means of professional learning for educators (Costa & Garmston, 2016). Cognitive Coaching’s wide usage in the education field is linked to the models’ four assumptions: (1) teaching is a contextual and continuous decision-making process, (2) all behavior is driven by our personal perceptions, (3) behavior changes after a change in perception, and (4) coaching facilitates change in behavior and perception (Costa & Garmston, 2016).

Learning theory and coaching model in conjunction

Kolb’s Experiential Learning theory and Costa & Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching model are complements of each other because both view learning as a cyclical process that stems from experiences. However, Cognitive Coaching extends Kolb’s theory into concrete application with the use of mind maps and coaching/reflective frames that support the change in the leaners’ behaviors and thought processes. Based upon experiential learning theory and the Cognitive Coaching model, to alter teachers’ instructional practices requires professional learning to be a continuous cyclical process that vacillates between observation and reflection of an experience in the teacher’s classroom. The reflection is structured to provide an opportunity for the teacher to determine an alternate course of action for instructional decisions and resources/research to support the planning and implementation of new practices. Thus, to address the problem of professional development that is not structured to allow teachers to reflect upon their current practice and conceptualize new metacognitive strategies in their practice, this study implemented Cognitive Coaching as its intervention.
For the purposes of this study, Kolb’s Experiential theory was reflected through the planning and reflecting cycles, mental maps, and question frames of Cognitive Coaching. In this study Kolb’s recursive cycle of concrete experience was reflected as the classroom experience that teachers reflected upon during the Cognitive Coaching model. The question frames associated with the analysis of causal factors and the construction of new learning in the Cognitive Coaching reflective conversation was representative of Kolb’s reflective observation and abstract conceptualization phases. Finally, as a representation of Kolb’s active experimentation phase, the questions in the commit to application phase and the planning conversation of clarification of goals, specification of success indicators, anticipation of approaches, and establishment of professional learning in the Cognitive Coaching model reflects Kolb’s active experimentation phase. The planning and reflection maps and accompanying question frames of Cognitive Coaching move Kolb’s experiential learning theory into application of new learning for teachers.

**Coaching as Professional Development**

To develop professional development that incorporates duration, context, active engagement, collaboration, and reflection coaching has become an alternative form of professional development for teachers (Killion et. al, 2012). Coaching aligns school and district’s goals with professional learning by supporting implementation of strategies, knowledge, and skills into educator’s daily practice and supports change in practice (Killion et. al, 2012). Coaching is diverse and is viewed in two separate lenses: coaching as a school reform model or coaching as a systemic change model (Vermont Agency of Education, 2016). This study focused upon coaching as school reform as a means of professional development. Coaching has been coined as “the cornerstone of professional
development” because it is ongoing, individualized, sustained in duration, and is based in the real context of teachers’ classrooms (Knight & Nieuwerburg, 2012, p. 5; Zugelder, 2019).

Types of Coaching

There are diverse types of coaching that are most reflective of supporting professional learning in the education setting. Although each type of coaching is distinct in its methods and terminology, two common factors in all educational coaching are to increase teacher effectiveness and improve student learning (Killion et. al, 2012). The types of coaching include peer coaching, content focused coaching, instructional coaching, and cognitive coaching (Killion et. al, 2012; Devine, Meyers, Houssemand, 2013).

Peer coaching is a form of coaching that is non-evaluative and occurs between peer teachers. It is considered reciprocal and focuses upon some aspect of classroom practice (Killion et. al, 2012; Devine et. al, 2013). Content coaching occurs with a formal coach and supports teachers with instruction, planning, and assessment as it relates to their specific content area (Killion et. al, 2012). Instructional coaching provides teachers with a specialist in their content that also supports teachers with all areas of planning, instruction, assessment, and differentiation of instruction (Killion et. al, 2012; Devine et. al, 2013). Instructional coaching is common in schools and has literature to support its effectiveness. Instructional coaching is most widely known in system wide programs such as Reading First, Success for All, and America’s Choice (Desimone & Park, 2016).
Cognitive Coaching focuses upon instruction with emphasis on building teachers’ self-efficacy through self-reflection and self-analysis by using planning and reflecting conversations (Killion et. al, 2012; Devine et. al, 2013). Unlike instructional and content coaching, cognitive coaches do not have to have content knowledge to support teachers’ thinking and planning (Killion et. al, 2012). Like instructional coaching, research shows promise for cognitive coaching supporting teachers as a means of professional development. Research studies in education report that Cognitive Coaching affected educators’ self-reflection, level of thinking, planning, and knowledge.

Goker’s (2019) mixed methods study of twenty-six elementary teachers with their use of cognitive coaching to increase self-efficacy found promising results. Using a Likert-scale, and open-ended survey, and interviews the participants reported Cognitive coaching had an impact on their self-efficacy. Common themes that emerged from the surveys and interviews included participants being more aware of their own practice, strengthening their lesson planning, and implementing more classroom management skills and engagement. Participants credited Cognitive Coaching to the overall improvement of their practices, citing that they were more aware of their practice.

Catillio’s (2015) qualitative research study also revealed an increase in teachers’ awareness of their own practice. In this study Cognitive Coaching was used as method to support professional development on using strategies to better support linguistically diverse students. In the study the participants were elementary teachers and the means of data collection included semi-structured interviews and coaching conversations. At the end of the study teachers said that they reflected upon their practice at a deeper level. This included more intentionality with lesson planning and being more apt to adjust their
lesson plans to respond to students’ needs. Additionally, teachers noted their appreciation for the support offered from their coach. This study recommendations included using Cognitive Coaching as a school system’s model of coaching.

Like Goker (2019) and Del Catillio (2015), Donahue Barrett (2014) study found teachers implementation with professional development more effective with Cognitive Coaching. The study included six elementary teachers and noted their knowledge and implementation of writer’s workshop with the use of Cognitive Coaching. The study revealed that the planning conversation of Cognitive Coaching had the most impact on teachers’ practice and knowledge. Teachers noted that planning demonstration and co-taught lessons with the literacy coach proved most beneficial. This research led to the implementation of the Cognitive Coaching as the model for literacy coaching in the school’s district.

Although Rogers, Hausermann, & Skyatt (2016) used principals as their participants in their quasi-experimental research design the researchers reported similar themes of reflection and self-efficacy. In a study of fifteen new principals over the course of 18 months, the researchers used random samples to support principals with a leadership program using Cognitive Coaching. The findings of the research noted that the principals in comparison to other participants in the program reported an increase in their knowledge, practice, level of thinking, and confidence.

Though there are studies that find Cognitive Coaching relevant and effective, there is also research that notes the challenges of implementing Cognitive Coaching. For instance, in their article “Four Myths on Coaching and Efficacy” Varags and Melvin
(2021) argue that Cognitive Coaching is not practical because it lacks a sense of urgency is facilitative instead of directive, and predicates classroom change to a change in one’s beliefs.

Vargas and Melvin (2021) further argue that choreographed coaching is more effective because it provides an opportunity for teachers to practice the needed classroom changes in isolation with a coach and then reflect based on evidence that the change was implemented and worked with students. Additionally, the authors note that choreographed coaching is more effective with veteran teachers who are more results driven in reference to their practice.

Like other researchers Moody (2019) notes that instructional coaching is effective when the coaching program is “individualized, intensive, sustained, context-specific, and focused” (p.?). Moody notes that these elements are often challenging for schools or districts to implement which often results in ineffective coaching programs. Moody further notes that the most common challenges to instructional coaching are pairing the teachers and coaches, balancing scale while maintain quality, supporting coaches, funding for coaching, and producing data that measures coaching effectiveness.

Summary

Chapter 2 has provided the reader with an understanding of the study’s theoretical framework and how the framework supports the study. Chapter 2 supplied the reader with a background of the literature and previous educational research in relation to professional development for teachers. This study adds to the current body of research by highlighting the impact of reflection in conjunction with professional learning on
teachers’ pedagogical decisions. The remaining three chapters will describe the methodology and procedures of the study, summarize the findings of the study, and discuss significance, limitations, and applications and considerations for building on this study with future research.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter three begins by providing a contextual background of professional development which includes the need for effective professional development as well as the challenges teachers experience with the current structures of professional development. The chapter continues with an overview of the study by explaining the theoretical framework, study goals, and research questions aimed at determining whether cognitive coaching impacts teachers’ pedagogical choices and perceptions about self-reflection. This qualitative action research case study design will incorporate the planning and reflecting cycles of cognitive coaching during classroom observation and coaching conversations as intervention with five participants. The data collection tools, research procedures, and data analysis methods will be discussed.

Overview of study

The goal of creating equitable learning environments for all students has caused schools, districts, and state department agencies to seek methods, strategies, and strategic plans to ensure each student is supplied an effective teacher that is equipped to meet the varying needs of students within their learning community. Recognizing the varying needs of teachers and the complexity of teaching, educational policy and educational leaders rely upon professional development to support teachers in creating stronger
learning environments for students. Unfortunately, there is still a disconnect between the professional development teachers receive and the achievement of students. Research has noted that because of the diverse ways that teachers experience professional development and the lack of coherence in quantifying the effectiveness of professional development, it is difficult to develop a direct correlation between teacher professional development and student achievement (Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2002).

While professional development research lacks empirical data linking its effectiveness to student achievement, the research literature acknowledges that effective professional development has key characteristics. These characteristics include professional development that is content focused, mirrors classroom context, supplies time for collaboration, extended duration, and offers opportunities for reflection and feedback (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010; Desimone, 2011). Despite the research that describes the elements needed for effective professional development, teachers report dissatisfaction with the connectivity to their practice and effectiveness of professional development (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). The problem of practice for this study is that current professional development structures do not provide opportunities for teachers to reflect and implement new learning into their current context.

This study’s theoretical framework was grounded in Kolb’s experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015) and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching model (Costa et. al, 2016). Kolb’s experiential learning theory posits that learning occurs through analysis and reflection of new experiences through the phases of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The Cognitive Coaching model is based on the idea that learners develop new meaning through
mediated reflection on experiences and planning new responses/strategies. Together, experiential learning theory and the Cognitive Coaching model provide a model for providing professional development that is contextual and reflective.

The intervention for this study used the Cognitive Coaching model as a means of professional development. The study used Costa and Garmston’s (2015) planning and reflecting maps and question stems to determine teachers’ use of metacognitive reading strategies during their lessons and plan for adaptations of those strategies. The study employed two cycles of observation of each participant, followed by individual coaching sessions involving reflecting, and planning; at the end of the study, each participant completed a structured survey that captured their perceptions of the use of self-reflection related to pedagogical decisions. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?
2. How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?

**Research design**

This action research study was a qualitative case study. Herr and Anderson (2015) note that action research is an inquiry into a problem done by or with insiders in an organization. The researcher and the participants work in collaboration to solve a problem that is relevant to the organization and the participants. This study reflected action research because it looked to solve the problem of creating professional
development that supported teachers within the school district. Because the study focused upon making meaning of the experiences of the participants (Efron & Ravid, 2013), the research questions investigate teachers’ perceptions about reflection and their instructional response to Cognitive Coaching. Consequently, the study used a qualitative case study design as defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p.37). This study’s bounded system reflected the context of each participant’s school because the study collected and analyzed data for each participant as it pertained to the context of the participant’s school and compared data across each case.

This study took place in a suburban school district in South Carolina that serves over 25,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and has a total of twenty elementary schools, seven middle schools, and five high schools. Based upon the 2020-2021 90-day enrollment totals, the school district’s demographics included 61% African American students, 18.7 % White students, 12 % Hispanic students, and 2.8% Asian students. Students speak a total of thirty-eight languages other than English and 56% of the student population live in homes within the poverty line (About Two, 2021).

The study took place within the context of two of the district’s diverse high schools as it involved two participants from one high school and one participant from another high school. Each school was unique varying in student numbers and demographics, programs offered, and school culture. For instance, high school # 1 was located in the center of the district with a populations of 2,167 students. High school # 1’s population had 49 % African American and 44.5% of students living in households within the poverty range. High school #1 offered a range of magnet programs that served
students outside of each school’s community. High school # 2 was located in the northern end of the district and had a population of 1,659 students with 77% African American population and 56.5 percent of students living in households within the poverty range. The school did not offer magnet programs that serve students outside of the school’s community.

**Cognitive Coaching Intervention**

The study was based on Costa and Gorman’s Cognitive Coaching model as the intervention. The intervention included the use of classroom observations and portions of Cognitive Coaching’s reflective and planning coaching conversations maps (see Appendix A). Figure 3.1 captures the cycle of how I collected the data for each case study.

![Diagram of data collection cycle](image)

**Figure 3.1**
Cycle of data collection
Prior to the study, all participants took part in a 45-minute professional learning workshop. The professional learning workshop served to supply participants with information. The workshop provided participants with a detailed description of the purpose of the study, the structure and projected time span of the study, the data to be collected, a review of the data tools, an explanation that the study was voluntary and not connected to their current roles, and an explanation of how confidentiality during the study would be maintained and separated from their current roles and formal/informal observations. The workshop also explained the intervention, Cognitive Coaching, and how the intervention would be used during the study.

This explanation also included sharing with participants the reflective and planning questions to be used during the coaching conversations. The professional learning workshop also provided participants with information about two metacognitive reading strategies, chunking the text and evaluating roadblocks. The workshop explained that the purpose of the strategies were to support secondary students with independently understanding grade level texts. Participants then watched as I modeled the instructional steps of each strategy. I explained that these instructional steps were the same steps that they would follow during their classroom lesson that I would observe and these same steps were the steps that I would record on the classroom observation tool.

Each participant then selected one metacognitive reading strategy to implement to support their students’ comprehension of a teacher selected text. After each participant selected his/her metacognitive reading strategy, each participant selected a day from a set of pre-designated days for me to observe the participant implementing the metacognitive reading strategy with students. I observed the teacher’s lesson and took observational
notes about how the teacher modeled and implemented the selected metacognitive reading strategy and students’ responses during the lesson and application of the strategy during the lesson or students’ use of the strategy independently. This first step of the intervention reflects the application of Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning theory and the Cognitive Coaching model as the observation of the lesson is a concrete experience.

The second step of the intervention was the reflective coaching conversation. The Cognitive Coaching model provided a structure for the reflective coaching conversation. The structure of the coaching conversation mimics the reflective observation phase of Kolb’s experiential learning theory. During this stage, the teacher and I reviewed and reflected on the experience by summarizing impressions of the lesson via the notes I took and the teacher’s impressions of the lesson. I used the questions from the reflecting conversation memory map that is a part of the Cognitive Coaching model (see Appendix A). I recorded the teacher’s responses as a part of the researcher’s field notes. This step of the intervention addressed the study’s problem of practice that professional development fails to provide teachers with an opportunity to conceptualize new instructional strategies into their current practice.

The third step of the intervention deepened the reflective conversation. The third step echoed Kolb’s abstract conceptualization and active experimentation phases. During this step I supported the teacher in exploring and learning from the observation experience by analyzing the factors that worked and did not work with the selected metacognitive reading strategy. I used the analysis of causal factors and the accompanying questions from the Cognitive Coaching reflective conversation map.
Continuing the reflective conversation, I used the construction of new learning phase of Cognitive Coaching and the accompanying questions for this phase and provided the teacher with suggestions on how to alter the implementation of the current strategy or offered ways to replicate the effective portions of the strategy based on student responsiveness to the strategy during the observed lesson. I completed the last two steps of the Cognitive Coaching model by having the teacher commit to application of the new learning by setting a goal for next steps and by having the teacher reflect on how the coaching session supported or did not support her learning and/or thinking. This step of the intervention addressed the problem of practice as the intervention provided teachers with an opportunity to reflect over their practice and supported teachers with implementation of the strategy into their current practice.

In the last step of the intervention, I used the planning conversation map with the teacher to plan for implementation of the suggested strategies named in step three. I supported the teacher in planning and application of these ideas by clarifying the teacher’s goals, developing success indicators, and developing approaches to support the teacher’s new learning (UCD Learning, 2017; Costa, Garmston, Ellison, and Hayes, 2017). As a final question in this step, I asked the teacher to share how the planning conversation supported or did not support the teacher’s learning or thinking. The latter portion of step three and step four reflect Kolb’s active experimentation phase.

The intervention included two cycles of classroom observations followed by coaching conversations. The question at the end of each planning and reflection conversation (how this planning/reflecting conversation has supported your learning or thinking) allowed me to gather information about teachers’ perceptions and their
instructional decisions with the Cognitive Coaching model. This data answered the study’s second research question, “How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?” The observations and field notes taken during the coaching conversations also provided me with insight into the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teachers’ instructional practices and perceptions. I analyzed the responses given during each phase of the Cognitive Coaching model and compared these responses to changes that occurred between the first and second observation. This analysis answered the study’s first research question “What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?”

I am deemed as an insider to the organization as I work within the same school district as the participants and have a vested interest in improving my own practice and participants’ practice simultaneously. However, I am also an outsider as I am not a part of any school’s setting. Thus, Herr and Anderson (2015) deem my positionality as insider/outsider. As an insider to the organization, I fully understand the problem and seek a solution because the solution will improve the organization and allow me to improve my practice. However, as an insider, I have a limited understanding of the truth of the organization because I may view the truth based upon prior experiences and current knowledge of the organization. Contrastingly, as an outsider to each school and due to my current role as the school district’s high school English Language Arts specialist there is a hierarchal power dynamic (Herr & Anderson, 2015). While my role is non-evaluative and is considered a role of instructional support, this may affect the study because participants may be hesitant to share their candid responses.
Indicative of action research, the study’s intervention, Cognitive Coaching, sought to solve the problem of ineffective professional development structures used in my setting and improve my practice of providing professional development for teachers with the hope of improving classroom instruction for students (Efron and Ravid, 2013). Reflective of qualitative research, this study’s design included classroom observations and coaching conversations following each classroom observation to allow me to understand the setting and make meaning of the participants within their natural setting and the participants’ perspectives (Efron and Ravid, 2013). Qualitative studies allow the researcher to collect data in the participants’ natural setting and allow the researcher to observe and hear from the participants’ firsthand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In a similar fashion, this qualitative study looked to explore which phase of the Cognitive Coaching conversation cycle contributed to a change in instructional decisions for high school English teachers at two high schools in the school district.

Since the research questions investigate teachers’ perceptions about reflection and their instructional response to Cognitive Coaching, the use of a qualitative research design is most beneficial because the study focused upon making meaning of the experiences of the participants (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Consequently, the study used a qualitative case study design as defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2015): “[an]in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p.37). This study’s bounded system reflected the context of each participant’s school because the study collected and analyzed data for each participant as it pertained to the participant’s understanding of the strategy and implementation of the strategy with their students and compared data across each case.
This study’s qualitative action research methodology embedded the five quality validity criteria, outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic, throughout the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Outcome validity creates “action-oriented outcomes” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 67) for participants. This involves the researcher reframing the problem through a new set of questions (Herr & Anderson, 2015). I achieved outcome validity through the coaching conversations. During the observations I gathered data that provided the basis for participants’ reflection during the first cycle of the coaching conversation. Based on the data gathered during the reflection coaching conversation participants decided actions to either alter or keep. The second half of the coaching conversation was a planning conversation that allowed participants to move their reflections into action steps for their next observation.

Process validity refers to a study having “a sound and appropriate research methodology” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 67). It is through process validity that continuous learning about oneself, and the system occurs (Herr & Anderson, 2015). One way to achieve process validity is through triangulation. Triangulation happens when the study uses a variety of methods to collect data. Triangulation also takes place when the study accounts for multiple perspectives (Herr & Anderson, 2015). This study reflected process validity through triangulation. The study used observations, coaching conversations, and a survey as a means of data collection. Additionally, the study used different participants from different school settings to gather varying perspectives.

The study’s problem of practice is a problem that exists within my local setting and the problem impacts the participants, who are teachers in the district, because the problem describes ineffective professional development. The study asked teachers to
provide their perspective on the effectiveness of the intervention, Cognitive Coaching, during coaching conversations and at the end of the study during the survey. Since the problem was relevant to local setting and relevant to participants, the study reflected democratic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Catalytic validity, “the education of both researcher and participants” occurs as a spiraling process of change as both the researcher and participants understand their own changes throughout the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p.68). In this study participants were given ongoing opportunities to account for their changes to their instructional practices during the reflective and planning coaching conversations. This was most evident during the construct new learning phase of the reflective conversation (What learning(s) do you want to take away with you to future situations?). Documentation of field notes and reflective notes during observations and coaching conversations also captured changes noted in participants and myself as I noted changes to my learning by recording reflective notes.

Although this study used high school English teachers as participants the study could be relevant to all teachers that take part in professional development. For example, the process this study used to gather and analyze data may be replicated. Additionally, because the data the study collected is about the effectiveness of Cognitive Coaching as a professional development structure, the study could be relevant to educators responsible for creating professional development opportunities for teachers. The study’s data could be relevant to teachers that take part in professional development as it provides a measure of determining possible strategies that they may advocate for when receiving professional
development. The study’s “findings resonate with a community of practice” (Herr & Anderson, p. 70) and therefore uses dialogic validity.

**Participants**

This study’s sampling plan included purposeful sampling and a criterion-based selection. The sample strategy for this study is purposeful sampling “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 96).

Since this study sought to examine whether Cognitive Coaching can adjust teachers’ use of metacognitive instructional reading strategies, the sampling attempted to include at least one teacher from each of the five high schools within the school district. As each high school has a varying context and student population selecting at least one case from the five varying high schools provided the researcher with a representation of the school district. Purposeful sampling allowed me to understand the experiences of teachers with Cognitive Coaching and their implementation of metacognitive reading strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It is important to note that two participants decided to end their involvement in the study.

The process of purposeful sampling begins with deciding “what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied” and explaining “why the criteria are important” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 97). In alignment with the purposeful sampling process, the participants were limited to high school English teachers charged with supporting students with reading comprehension struggles.
Reading comprehension is essential in high school English courses as reflected in South Carolina’s state standards (2015).

The South Carolina College and Career Standards (2015) for high school English, have two strands Reading Literary text and Reading Informational text. Both strands have key ideas, principles of reading and range and complexity, that require students to comprehend grade level texts in order for students to move into analysis of a text as indicated in the key ideas, language, craft, and structure, and meaning and context (2015). To support struggling students with reading comprehension, I supplied a 45-minute virtual synchronous professional development session to participants. The agenda (see Appendix B) included the four metacognitive dimensions that support reading comprehension with an emphasis on the cognitive dimension. Participants also had the choice of participating in the professional development asynchronously. The professional development participants learned how to implement two metacognitive reading instructional strategies- text chunks and identifying roadblocks (Scheonbach et. al, 2012). The professional development supported teachers in learning the theory behind metacognition and reading and metacognitive instructional strategies to support students with reading comprehension.

To be considered as a participant, the teacher had to meet the following criteria:

- Teach a high school English course
- Participate in the 45-minute virtual synchronous professional development about that supplied information about the study and the two metacognitive reading strategies, text chunks and identifying roadblocks
• Lack knowledge or experience with Cognitive Coaching as a means of reflection on their personal classroom instruction

To decide whether teachers met the criteria, I administered to 10 random English teachers a pre-study survey (see Appendix E). Teachers’ responses to the survey were recorded in the pre-study survey via Google forms. I reviewed the responses to determine which teachers most fit the criteria. This first criterion ensured that participants understood the requirements and depth of the high school English standards. The second criterion allowed all participants to develop the same understanding of how to support adolescent readers with two metacognitive reading strategies. The third criterion was essential because it provided participants perspective of Cognitive Coaching and how Cognitive Coaching does or does not support their instructional practices since teachers would not have had prior or in-depth experience with the tools.

A reflection of the diversity of the school district’s setting, the sampling first included teachers from five different high schools for the largest total of five teachers for the study to ensure a complete sample under the criterion. To inform English teachers of the study, I first sent an invitation email/letter (see Appendix C) to 10 random English teachers (2 per high school) that taught at least two sections of either Reading Seminar, English 1 CP, or English 1 CP. The invitation letter outlined the purpose of the study, the procedures of the study, explained that the study was voluntary, and provided participants with the researcher’s contact information to ask any added questions. The invitation email/letter also explained that participants would receive an additional email that contained a Google document link to the electronic Consent Form (see Appendix D).
The electronic Consent Form was a document that explained the purpose of the study, the benefits of the study, privacy and the right to accept or decline participation in the study, the professional development component of the study, the observations and coaching conversations attached to the study, and the separation of the study from current district evaluations, as well as the earnest desire to solicit their candid responses without any penalty. The electronic Consent Form had participants to select whether they agreed or disagree to participate in the study, agree or disagree to have the coaching conversations recorded, and electronically collect their signature. I reviewed the responses recorded from the electronic Consent Form.

Profile of Participants

This process yielded a total of four participants that met the criteria and agreed to take part in the qualitative case study. The four participants in this study were each assigned a pseudonym. For the remainder of the study, they will be referred to as (a) Rhonda, (b) Grechen, (c) Betsey, and (d) Priscilla. It is important to note that Priscilla later decided to no longer participate in the study after completing the professional development and giving consent.

Rhonda

Rhonda was a certified English teacher with 13 years of experience and she taught at a high school that had a culture that encouraged teachers to experiment with various instructional strategies to support the needs of the students since many students arrived to the school with educational gaps. During the time of the study Rhonda had been teaching English and reading for 13 years, but now she was only teaching Reading
Seminar, a course that supports ninth grade students that have shown gaps with reading comprehension and is part of the English department.

While Rhonda had previously taught high school English courses, she preferred teaching reading and has a master’s degree in reading. Rhonda’s reading background surfaced in her classroom culture. Her classroom was full of various engaging novels for students, was print rich, and was structured to allow her to support students with introductory reading skills as well encourage students to value reading. Through the study’s pre-survey, Rhonda indicated that more than 70 % of her students struggled with reading comprehension. Rhonda also shared during the pre-survey that she was interested in learning metacognitive strategies that would support her secondary students with reading comprehension. She had a general understanding of Cognitive Coaching prior to the study but had never used Cognitive Coaching as a means of reflection over her daily instruction.

_Gretchen_

Gretchen was a high school English teacher with 24 years of experience and she taught at high school where most students came academically prepared. Like Gretchen most of the teachers in the English department at her school had more than five years teaching experience. With a more experienced teaching staff, there was less focus on instructional change and more focus on continuation of established instructional practices. The school’s culture focused on tradition and the academic achievements that the school was known for accomplishing. Recently, the student population at the school had shifted and added more students of color and more students with academic gaps.
During the pre-survey Gretchen indicated that she taught a mix of Reading Seminar courses and English 1 courses which reflected the school’s newer population. Gretchen’s classroom culture was warm and nurturing as she posted positive affirmations for students around her room and provided students with high expectations via classroom rules, long term and short-term assignments, and structured routines. Gretchen’s expectations for her students caused her to be extremely interested in learning about reading strategies as 26-49 % of her students struggled with reading comprehension. Gretchen indicated that while she had a method for reflecting over her instruction, she was a novice with her experience and understanding of Cognitive Coaching.

Betsy

Betsy was a high school English teacher with seven years of teaching experience and four years of her experience was at the research site. Betsy taught at the same high school as Rhonda. The high school served a larger population of students that had more academic gaps than other high schools in the school district; thus, the high school had a culture of embarrassing innovative practices to support student learning. This same culture permeated Betsy’s classroom as she used a less rigid classroom structure with her students. The classroom had a more relaxed feel as Betsy often used jargon that the students understood, and she was more flexible with her classroom expectations of students. Her course load during the study included English 1 and English 2 courses. She noted that about 11-25 % of her students struggled with reading and therefore she was interested in participating in the professional development session. Betsy’s responses during the pre-survey indicated she was a novice with understanding and using Cognitive Coaching.
Priscilla

During the study, Priscilla had been teaching high school English for over twenty years. Priscilla’s high school had a large number of African American students and the students’ backgrounds were diverse. The population included various economic levels, students from different parts of the district as the school offered several magnet programs, and many students that were taking courses for college credit. While Priscilla’s primary role was that of a teacher, during the study she taught a Reading Seminar course, English 1, and English 2, she also served as the school’s lead teacher for the freshman academy.

Since the school had a focus on student success, the freshman academy was an opportunity for Priscilla to work closely with students that might struggle academically or behaviorally as a first-time freshman. Reflective of her desire to support student success, she indicated that 11-25% of her students struggled with reading and she was interested in learning how to support students and willing to participate in the professional development session. Priscilla classified herself as somewhat of a novice with understanding and using Cognitive Coaching as a means of reflection. Since Priscilla withdrew from the study prior to the first classroom observation, there is not observational data on her classroom or classroom culture.

Based upon the participants that agreed to participate in the study, an online survey was generated for the sample (see Appendix E). Merriam and Hester (2015) note that purposeful sampling places emphasis on understanding of cases, referred to as “information-rich cases” (p. 97). As this study provided participants with professional
development to support struggling adolescent readers, the survey was sent to English teachers that agreed to participate in the study and taught at least two sections of either Reading seminar, English 1 CP, English 2 CP, or a combination of these courses. Teachers that taught these courses provided an information-rich case as they served more students that have historically struggled with reading comprehension. The survey included closed responses reflective of the criteria to allow selection of a purposeful sample. While not a part of the criterion, the survey also garnered background information about the participants such as years of teaching experience. The survey also asked participants to say the number of Reading Seminar courses, English 1 CP courses, and English 2 CP courses that they taught and estimate the number of students in those courses that struggled with comprehension. The final sample reflected a teacher from each high school that teaches the largest percentage of described courses and with the highest percentage of students that struggle with reading comprehension.

Over the course of two weeks, this study sought to understand teachers’ perceptions of Cognitive Coaching and the impact Cognitive Coaching has on teachers’ instructional decisions. Hearing teachers’ reflective responses to their lessons and ideas about what type of professional learning facilitation most supported their contextual practice was a voice that is needed but often omitted during the development of professional learning. To best understand how to improve professional learning as noted by teacher voices, I selected action research because the goals of action research are to understand practice and improve practice (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

However, since action research requires the researcher to work within the research setting that is central to the researcher, it was essential that I acknowledged and addressed
my relationship to the research setting and the participants (Herr & Anderson, 2015). My current job role in relation to participants is a role of instructional support. Even though I am not evaluative, the role does create a power dynamic because the role requires me to supply feedback to teachers and set the instructional expectations for high school English Language Arts teachers in the district. The position is viewed as a “hierarchical position or level of informal power within the organization” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 54). To address the power dynamic and reduce bias, the research methods included observing participants in their natural elements, hearing participants’ voices during coaching conversations, and providing an opportunity for participants to share their perspectives anonymously. I also used techniques to observe each “setting as it develops independent of the researcher” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 62). This included participants selecting their preferred class period and my location in the classroom. Additionally, throughout the coaching conversation I reminded participants that their candid responses were needed and valued because they allowed me to understand and develop solutions to the problem and allowed me to “empower [herself] professionally and bring about organizational change (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 38).

In an effort to support participants’ comfort levels and willingness to be honest, throughout the process I shared all data collection tools with participants prior to collecting data, did not interject or participate during the observed lessons, collected data only on the agreed upon metacognitive reading strategy, maintained participants’ confidentiality with school or district administrators, and suspended my job-related observations of the participants during the study (Efron and Ravid, 2013). The data collection methods allowed for an authentic experience for participants and gave them
ownership, thus lessening the power dynamic as they were fully informed and participated in decisions with the data collection.

In addition to the collected data, as the researcher I took the role of “reflective practitioner” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 43). To capture my self-reflection within the classroom observation data collection tool there was a space for my reflective field notes. This area was separated from the descriptive field notes. In this area I recorded my thoughts, questions, and connections after each classroom observation.

**Data collection methods**

Qualitative studies collect data about the researcher’s problem or phenomenon using interviews, focus groups, and/or observations (Efron & Ravid, 2013). To best extract usable data that answers the research questions, this study used classroom observations, coaching conversations, and an open-ended survey to collect data. These data tools allowed me to get a firsthand experience of the current phenomena.

Since this study examined the impact of reflection on teachers’ implementation of metacognitive instructional strategies, I observed participants in their classrooms two times during the course of the study. I used a structured observation and collect the data by using a checklist. I created the data tool based on the study’s research questions, Costa et. al. (2017) reflection and planning maps, Schoenbach et. al (2012) metacognitive reading strategies, and Efron and Ravid’s (2013) guidelines for creating data tools. The checklist included procedural steps/behaviors that reflect the intended implementation of the metacognitive instructional reading strategy (see Appendix F).
I placed a check beside each procedural step/behavior that was seen during the observation. To collect observation notes in each observation, the study used an observation protocol that included two kinds of field notes: descriptive and reflective. “Descriptive notes aim to record what happened during the observation without inferring feelings or responses to what is happening” (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 88); therefore, the descriptive notes captured the actions of the teacher and students within the classroom. In addition to descriptive notes, I also captured reflective notes to record interpretations of the observation after the observation (Efron & Ravid, 2013). During all observations I used a form that I created that divided the observation data into sections to differentiate between the descriptive and reflective notes. Both the observation checklist and the descriptive and reflective notes were all on the researcher created tool, titled Observation Data Tool 1 & 2 (see Appendixes F and G).

The study employed two observations as follows: the first observation served as a pre-intervention baseline because the researcher will note current implementation of metacognitive instructional reading strategies. The second observation occurred after the first reflecting and planning conversation cycle to determine changes in the teacher’s decision on how to model or implement the strategy into the lesson. As each observation was structured and anchored to the coaching conversation, I reviewed the field notes gathered from the observation and coaching conversation to solicit patterns in the teacher’s actions during observations and the teacher’s responses during the coaching conversations.

Observations allowed me to gather data about research question number one, “What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional
decisions?” and view in the natural setting instructional decisions made by teachers. However, to get a deeper understanding as to why the teacher made those choices, the reflecting and planning coaching conversations supplied more insight to the first research question and the second research question, “How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?”

To collect data that gave a deeper understanding into the phenomenon the study employed structured coaching conversations after each observation. The questions used during the coaching conversations were based on the questions provided from the planning and reflecting maps. The coaching conversations were recorded. The coaching conversation was most beneficial for the study because the coaching conversation supplied more insight into participants’ response to the intervention and rationale for their pedagogical decisions. Central to the study, I inquired from participants further explanation about the procedures and implementation of the metacognitive instructional reading strategies observed and sometimes employed probes to garner further understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Surveys are a means to gather people’s perceptions (Efron & Ravid, 2013). As the second research question looked to get teacher’s perspectives about Cognitive Coaching, I created an online Google form survey, titled End of Study Survey, that solicited structured responses from participants (see Appendix H). The survey I created included a total of eight questions. The questions on the survey included two yes/no questions, two multi-select questions, and four rating questions. The eight questions allowed participants to share their perceptions of Cognitive Coaching and self-reflection.
Throughout the study I protected participants by using pseudo names and kept notes and videos of interviews on a personal computer that could only be accessed by me. I assigned each participant a coded folder so that I could keep the notes organized by case. I organized the notes by date within each case. The entire research process extended for a total of 10 days. These days included participants being notified of the study and collection of data. I created a data collection schedule document to monitor my time during the study. Figure 3.2 shows the data collection schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send information/</td>
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<tr>
<td>invitation email and</td>
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<tr>
<td>letter to possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send electronic consent</td>
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<td>form with a two day</td>
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<tr>
<td>deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
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<td>Waiting on returned</td>
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<td>consent forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review consent forms</td>
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<td>and send electronic</td>
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<td>survey for purposeful</td>
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<td>criterion sample</td>
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<td>Day 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine final sample,</td>
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<td>notify participants,</td>
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<td>and send link for PD</td>
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<td>session</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete synchronous</td>
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<td>PD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send link for</td>
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<tr>
<td>asynchronous PD session to be completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compile information for</td>
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<tr>
<td>observation schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>and strategy selected by participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation 1 for</td>
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<td>participants 1&amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching conversation 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>for participants 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td>Day 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation 1 for</td>
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<tr>
<td>participants 3&amp; 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching conversation 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>for participants 3&amp;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation 2 for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants 1&amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching conversation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>for participants 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>and provide final survey to participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation 2 for</td>
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<tr>
<td>participants 3&amp;4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching conversation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>for participants 3&amp;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and provide final survey to participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2
Data Collection Schedule

To support the transcription of notes during the observation I maintained separate columns to reflect notes from the actual observation and researcher’s reflections about the observations. The field notes from the observations and coaching conversations were transcribed into Word document and placed with each cases’ online folder. Since the
results from the survey were already transcribed as participants completed the survey online I only copied these notes onto another Word document.

**Data analysis methods**

Qualitative data analysis best reflects the researchers’ choices to organize and analyze the data and does not follow a set rule as quantitative data (Efron and Ravid, 2013). In this study I will analyze each research question by responses by each case study. Throughout the course of the study data analysis will occur “…simultaneously with data collection” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 197).

The first step of analysis was coding. Like Merriam and Tisdell’s definition of coding, the researcher “…will make notations to bits of data” that may support answering research questions. Initially open coding will be used to generate categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study open coding occurred for each case observation and each coaching conversation. Each case’s data had dates and time and a unique verifying code only known by me that tied all data of the case together. Merriam and Tisdell describe this process as the “case record” (2015, p. 233). The case record is the “data of the study organized so the researcher can locate specific data during intensive analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 233). The case record sorts data chronologically. For example, after each case’s observation and coaching conversation the researcher individually codes each cases data and then the researcher will find themes across cases at each data collection interval (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). The notes from the observation tool allowed me to see any changes the teacher made in instruction between observations.
The data analysis process was broken into two phases: phase one consisted of a careful review of video transcriptions and field notes with symbols and the second phase consisted of coding the transcriptions and field notes for each case and finding similarities across cases to develop larger themes across cases.

Phase One: Review of each case with symbols

To review each case, I began by transcribing each cases audio/video recording of the two coaching conversations into a chart of a password protected Word document. I also transcribed my handwritten notes of each classroom observation into a password protected Word document. After transcription, I then began to re-read all transcriptions. First, I reviewed the transcription for each case’s first classroom observation. I placed in a password protected Excel sheet each area of the strategy that the participant completed as noted with a check mark on the observation tool.

Next, I reviewed the transcription of the first coaching conversation. I compared the participants’ reflective responses to the lesson and what the participant stated was missed or completed in the observation. Each time the participant’s response was similar to the response I recorded in the classroom observation I highlighted the transcription in yellow. Next, I placed an “x” by each question of the planning and reflecting conversation if the teacher’s response in the transcription indicated a new idea about their practice or a suggestion/mention to do something different next time during their classroom instruction, or if the response was a question generated by the participant about their instruction. I then re-read the planning conversation transcription and circled areas in the transcription that the participant said she change for the next lesson. Finally in the
transcription, I tallied the participant’s response to whether the conversation supported or did not support her thinking by placing a check mark in the transcript for the affirmative and a minus for the negative. I followed this same process when reviewing each participant’s second observation and coaching conversation. This process provided information for the first research question: What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?

Phase Two: Coding and Themes

After reviewing the transcriptions and using symbols to analyze, I then began to look for patterns in the data via coding. To support organization and identification of codes within and across transcriptions and across cases, I used Delve, an online qualitative analysis tool (delvetool.com). Within Delve, I uploaded classroom observation transcriptions and coaching conversation transcriptions for each case. I began by reading each transcript and highlighted quotes within the transcript that were relevant to the research questions as well as quotes that were interesting in relation to the research questions. I summarized each quote by including key ideas from the quote or the exact key phrases from the quotes. I used this same process for each case’s classroom observation transcription and coaching conversation transcription. Once a code was originally created for a quote, the code was reused for other quotes if the code was applicable.

After coding all transcripts, I reread all quotes attached to codes and created descriptors for each code. The descriptors were based upon the quotes and supplied in-depth thoughts about the meaning of the codes. Next, I grouped codes into categorical
themes. I read through all the themes and deleted themes that did not have sufficient evidence. This included themes that had less than two quotes. I also removed themes that were not distinct and I merged themes or made subthemes to ensure themes were more comprehensive.

While the nature of qualitative research is to uncover or change a phenomenon by using the natural setting, traditional researchers may question the validity and reliability of the study due to the data collection methods of qualitative observations and interviews. This happens “because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, interpretations of reality are accessed directly through their observations and interviews” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 244). To maintain validity and reliability the study used triangulation and an audit trail.

Triangulation ensured creditability by providing multiple data sources (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). This study used multiple methods of data collection as it compared data collected from observation, coaching conversations, and a survey. Additionally, since the study was a qualitative case study, it used multiple sources of data as well. For example, I conducted two observations at separate times throughout the study and with participants from different high schools and varying career levels and backgrounds.

Additionally, the study used an audit trail as a means of showing validity and reliability (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To access and analyze the themes in each case for the study, I maintained a chronological journal of notes for each case, which is also a means for documentation in an audit trail (Creswell & Miller, 2000).
Summary

Professional development structures are often devoid of opportunities for teachers to reflect and apply the new learning into their current context. Using Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Garmston’s Cognitive Coaching model, the study’s theoretical framework rationalizes that learning occurs through mediated experiences. To support this learning the study proposed the use of the reflective and planning maps and the Cognitive Coaching model to supply teachers with more authentic learning. The study looked to determine the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teacher practice and self-reflection. Set in a suburban school district with three high school reading teachers, the study used a qualitative case study research design to explore how the use of Cognitive Coaching supported teachers in implementing metacognitive instructional reading strategies. Over the course of a two-week period, the research study used a cyclical process of observation and interviews with one survey to gather data from participants. The classroom observation data and coaching conversation data were analyzed using the process of coding to generate larger categories across cases while the post-study data was analyzed to determine commonalities between participants’ responses. Chapter four explains the data and offers an interpretation of the data.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The problem of practice in this study was that the structures traditionally used in my district to facilitate professional development for teachers are ineffective. The intervention for this study employed Cognitive Coaching planning and reflection conversations during professional development sessions about metacognitive reading strategies, followed by classroom observations and Cognitive Coaching sessions. The study took place within two high schools in a suburban school district in a southern state. The study participants included three high school English teachers who had either limited or no experience in using cognitive coaching, which the study employed as the vehicle for professional development in learning how to implement reading strategies to support their students’ learning.

The purpose of the qualitative action research case study was to examine the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teachers’ pedagogical decisions and to understand teacher’s perception of self-reflection. It was grounded in Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning theory and Costa and Gorman’s (2016) Cognitive Coaching model. Experiential learning intersects perfectly with Cognitive Coaching as the theoretical framework for this study because they are both anchored in the concepts of learning through new
experiences, reflection, and application of experiences and reflection. This theoretical framework supported the research questions that guided the study:

1. What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?
2. How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?

Qualitative data was gathered through classroom observations, reflective coaching conversations, and a survey. These were then analyzed by comparing instructional changes or adaptations that the teacher identified during coaching conversations in successive observations. Additionally, participant responses to a post-study survey were compared to participants’ responses during coaching conversations to understand their perspectives about reflection. Data was coded to identify themes that developed within individual cases, and those themes were also compared across cases to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4 includes sections focused upon data presentation and interpretation, general findings and results, analysis of data based on research questions, and a summary of the findings. The data and interpretation are presented as individual cases. The section was organized chronologically across data collection sources by each case and the reader is presented the themes that evolved in the data. Additionally, chapter four answered the research questions. In the general findings/results and analysis of data based on research questions, the reader learns how the three themes and research questions informed my understanding of using reflective structures when supporting teachers’ instructional
practices. As a wrap up of the chapter, the summary supplies readers with a reminder of data analyzed and answers to the study’s research questions.

**Data Presentation and Interpretation**

For each participant, codes were generated to discover the ways Cognitive Coaching impacted the teachers’ instructional decisions and use of self-reflection. Codes and sub-codes were used to classify experiences, which were then arranged into categorical themes upon analysis to better develop connections and similar concepts which emerged across the participants. After completing coding for each case, I determined broader categories by making connections between codes and across cases. I then grouped codes into nine initial themes. These themes were revised by reviewing the quotes that supported each theme to ensure that each theme had sufficient evidence. I then merged similar themes and deleted themes that were not distinctive thus ending with a total of five themes: impact of reflection on instructional decisions, impact of self-reflection, teacher belief, opportunities for student success, and sustaining instructional practices. Using narrative description, the data presentation follows the sequence of classroom observation, coaching conversation, and post survey responses for each case.

Case 1: Rhonda

At the time of the study, Rhonda, a White 36-year-old woman, had taught high school English for the past 13 years. She entered education after completing a traditional educator program and had taught in the southeast and northeast of the United States. After teaching high school English for several years, she obtained a master’s degree in reading. She had spent the previous year as a reading teacher in an out-of-state high
school. She wanted to teach reading to struggling high school students instead of teaching a non-support English course. During this study she taught only students in Reading Seminar, a support English course. She was new to the state, and she was new to the high school.

*Classroom Observation 1*

Rhonda’s first classroom observation occurred during her third period class and lasted a total of thirty minutes. There was a total of twenty-one students with a make-up of eight female students and thirteen male students. In this class all students were either Hispanic or African American. Rhonda’s lesson was focused on students using the strategy, chunking the text from the professional development session I provided. To practice the strategy, Rhonda used portions of the novel, *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson.

Rhonda began the lesson by telling students, “We will use the strategy of chunking the text for the next section of the novel. It will help you understand the text before we read the actual text.” She continued the lesson by projecting a two-column chart for students. The first column of the chart had various paragraphs of the novel and the second column of the chart was blank. Rhonda also gave students a paper copy of the two-column chart.

She then explained portions of the novel to students by saying, “Bobbi, the main character uses graffiti as a means to create a timeline for his life. Bobbi’s graffiti will help you understand the events of his life.” Students followed along on their own papers as Rhonda read the first section of the novel to students. After reading the first section,
Rhonda paused and asked the entire class, “Guys, what’s happening here?” Students shifted in their desks and either looked at the text from the board or from their paper copies. After a momentary pause, two female students that sat at a table adjacent to the classroom board exchanged whispers and then one student offered, “He has to take her with him everywhere he goes.” In the chart’s second column Rhonda typed the sentences for students.

Rhonda followed the same process with students for the next four sections of the chart. Rhonda asked students to complete the remaining sections of the chart by working with partners. Students swiftly moved their desks to join their partners. Rhonda moved around the room, visiting and assisting various groups. Some groups worked independently, while other groups raised their hands signaling the need for extra help.

Rhonda stopped at one group where students had their hands raised. One student expressed frustration as he lamented, “Mrs. R, we don’t know what we are supposed to be doing?” Rhonda explained to students that they should read each section and answer the questions, “What is happening here? And what is the meaning of this chunk?” However, the two students still struggled to gain an understanding of the section.

Rhonda proceeded with, “If she has no face, what does that mean? Can you describe someone in my first period class? Why not? Because you don’t know them. This is the same with the main character.” After she left the group, Rhonda addressed the entire class by reminding them to ask themselves, “Why is this happening?” My observation ended with Rhonda going back to the front of the classroom and reviewing the assigned chunks with the students as a whole group. She explained the chunks to
students and ensured that students had answers to each chunk by typing answers to the chunks on the board.


d Coaching Conversation 1

The first coaching conversation occurred the day after the first classroom observation during Rhonda’s planning period. We met virtually via Google Meets, and I recorded the conversation. The virtual meeting had audio and video. The coaching conversation lasted a total of thirteen minutes. The coaching conversation started with Rhonda sharing her perspective of the effectiveness of the lesson. Rhonda thought her lesson was effective as she compared her students’ success with the text in her first period class with her students’ success in the class I observed. She noted that the students in the class I observed “were actually able to understand. And with my first period class. . . like nobody had a clue about what was happening in the chapter.” When I asked Rhonda to share her comparisons between the lesson she taught and the lesson she envisioned, she paused briefly before saying, “I was like . . . wait. . . let me be just real scaffolded with this.”

As the conversation moved into questions regarding what new learnings she wanted to take to future situations and how she might apply her new learning, she focused upon the use of the strategy by noting, “I do chunk texts a lot. Just like in reading seminar . . . it’s what you do. But . . . ummm . . . I think I would use it as a preview strategy. I think that’s productive. I think I will just use the strategy more often.” I ended the planning portion of the coaching conversation by asking Rhonda to reflect on how the conversation did and did not support her learning. While Rhonda did not note areas of the
conversation that did not support her learning, she found the conversation useful because she found it “forces me to really think about it and reflect on it; whereas if I don’t have this conversation, I will think about it probably after that class . . . it’s different to bounce ideas and thoughts with another person.”

The second half of the coaching conversation focused on planning next steps with instruction. I began by asking Rhonda to consider the strategy she had used during the classroom observation and what she wanted students to leave thinking or being able to do at the end of the next class. She began by explaining that her long-range goals for students was “to be able to chunk the text on their own so when they go to their other subjects, they can use the strategy.”

Rhonda then paused and shifted in her chair before asking, “So what I was going to ask you…when I teach this again on Tuesday, I guess I should do more gradual release? So, I would model it, but then I need to let them pick which portion of the text they want to chunk themselves. Right?” I provided Rhonda with practical options that would support her in creating the gradual release she was considering by reminding her of the instructional practices she used during the observation: “I was listening to the things you were asking them and saying to them to make them think. What if you said these are the questions I am thinking about as I am doing this?”

Rhonda altered her goal for students to be able to “do it in other classes to aid their comprehension. But I think it’s going to take way more practice before they’re at that level. I feel like in the next class I still need to be able to chunk it for them but let them do more metacognition.”
I then probed more by asking, “So are you thinking you might just say the next step in this process is this?” Rhonda’s eyes widen as she responded swiftly with, “Yeah, I think I will be more explicit with how I determine meaning with that chunk of text. So, then I would ask the class ‘what do we come up with together? What are you asking yourself? Like, what are you asking yourself to determine the meaning?’”

The next three questions I asked Rhonda focused on specifying success indicators, anticipating approaches for the next lesson, and establishing her own personal learning focus. Rhonda’s success indicator included that students “would be able to ask themselves the questions and be able to orally share their thinking processes in their heads.” In order to support students in achieving that success, Rhonda expressed that she needed the chart she had used during the last classroom observation but next time she would “make sure I go thru each of those things and have examples of what I would ask myself,” and she challenged herself to “being . . . like real specific and easy to understand when I show my thinking process so they are able to mimic that themselves.” Similar to the first portion of the coaching conversation, this part ended with Rhonda sharing how the conversation supported her learning by immediately saying the conversation helped her because “I just developed my whole lesson.”

Observation 2

The second classroom observation occurred four days after the first coaching conversation. The classroom observation was completed with the same second period class from the first classroom observation. In this lesson Rhonda began the lesson by having students complete a fluency activity with the poem, “The Veteran and the Young
Solider.” Rhonda then transitioned into using the reading strategy, chunking that she used in the first classroom observation and was taught to her during the professional development that began the research study. In this lesson she used the same novel that she used in the first classroom observation but focused on the section of the novel titled, “Now.”

Rhonda began the teaching the chunking strategy by explaining to students that they would complete the same strategy and steps that they had done the day before. She further explained to students that the text would be more difficult because it is written in poetry: “So today we want to read these chunks to understand these better.” Rhonda continued to read the first chunk of text to students while the students followed along. After the first reading, she stopped and turned to the students and asked, “What does it mean if his stomach is turning over?”

While none of the students offered a response, Rhonda typed the meaning for students in the box adjacent to the text while the students copied the typed items on their papers. As Rhonda went to the next section a student read the next section. Again, Rhonda used the same question stem for her next question, “What does it mean to imagine someone in a dumpster?” This time the student that read the section piped up and said, “His dad thinks he’s dead.” Rhonda affirmed the student’s response and typed the response for students to add to their own copies. Rhonda continued the same process with students until she got to the third section. She altered her questioning by asking students, “Who can break down the meaning of this?” and then followed that question with “so what does this mean? How does he know this?” As students offered ideas Rhonda typed the ideas in the second column of the chart. To end the direct instruction section of the
lesson, Rhonda asked students to partner with someone next to them. She directed each group to complete the next three boxes and to be sure to “Ask your partner the right questions. Who is saying this and what does it mean?” Rhonda walked around the classroom to listen to group conversations but did not stop to talk with students or to ask students questions. The classroom observation ended with, my observation of students working through the next three sections of the text with their partners.

*Coaching Conversation 2*

The second coaching conversation occurred the same day as the classroom observation. I met with Rhonda virtually, via a Google Meet that had audio and video. The conversation began with an inquiry into her perception of the lesson. Rhonda focused on what she needed to do next in her instruction and how that might occur. For example, when asked this time how the lesson had gone, she began by supporting her answer with what students did in comparison to what she had intended them to do.

I think they are still very dependent on my questioning to make inferences. And I was trying to do the gradual release where I completely modeled the first one…but I also did not want them to drown and get frustrated, so I stepped in to ask the questions. And then I did a full release at the end to see how they would do; and honestly, I was impressed with the groups because they were bouncing ideas off of each other and asking the questions. So, I guess if I think about it like that, I guess it was successful. (Rhonda, May 5, 2022)

After Rhonda supplied her perception of the lesson she wondered if I had “noticed the same thing or no.” I shared with Rhonda the notes that I had taken during the
observation by describing that I heard students mimicking the questions she provided during her instruction and that there were fewer students seeking help during their independent work time. In agreement, Rhonda echoed similar observations and noted, “It wasn’t like last time where everyone needed me. It was more like they wanted to run it by me. It was definitely an improvement from the first time.”

The conversation moved into Rhonda sharing her comparisons between the lesson she had planned and the lesson she had taught. After an extended pause Rhonda noted that there was a difference because she “felt rushed” and she “went faster thru this than planned . . . so it sort of took away from some of the gradual release that [she] was sort of aiming for.” The new learning that Rhonda wanted to take away from the last lesson included “to actually scaffold it [the strategy] better . . . what I should do is more of the metacognition where I model my thinking and how I came up with the questions and then ask them to pose the questions and then answer the question as a class.”

She further acknowledged that she “skipped that whole scaffolding of them coming up with the question” as a class before students were asked to complete the task alone. Rhonda believed to alter these areas she needed to make some changes based on her personal new learning which included “the scaffold of the question and I will release them earlier to do more on their own.” As the conversation progressed, she also mentioned her desire to have students move from working with a partner to complete the task to just sharing ideas before they worked independently.

As in the first coaching conversation, at the end of the reflecting phase Rhonda expressed that the coaching conversation caused her self-reflection to be more focused as
she highlighted, “I actually didn’t think about that scaffolding part until you posed the question to me, and it really made me reflect on it . . . like initially I said that it went a little too fast . . . I need to slow it down, but I realized specifically what I was missing.”

In the planning phase of the coaching conversation, as Rhonda specified her goals for students, she recognized that

because it was so late in the year, I don’t think I’m even going to get my current kids to be independent with this. I am definitely going to incorporate this at the beginning of next year so that by the time I do release my ninth graders next year it will be to the point that I do not have to give them this.

Rhonda held up the two-column chart she used with students during both classroom observations.

To achieve these goals, she anticipated that she needed to do multiple smaller steps with students such as

release them earlier and earlier to complete this [chunking text] own their own . . .
eventually not depend on a partner. And then I would move into a short chapter with having them verbally identify one area they want to chunk and break down and eventually they can write in the margins.

While during the conversation Rhonda did not identify a personal learning focus about herself, she incorporated her students because she would know that what she was doing was working “if I gave them a more difficult passage and if I see the kids identify the same areas where I expect break down.” Rhonda later ended the conversation by
noting the coaching conversation “supported my learning because it made me think about the whole scope of the situation.”

Case 2: Betsy

At the time of the study, Betsy a 27-year-old African American woman, was completing her third year of teaching at the high school. She entered teaching after completing a traditional four-year program at a local four-year institution. Prior to the study she taught high school English for four years. Her teaching experience included her hometown in a different area of the state. She moved to the area to teach because she wanted to leave her hometown and experience a more urban setting. When the study began, she was completing her third year of teaching at the high school. Her teaching load included English 1 courses and English 2 courses, a state test for accountability. This was her first-year teaching English 2, as well as her first year teaching an English 1 Honors course.

Classroom Observation 1

Betsy’s classroom observation lasted a total of forty-seven minutes, although the chunking the text portion of the lesson was only twenty-minutes. Betsy’s focus of her lesson was ensuring that students could summarize the short story, “The Scarlet Ibis.” Betsy selected her afternoon English 1 class for me to observe. The class was comprised of nineteen students that included fourteen males and five females. All but two students in the class were African American.

Betsy decided to use the chunking the text strategy and began the lesson by naming and explaining the purpose of the strategy for students by expressing that using
the strategy would “make it easier for us to work with it [the text] and help us be able to have a summary.” After she provided students with an electronic copy of the text, she projected the text for students on the Clear Touch Board. As the students followed along on their Chromebooks, Betsy read aloud sections of the text. After reading a few sections aloud, Betsy addressed the class. “I have already broken down the chunks. You can just mark your paper like mine. You will make a comment by clicking an area of the chunk.” Students mimicked the actions of the teacher by placing their paraphrases in the comment bubbles the teacher created for each section of the text. Each comment bubble noted a new chunk and signaled to students they should stop and write a paraphrase.

Betsy read more with students and supported their understanding of the text by summarizing portions of the text that she found relevant. For instance, “This isn’t a chunk, but this is important. Isn’t this connected with death?” When necessary, she also clarified areas of the text for students, such as “Let me clear up a few things. Born in a caul means that a mother’s water doesn’t break, and this is a special situation. What’s wrong with Doodle [the main character]?” A female student yelled out, “He’s small.” Using the student’s response as a base to work, Betsy continued clarification of the text for students by asking three additional questions to help students understand how the character’s current situation was predicted with his birth.

Betsy then transitioned from questioning and explaining the text to students by sharing with students her thinking. She read another area of the text and then paused and asked the students, “Is that a chunk?” A female student expressed, “It’s not a chunk because it is still talking about Doodle being small.” Betsy proceeded to read another section and then she turned to the class and said, “I want you to notice something. This is
not a new paragraph, but it is a new chunk. You can chunk within a paragraph.” The observation concluded with Betsy instructing students to make a prediction about the text. Betsy postponed students completing the strategy on their own.

**Coaching Conversation 1**

I held the coaching conversation virtually, via Google Meet, on the same day as the classroom observation. The conversation lasted for twelve minutes and allowed Betsy to share her reactions to the lesson. As Betsy and I began the coaching conversation that afternoon, she beamed with pride while expressing that she thought the lesson “went really well.” She attributed the lesson going well to the professional development being close in time to her implementing the strategy, “I like that… the PD was close enough to when I did the professional development, so close to being able to implement it because it made me kinda excited a little bit too.”

Betsy also credited the lesson success to her feeling “a little more confident” and to her implementation of the strategy as “it has never [been] explicit like that.” When I asked Betsy to make comparisons between the lesson she taught and the lesson she planned she said, “No, it was pretty much as I planned it. It was also helpful that you gave in the PD explicit steps. So, then I feel like because I had those steps, I was able to kind of plan it and follow through with it. I knew exactly what I was doing so it made it a little bit easier.”

During the constructing new learning and commit to application portion of the conversation, Betsy initially noted that the new learnings she will apply to future situations are applying the strategy to writing with students and different informational
texts with students as both of these areas are areas of struggle for students. She pinpointed, “I know that specifically for next year, I’m going to purposely very intentionally, work more, with informational text. And I think that would be very good for that.” However, as the conversation progressed to reflecting upon how the coaching conversation did and did not support the learning, she made connections between her new learning of the strategy and how she may want to alter instruction for a more effective implementation with students tomorrow. Betsy said that the conversation helped her consider “the things that went really well in the lesson today and that I want to continue tomorrow.” She also noted that she wanted to make “small tweaks for tomorrow” to ensure she is able “to explicitly show them the reason why I’m chunking or why I’m choosing where I’m stopping.” She continued by asking for clarity on how she should best provide that type of instruction for students.

Once the coaching conversation reached the area of clarifying goals for students, Betsy mentioned that she wanted students to be able to chunk the text on their own but recognized her instruction had not supported that because she had “held hands kind of a lot maybe more than I needed to but just out of, you know, wanting them to succeed.” After a brief pause, Betsy connected her fear that students would fail with ways to alter her instruction as she noted, “So I think it’ll be very important for me to make sure that I explicitly teach them how to do this on their own. So that when we do begin reading our reading journal next week, I don’t have to hold their hands so much.”

The coaching conversation shifted into questions about specifying success indicators, anticipating approaches, and establishing personal learning focus. Betsy expressed that an indicator of success would be students chunking independently and
“creating an entire summary that is effective, not too wordy.” In order to get students to that goal, Betsy decided to change her approach from provided students with the pre-coded chunks to creating chunks “on a personal page” so that only she is aware of where students should chunk in case, they miss a particular area. She further clarified her plan would include her reading aloud again to students “But kind of the way that I was yelling out chunk, I would like them to say chunk.” Betsy established her personal learning focus of the lesson, as “our chunks correlate or even if they chunk in a place where I may not necessarily chunked, I can maybe at least see their rationale.”

The coaching conversation ended with Betsy sharing, “So… I think as we reflect, its supporting my learning because it’s preparing me for tomorrow. It gives me a chance to kind of anticipate what the lesson is gonna be like . . . prepare for anything that may go wrong. . . reflect on the future in a way.”

*Classroom Observation 2*

The second coaching conversation occurred the day after Betsy’s first classroom observation and first coaching conversation. The second classroom observation was with the same English 1 class in the first classroom observation and the same students were present for this classroom observation. Betsy continued the lesson of summarizing with the strategy, chunking the text, and she used the second half of the text from the previous day, “The Scarlet Ibis.”

Betsy’s second classroom observation had examples of the changes she indicated in the first coaching conversation. In this observation, Betsy did not give students the text with pre-noted chunks. She started the classroom lesson by reminding students,
“Chunking [reading strategy] will help us understand what the text is about.” The lesson followed a similar pattern as the previous lesson with Betsy reading a passage aloud to students. After reading the passage she explained her thinking to students, “I have a chunk right here. The reason I put this chunk here I knew that this was an important idea and I decided I needed to chunk.” Betsy then typed the paraphrase of that section in the comment bubble and students follow the same steps on their documents. After she typed the paraphrase, she asked students if her paraphrase was accurate or if it was “missing something.” A student offered, “There was a dilemma or ultimatum for Doodle.” Betsy nodded in agreement and then types the student’s idea in the document. Betsy read another section to students and then stopped to question whether students understood the section. “Did you guys catch why he’s teaching him to walk? So, what will we put?” One student responded with, “[The] narrator is embarrassed that his brother can’t walk.” Betsy added the student’s response to the document and then explained her thinking for students, “I put this chunk because I really needed to understand and unpack.” Betsy continued the pattern of reading a section, signaling students of a section to paraphrase with her announcing the word “chunk”, and then explaining her thinking and the paraphrase continued for the next fifteen minutes. Then she transitioned students into them showing their understanding of when to chunk. She announced to the class, “I think we are done with all my chunks. So now I’m going to read, and you tell me where we can chunk.” As she read, students stopped her periodically to show a new chunk and their rationale for the chunk.

For instance, as Betsy read the next section a student interrupted Betsy’s reading by yelling out “chunk.” Betsy turned to the student and said, “What made you say
chunk?” Ready with a reply, the student explained, “Because in that section they were all describing something about their parents.” Betsy beamed with pride as the student explained his thinking. The lesson wrapped up as Betsy began to slow down her reading to prompt students to say that the section was an area to chunk. She also continued to have students explain their thinking as she clarified students’ thinking. For instance, one student noted “Oh, that’s the end of the paragraph” which meant a new chunk. Betsy supported and challenged the student’s thinking with, “Yes, but every chunk doesn’t have to be that. Remember we chunked in various places like sentences and paragraphs.” Betsy ended the lesson by telling students they would finish the text during the next class period.

Coaching Conversation 2

The second coaching conversation lasted twelve minutes and occurred the same day as the classroom observation. During the second coaching conversation, via Google Meets, Betsy reflected over her impressions of the lesson. I wanted to know how she thought the lesson went and she responded enthusiastically, “Smooth. I mean like both the students, and I were, um more comfortable about what was expected of use and what we were doing.” We continued the conversation by having Betsy make comparisons between the lesson she envisioned and the lesson she taught. Readily, Betsy pinpointed that “time” was a factor that impacted the lesson.

As I nodded to her response she continued with a fuller explanation, “But I know that um…., I struggle with time management in general because we do have a lot of side conversations.” She added she did not have any other expectations, but she was glowing
with pride as she talked about a student, “I was actually pretty excited that someone would say chunk. I don’t know if he has a different image for where he sees himself but when he applies himself it is amazing almost. Nobody else caught the chunk, but you caught the chunk.” The conversation then progressed to Betsy sharing that a new learning that she wanted to take with her was, “Maybe we did a little too much of those kind of like guiding questions and maybe for the sake of time I just need to focus strictly on the strategy versus some of those other things that I was trying to point out to them.” Betsy followed her same thought pattern as she expressed, “Having them [students] read might take some of that out of it because I feel like I’m excited and I want to point these things out to you, but maybe if you’re not reading, you’re not even noticing all of these fine detail things.”

As we ended the first half of the conversation with Betsy’s final reflection, she found the conversation supported her by, “kind of supporting my learning and making me aware of being reflective. Just making sure that I’m aware of things I need to tweak and things that I definitely need to keep doing. I know that it kind of helps me with my confidence to know that, okay, well now I know what I need to do.” She also shared that the conversation did not support her as well because, “No, I feel like the one thing missing, that I didn’t necessarily know how to explain my chunks.”

As we shifted the conversation to clarifying goals, specifying success indicators, and anticipating approaches, Betsy recognized areas of strength in her lesson and discussed ways she could further success with her instruction. This was evidenced when she noted her ultimate goal for students is they “be able to chunk on their own.” She earnestly felt the goal was realistic and promising because she “saw pretty strong
evidence that they will be able to do this on their own. Even one of my babies that just said chunk at the end of each paragraph.”

Betsy also recognized that further evidence of students reaching her goal would include an “understanding that chunking, it is a bit subjective” and “success would look like them [students] kinda of understanding that chunking is a tool that they can use how they would like to use it.” When I questioned Betsy about what she might need to do in her next lesson to achieve these goals she made mention of providing “some explicit instruction about when to chunk” and sharing her thinking by explaining “Why am I stopping here?” and “What was I thinking when I said this is a good place to chunk?”

By the end of the coaching conversation, Betsy did not establish a personal learning focus, but she shared that the coaching conversation supported her in her lesson planning because “It gives me almost like a game plan. It lets me be reflective on what student success looks like and what they need to get to that success. Making me aware.”

Case 3: Gretchen

At the time of the study, Gretchen, an African American woman, was completing her 24th year as a high school English teacher. She completed a traditional education program at a local historically black college/university where she earned her bachelor’s degree in secondary English education and currently holds a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction. Gretchen’s teaching experience extended from rural schools in SC to the current suburban location of the study. When we began the study, she was completing her third year of teaching at the research site and her teaching load included
reading seminar courses, an intervention course for ninth graders, and several English 1 classes.

Classroom Observation 1

The classroom observation lasted for thirty minutes, and Gretchen’s focus was students summarizing using the reading strategy, chunking the text. Gretchen decided to use the text, “Living Well, Living Good” by Maya Angelou. During this first classroom observation students did their first reading of the text.

As I entered Gretchen’s classroom, she was at the board reviewing items with students. The classroom was set up with two rows of desks at each end of the classroom facing each other and two rows of desks facing the board. While there were many desks in the classroom, there were only seventeen students in the classroom. The classroom makeup included six females and eleven males. The demographic makeup was less balanced as there were two White students, one Hispanic student, and fourteen African American students. Gretchen explained to students that the purpose of the strategy was to help them better understand a text. Students used the paper copy of the text and medium sized post-it notes that Gretchen gave them to record their ideas.

Gretchen stood between the first desks found in the middle of the classroom and the board and read to students a chunk of the text. The chunks of the text were already labeled for students on their papers and on the board. She then told students, “Write that she was 70 years old. She lived alone and was very independent and strong minded.” Gretchen walked around and ensured all students recorded the sentences and then she asked students, “How do we know she is old?” A student responded by first focusing
upon another portion of the text without directly responding to the teacher’s question. Confidently, the student let Gretchen know, “I feel like she’s clean because of all the stuff she used.” Gretchen noticed that students struggled to understand the section and then she directed students’ attention to a key vocabulary word in the section. “An important word here is sinewy. Sinewy deals with fat and muscles. I want you to write that down on the side of your paper.” Gretchen continued by reading paragraphs 4 and 5 aloud to students and continued by asking students questions about the paragraphs and required students to place each new idea or new summary on a post-it note. After completing summaries and questions about the description of the aunt, Gretchen proceeded to independent work.

Gretchen gave students an opportunity to work on their own by asking students to “Give me three ideas from chunk 5. These should be the most important ideas.” A female student that sat in the front of the middle row of desks spoke loud enough for the entire class to hear, “I don’t know what’s important and I don’t understand this section.” Gretchen walked over to the student’s desk and asked her questions to support her thinking. The questions included Who is this section about?, and Why is she saying this?” How does she feel?. Gretchen closed out the lesson with students sharing the section summaries they had created. She asked students to tell her about the aunt’s life based on that paragraph. She said, “Summarize what I just read in 1 statement. Write it on a new sticky note.” The classroom observation ended with a few students sharing their summaries and Gretchen closing the lesson by telling students they would learn more in the next paragraphs tomorrow.
Coaching Conversation 1

While the classroom observation occurred on a Thursday, the coaching conversation occurred the following Monday due to Gretchen being absent on Friday. Gretchen and I met virtually, via a Google Meet for thirteen minutes. The conversation began with Gretchen sharing her impressions of the lesson. She began with a small pause before she said, “I think it went pretty good. I think I should’ve done less talking because a lot of times I tend to guide my students I think a little too much as opposed to allowing them to do it on their own.” Gretchen also noted that throughout the lesson she kept saying “summarize” and she really wanted students to “analyze the text.” The conversation progressed into Gretchen sharing her comparison of the lesson she envisioned with the lesson that she taught. After a brief pause, Gretchen described the text and the comparisons she hoped students would be able to generate by the end of the lesson: “So the kids will be able to see the comparison of why she [Aunt Tee] said what she said and then they [students] will take that piece and compose a persuasive speech in pulling one of those quotes.”

While Gretchen’s comparisons focused on students and the text, her reflection shifted to her instructional practices as we moved into constructing new learning and application of new learning. One new learning from the classroom lesson she wanted to take into future situations was “maybe coaching them too much. Although I show them . . . you know . . . I did the modeling for them but even as I was doing the modeling . . . in turn, I was asking them the question.” She reflected to the professional learning on how to implement the strategy and acknowledged, “I know you mentioned how to do the chunking piece, so I said I know I’m not doing this quite right.” I then asked Gretchen
how she might apply her new learning and she offered, “When I look at more difficult
texts having the kids do it in that way or maybe just do one model or maybe put them in
groups or maybe having them jigsaw.” She thought that using the jigsaw method might
“get everybody more collaboratively involved.” At the end of the reflecting phase of the
conversation, Gretchen felt the conversation supported her learning, “Because now I have
another best practice that I can use and then kinda refine what I’m doing.” She further
added, “Being able to support them with that reading comprehension is important. When
I get the hang of it effectively, I think it’s going to be good.”

We then transitioned into the planning phase of the coaching conversation. The
conversation started with Gretchen clarifying that she “want[s] them [students] to be able
to fully analyze what it is saying” and students being able to “look at the entire text as a
whole.” I asked Gretchen considering her goals, “What might success look or sound
like?” Her response focused on a student product as referenced in her response, “And so
with that quick little persuasive speech also being able to take it a little further in the last
few weeks they will do an argumentative paper. Them being able to take those same
techniques and use them as we are writing this argumentative paper as well.”

I wanted to know from Gretchen how she thought she could be most prepared for
the next lesson, and after an extended pause, she admittedly answered, “Umm… that’s a
tough one.” Which was followed with, “Being more open to what kids may bring to the
table and not being bias on how they think the texts applies to them or their lives.” This
was also the premises of her own personal learning focus, as she reiterated that she
wanted to make sure she was, “able to listen to the different perspectives from the
students” and be able “to question why they are thinking the way they are thinking.” We
wrapped up our conversation with Gretchen sharing that the conversation, “supported me because it has given me an opportunity that I used before but use in a different way.”

*Classroom Observation 2*

I visited Gretchen’s classroom the same day as the coaching conversation that afternoon and observed for thirty-two minutes. Gretchen continued her lesson from Thursday with the same class and the same text. However, for today’s lesson Gretchen focused students’ attention on the second half of the text. The classroom observation began with Gretchen asking, “Ok guys. Do you remember the strategy we did Thursday?” In response, a student proclaimed, “Yes, we were using chunking the text.” Gretchen continued by explaining that the strategy will help them understand the text and understand some key ideas that they learned about the character, Aunt Tee.

Gretchen used the next three minutes to review students’ key ideas from their previous reading. To further support them she walked around while having students take out the copies of the text and annotations they did during the last class session. Most students rummaged through their bookbags and notebooks to find the materials. However, one male student that sat closest to the door, sat without materials and did not search for them. Gretchen realized that the student was absent during the class period, and she provided him with materials as well as directions on what they did last period and how they would finish this period.

“Ok guys, we are starting with paragraph 13. Do we need more stickies?” Gretchen passed out materials to students that had their hands raised and then read the next two paragraphs aloud to students. The lesson continued with Gretchen following the
same pattern of instruction as the last class session except much of the class period
Gretchen required students to summarize or explain the chunks that were noted in the text on their own. After allowing students to work independently for about 15 minutes, Gretchen asked the students, “Who wants to give me what we talked about here [the text]?” A female student that sat in the front middle rows chimed, “You have to look past what’s in front of you.” Gretchen wanted to hear from numerous students and thus proceeded to call on various students. “Ok…C what did you say?” The student looked at his paper before sharing, “If you are living a good life.”

Gretchen probed more students with different questions to support their thinking and to help students confidently respond, by stating, “What was she saying? What is your interpretation? Do you want me to come back?” After three students could not share their ideas about the text, a fourth young man sitting on the right hand of the classroom added, “I think there are some things you will be good at and not good at all.” Satisfied with the student response and the efforts of other students Gretchen moved to another section of the text and helped students understand the meaning was, “Be thankful for what you have.”

Gretchen transitioned the students into an independent work time as she proclaimed, “Now take about 1 and a half minutes and give me your interpretation of what she means.” After the timer alarmed Gretchen called various students to share their interpretations. Their interpretations ranged from, “You can’t hold them forever.” To another student saying, “I basically said the same thing. Calm down and picture it and speak it into existence.” The sharing ended with a student offering, “You should treat people the way you want to be treated.” The classroom observation ended with Gretchen
allowing students to complete three more sections of the text in the same pattern as the earlier sections. She also continued to solicit students’ interpretations of the sections.

*Coaching Conversation 2*

I met Gretchen the next morning for the coaching conversation via a Google Meet. During the twenty minutes that we met Gretchen shared her reflections about the lesson. As soon as Gretchen entered our virtual meeting room, I asked her to share her impressions of the lesson. Gretchen reflected that, “they seemed a little kind of out of it” and reflected on our earlier coaching conversation, “I know I talked about the jigsaw thing and maybe I could have done that little piece to kind of get them a little more energized.” Despite the students’ lack of energy, she felt they still were able to complete some of what she had hoped.

We continued to reflect as I asked Gretchen to share any new learnings for future situations and how she might apply these new learnings. She readily replied, “Umm monitoring and adjusting. Being able to monitor and adjust quickly to kind of get the kids refocused and back on track.” She shared that normally when things are going “awry” she would at once change them. However, she felt that during any classroom observation she is less likely to make changes because she, “was trying to stick to the routine because when other people are in the room you want to make sure you kind of like don’t change nothing.”

Yet she noted that a change was needed and in the future to she “would definitely put them in smaller groups and maybe allow them to do the chunking activity and just give each group one piece of the text.” She also noted that doing a “gallery walk” to view
each other’s ideas would be a possible way to apply her new learning. In the final phase of that portion of the coaching conversation, Gretchen reflected that the conversation helped her with, “different ideas popping in my head on how I can use chunking.”

Like the earlier coaching conversation, we transitioned into the planning phases. I asked Gretchen to share her goals for students. She began by explaining she knew “some students do have issues with summarizing details, so definitely being able to see them be able to summarize or paraphrase what the author says” and she ended with having students “think on their own independently.” She expressed that she would know she was successful if she was “able to listen to what they[students] have to say, learning from what they[students]said. She further expressed that to be best prepared for the next lesson she wanted to “Throughout the lesson, or as I am doing the lesson keep reminding them of the strategy’s focus and what I want them to do.” She thought this was essential to students not getting “sidetracked” and she remembered that “I don’t think I went back and stated the purpose again as to why we were doing it.” Ultimately, Gretchen’s personal learning focus was her desire to “see it [paraphrasing] in their writing as well”.

To wrap up our conversation, Gretchen shared that the reflective conversation helped her consider how “to do some more planning with the strategy’ and “looking at what other teachers are doing and looking at other best practices when it comes to chunking the text.”

End of Study Survey

The end of study survey was an anonymous survey that asked for structured responses from participants. The survey was sent as Google form via a link to
participants after they completed the two classroom observations and coaching conversations. The survey was made up of eight questions with the purpose of gathering from participants their perceptions of self-reflection and self-reflection in connection to Cognitive Coaching. Figure 3 indicates participants’ view of self-reflection while Figure 4 reveals participants value for self-reflection in professional learning and as a tool for future reflection.

Figure 4.1
View of self-reflection
To analyze the survey, I reviewed each participant’s response to each of the eight questions. I then compared each participant’s response to note similarities and differences among their responses to figure out common ideas. Overall, the outcomes revealed that all participants found that certain questions within Cognitive Coaching had either some or
a significant impact in their instructional decisions and all except one participant found self-reflection to be of value in supporting their instruction and professional growth.

These overall outcomes were supported by participants responses to the eight questions. For instance, in the first two questions two participants noted that prior to the study they had a process that they used to reflect over their lessons and the process did improve their instruction. Despite their current reflective process, all participants responded that Cognitive Coaching increased their value for self-reflection. All participants agreed that the Cognitive Coaching questions that required them to summarize their impressions of the lesson, construct new learning for future implementation, and committing to application by considering how they would apply their learning had the most significant impact on their reflective decision to change their instructional practice. In a similar fashion all participants found questions that asked them to clarify goals, specify success, and establish their own personal learning focus by determining what they want to do well next time had the greatest impact on their plan to implement instructional changes.

Contrastingly, two participants found comparing the lesson they planned to the one they taught and considering what they needed to do for future lessons to have had significant impact on their reflection and instructional decisions. One participant found these questions only had some impact on their instructional decision. These contrasts also existed in two additional questions, as two participants shared that self-reflection was a tool that was effective in supporting their processes for reflection and two participants also found that reflection was an important element that needed to be included during professional development session for teachers. With both questions, one participant did
not find self-reflection beneficial nor needed as a part of professional learning. The contrast in the survey data in comparison to the classroom observation and coaching data may be attributed to the one participant not fully understanding the question and the other participant having a negative perception of professional development.

Although the survey was not administered at the beginning of the study to make a growth comparison in participants ideas, the questions were geared towards participants perceptions after being a part of Cognitive Coaching. Thus, concluding that participants participation in Cognitive Coaching positively impacted their perception of self-reflection is a logical outcome.

**Data discussion**

Codes and key ideas were generated from the data collection and the data presentation followed the sequence of classroom observation, coaching conversation, and post survey responses for each case. Codes were generated by highlighting relevant/interesting quotes based upon the study’s two research questions. Each quote was given a descriptive code that summarized key ideas in the quote. I developed broader categories by making connections between codes that were similar within each case and across cases. This process included merging codes that had similar ideas based upon the summary of the quote. I also created descriptions for the broader categories to ensure each quote fit the larger category. Categorizing the codes from classroom observations and coaching conversations lead to larger categories of strategy implementation alteration, teacher agency, professional beliefs, student success, and teacher support. Figure 4.3 lists the resulting categories and the codes that were used for each category.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Key Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy Implementation</strong></td>
<td>• reflection to create productive struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alteration</strong></td>
<td>• reflection to refine practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflection to use a different strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflection to incorporate modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Agency</strong></td>
<td>• reflection leads to personal growth intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• changing lesson as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Beliefs</strong></td>
<td>• student success equals lesson effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflection on lesson effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Success</strong></td>
<td>• student struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• develop transfer skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increase strategy use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• scaffolded thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• modeling thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• no modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• questioning verses modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• teacher pre-doing for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• teacher explaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Support</strong></td>
<td>• teacher implementation support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• peer reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• lesson plan support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• professional development relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• using earlier professional development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3
Categories and codes

The category *strategy implementation alteration* was clear during some point in each participant’s coaching conversations. For instance, this was present in both of Gretchen’s coaching conversations and in Betsy’s first coaching conversation. In Gretchen’s first coaching conversation she finds that the lesson went well but readily admitted that she “guided” her students too much which cut their independence. It was also prevalent in Gretchen’s second coaching conversation as she described how she needed to alter her strategy by allowing students to “understand the text more own their own.” Like Gretchen, Betsy noted in her first coaching session that she “held hands kind of a lot;” unlike Gretchen, however, Betsy noted that she did this because she wanted students to be successful. The fact that Gretchen continued to focus on her desire to create more independence for students in both coaching conversations showed that she
saw the need but had not yet mastered how to implement such structures in the instruction.

In contrast, after Betsy recognized that she needed to provide students with more ownership, she did so. This indicated that while some teachers may recognize a need for change in their instruction, there still must be an additional cognitive shift that supports teachers in determining how to move from considering the change to implementing the change. Also, as noted with the differences in Gretchen and Betsy, Betsy made these changes as she talked through her next lesson plan and developed actionable steps that were contextual to her own understanding, comfort, and goals for her students.

The category teacher agency was prevalent throughout Gretchen’s second coaching conversation. For example, teacher agency surfaced when Gretchen considered how the coaching conversation supported her as a teacher. She noted that the reflection allowed her to see the need to visit other teachers using the strategy as well as researching other instructional strategies that would allow her to better implement the chunking strategy with her students. It also appeared as Gretchen reflected on areas she would like to improve and take with her into future lessons. In two different instances Gretchen stressed the need to trust her own instinct and the needs of students, which included the need to “switch” her instruction in the middle of lesson despite the plan she initially made. While this category only showed up in Gretchen’s second coaching conversation, it was important to explain this category because Gretchen was the only participant at her school site, and she had the most years of teaching experience. As the most experienced participant, Gretchen’s comments revealed that she desired self-reflection that allowed
her to be guided through self-reflection as she more readily generated her own next steps and areas of need.

The category *professional beliefs* was evident in all participants coaching conversations. A commonality with this category that arose for all participants was their constant connection of the lesson outcome to students’ outcomes. During the second coaching conversation, participants were able to supply more detailed evidence from their own lessons that reflected student outcomes. For example, both Rhonda and Gretchen thought their first lessons went well and attributed the lesson to vague actions completed by the students such as the students understood, or the students inserted their own individual experiences. Even Betsy began the beginning part of her first coaching conversation like Rhonda and Gretchen because she noted that the lesson went well because students could paraphrase.

However, over time, all participants provided more concrete evidence of student outcomes in relation to lesson effectiveness. For instance, Betsy’s description of student outcomes and lesson effectiveness was tied to students being able to select on their own the same chunks of texts she identified in her lesson plan. She found it valuable for students to be able to recognize that these chunks of texts were essential to understanding the text without her prompting them. Her description became more concrete as we moved to clarification of goals in the coaching conversation. Rhonda and Gretchen’s descriptions of students’ success became more detailed during the second coaching conversation. Rhonda noted that her second lesson was more effective because students were able to “bounce ideas” off each other during their group work, asked her less questions, and used the question stems she had modeled for them. She even noted that in
the future she would see greater success if students could identify passages that would pose difficulty with comprehension own their own, which was similar to Betsy’s ideas. Like Rhonda, Gretchen’s second coaching conversation was more detailed as she noted specifically, she wanted students to provide feedback.

A noticeable difference between participants responses was the type of student outcomes participants described. For instance, both Betsy and Rhonda, who were also at the same research site, provided student outcome descriptions that were focused upon students completing the strategy steps independently. Gretchen’s final student outcome description was linked to student’s production of a final product. These same differences continued in this category as both Rhonda and Betsy noted instructional decisions that they made or failed to make that impacted the effectiveness of their lessons during the second coaching conversation while Gretchen did not. Rhonda highlighted the need to scaffold her questioning, release students to independent practice sooner, and alter her time management of the lesson. Similarly, Betsy cited the need to better manage her time but also noted her and the students’ comfort level with the strategy increased over each class period.

The category student success described teachers’ implementation of instructional strategies that supported students and/or helped students own and use skills independently. This category showed up at some point in the classroom observation for all participants and in some cases adjusted in the second classroom observation as referenced in the first coaching conversation. The category also surfaced during some coaching conversations. For example, to help students understand the text all participants used a series of guided questions about the text. However, during their coaching
conversations participants acknowledged that they needed to eliminate or limit questioning if students were going to be able to complete the strategy on their own. Rhonda acknowledged this in her coaching conversation as she explained she did not want students to “drown” and that students were still dependent upon her questioning instead of students making their own inferences.

All three participants expressed during their coaching conversations the need to develop/implement instructional strategies that would allow students to use the reading skills on their own. Gretchen wanted students to use reading skills with difficult text, Betsy planned sections that she wanted students to identify as important chunks independently, and Rhonda developed questions that reflected her metacognition and allowed students to replicate. However, only Betsy and Rhonda altered their strategies during classroom instruction. Betsy scaffolded students thinking by explaining why she chunked in certain areas of the text and asked students to share their reasons for the chunks they identified while Rhonda reminded students to use the metacognitive questions, she modeled in conjunction with the graphic organizer from the first classroom observation.

Again, in an effort to ensure student success, Rhonda and Betsy either expressed a need to increase the use of the strategy with students or increase the use of scaffolds to support students in using the strategy successfully independently. Betsy noted this in her coaching conversation as she considered how she might improve the strategy for next school year and Rhonda wanted to expose students to the strategy more often with varying levels of support.
The final category that surfaced was *teacher support*. This category included methods that supported teachers in sustaining instructional practices and the implications of teachers’ reflection. At some point during each participant’s coaching conversation, this category surfaced. During each participant’s coaching conversation, she expressed that the coaching conversation supported her in planning for future lessons. There were differences in how each participant used the coaching conversation to further her planning. For instance, Gretchen found the coaching conversation encouraged her to independently research various ways to implement the strategy into her lessons. Whereas Betsy found the coaching conversation gave her a “game plan,” caused her to “anticipate” issues and fine tune instructional steps to create student success. And Rhonda found the conversation led to the development of her next lesson.

Despite the similarities that participants shared in this category, there were differences as well. For example, Rhonda and Betsy had generated questions and asked for clarity with implementation of the strategy during the coaching conversation. Yet, Gretchen did not and instead noted how the conversation caused her to consider previous strategies that were used during professional development sessions she had attended and how she could use those strategies to support her future lesson planning. Only Rhonda stated that the conversation led to valuable peer reflection and Betsy was the only participant that expressed that she the conversation and professional development session did not fully help her understand how to explain the chunks of texts to students but provided explicit steps to the strategy itself. Additionally, both Rhonda and Betsy expressed that the reflection had an impact on their instruction. Betsy felt more reflective, confident, and intentional in reference to the positives and negatives of the earlier lesson.
and for Rhonda she was able to move from seeing each portion of the lesson to the “whole scope of the lesson” including areas that were “missing.”

These categories implied that while the coaching conversation has an impact on teachers’ instructional decisions that impact is relative to the individual teacher and how the individual teacher views her current practice. Additionally, Rhonda and Betsy had more similarities emerge in their coaching conversations and shared other similarities such as the same research site and less years of experience in comparison to Gretchen.

**General Findings/Results**

After reviewing the data for each case, I noticed commonalities in participants’ classroom observations. For example, during the first classroom observations the steps that required participants to model the instructional reading strategies of chunking paraphrasing the text, all participants replaced the modeling with providing students with additional scaffolds such as questioning, summarizing, or pre-selection of the important chunks of the text for students. Participants said that these replacements were used to ensure that students were successful with more abstract processes. During the coaching conversations, all participants’ reflections noted that they had an earnest desire for students to be successful and that they linked whether their students completed tasks successfully to whether their lesson and instruction was effective. In the coaching conversations, all participants acknowledged a need to allow students to work through the text and strategy with less supports from the teacher by adding instructional steps that would allow students to work independently and still have some support.
The data also revealed an impact of the coaching conversation on instructional decisions by phases of the conversation. In each of the three cases as the coaching conversation moved from the questions that merely asked participants to summarize their impressions of the lesson to clarification of goals and examples of success, participants were able to supply more concrete examples that were more tied to their instruction. However, it is important to note that only two of the three cases actually altered their instruction as they mentioned in the coaching conversation. One case mentioned in both coaching conversations the need to add a “jigsaw activity” to give students an opportunity to be more independent but the participant did not make this change. Each participant expressed a need to alter their instructional decisions during the construct new learning phase and the commit to application phase which are both in the first reflection phase.

Additionally, it was noted that the two participants that were at the same research site and that both had less than 15 years of experience tended to share more commonalities during their reflections and alterations of instructional strategies after their coaching conversations. This notice posed the idea that teachers’ reflection and instructional changes may be tied to their school context, the students they serve, and where they may be in their current careers.

Additionally, the data revealed participants’ value for self-reflection/ reflection via the cognitive coaching conversation. After implementing the strategy with their students, the cycle of reflection gave participants an opportunity to make the professional development session they participated in earlier in the research contextual to each participants’ understanding, classroom, and students. Participants understood their own
instructional challenges and problem solved through the coaching conversation on how to best implement the new strategy with their classroom context, their personal knowledge, and their comfort level for the next phase.

As evidenced by the end of each coaching conversation and the end of study survey, all participants found value in self-reflection. However, according to the survey only 2 participants thought that self-reflection should be a part of professional development and only 2 of the three participants thought that Cognitive Coaching was effective in supporting their reflection.

From the data derived from the cases the following themes emerged: teacher’s perceptions of success are linked to their students’ success, conversation supports self-reflection, teachers’ instructional decisions are contextual, and reflection over new learning supports implementing new learning. These themes meshed with the study’s questions of the impact of Cognitive Coaching on instructional decisions and the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teacher’s perception of self-reflection. The themes meshed with the research questions because as teachers moved through the phases of Cognitive Coaching, they were able to reflect on their instructional decisions and in some cases make changes that allowed them to see that they could have students be successful by considering their instructional practices.

The themes and research questions indicated that each teacher’s reflective process was different despite using the same instructional strategy and reflective conversation model. While reflection provided a model for teachers to use to reflect alone or with someone, the depth of that reflection was contingent upon the cognitive processes of that
teacher. Additionally, the teacher’s instructional decisions may be impacted by having a reflective conversation in varying ways. These impacts include a change in perception, generating questions, development of long-range plans, more intentional instruction, seeking additional support, or developing more confidence and self-agency. Although a teacher may find reflection valuable the conversation alone will not cause all teachers to move from reflection to implementing an immediate change in their classrooms.

**Analysis of Data Based in Research Questions**

*Research Question 1: What impact does Cognitive Coaching have on English teachers’ instructional decisions?*

Based upon data analysis of the participants’ coaching conversations and classroom observations, Cognitive Coaching can have an impact on teachers’ instructional decisions. This impact varied based upon several factors including each phase of the coaching conversation, the type of questions asked during the coaching conversation, and the teachers’ cognitive processing of their instruction and students’ needs. In this study, all participants expressed a need to alter some form of their instruction during the first coaching conversation. Participants’ clarity of what needed to be changed became more explicit and aligned to their own instruction and their goals for their students as the coaching conversation moved from the reflecting phase to the planning phase of the coaching conversation.

*Research Question 2: How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection?*
Based on participants responses to the end of study survey, there was a mixed perception of self-reflection in relation to Cognitive Coaching. Participants responses to the end of study survey revealed that two of the three participants found self-reflection to be a necessary component for self-reflection when attending future professional development. Likewise, two of three participants thought that Cognitive Coaching was a needed tool to support their reflection on their teaching practice. In contrast, all participants stated that they had more value for self-reflection after participating in the reflecting and planning phases of Cognitive Coaching. It is concluded that while participants found self-reflection valuable after participating in Cognitive Coaching, that value did not necessarily extend to finding self-reflection as a needed component in their professional learning or continued use of self-reflection.

Summary

Chapter four examined and answered the study’s two research questions. In chapter four Cognitive Coaching proved to have a positive impact on teachers’ instructional decisions. While these impacts varied based on each participants’ context, the impacts included participants noting a need to alter their implementation of the strategy. Some participants’ reflection also led to a change in their next lesson. Cognitive Coaching also positively impacted teachers’ perception of self-reflection. Most participants found the conversation supported their lesson planning, self-confidence, strategy implementation, and boosted their confidence with implementation of the strategy.
Grounded in Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Gorman’s Cognitive Coaching model, this study gathered data based upon participants’ classroom observations, coaching conversations, and end of study survey responses. The data gathered led to data analysis that included coding common ideas and grouping those codes into the five categories of (1) strategy implementation alteration, (2) teacher agency, (3) professional beliefs, (4) student success, and (5) teacher support. While Chapter 4 provided the reader with answers to the impact of Cognitive Coaching on instructional decisions and teachers’ perceptions of self-reflection, interpretation and recommendations based on these results are discovered in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

Despite the need for professional development, most professional development for teachers is deemed ineffective because the professional development does not align to teachers’ goals, does not have implementation support, and the facilitation structures lack reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Bowe & Gore, 2017; McElearnery et al., 2019). The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of reflective conversations on teachers’ instructional decisions.

The study used Cognitive Coaching, a framework for reflection, as the intervention and the study answered the two research questions:

1. What impact does Cognitive Coaching have in English teachers’ instructional decisions?
2. How does Cognitive Coaching impact teachers’ perception of self-reflection?

The study found that Cognitive Coaching has a positive impact on teachers’ instructional decisions and that teachers view self-reflection as valuable.

Chapter five is organized by explaining how teachers’ response to reflection supports current literature about professional development, recommendations for how to
use reflective conversations, how I will use my findings to coach teachers, insights I discovered about reflection and classroom implementation, limitations of the study to include number of participants and number of research sites, expansion of this research with other professional development facilitators, and a summary of the study.

Findings and the literature

The findings from my study were conclusive with some findings presented in Chapter 2’s literature review but also contrasted with some earlier research findings. The findings of my study further add new information to the current body of literature. It furthers the research because my study focused solely on high school English teachers and instructional decisions teachers used with ninth grade students struggling with reading comprehension in connection with Cognitive Coaching.

Finding 1: Cognitive Coaching has a positive impact on teacher’s depth of reflection. As the coaching conversation moved from general reflection over the lesson to more specific questions in relation to the lesson, teachers’ descriptions and justifications of effectiveness were supported by evidence from their lesson. Teachers benefited from first sharing their initial reflections and then connecting those reflections to what was a logical next step for their students and their instruction collectively.

This finding is reflective of studies conducted by Del Catillo (2015) and Donahue Barrett (2014). Both Del Catillo (2015) and Barrett (2014) found that after coaching conversations, teachers reflected at a deeper level than before. This was evident in my study where teachers benefited from first sharing their initial reflections and then
connecting those reflections to what was a logical next step for their students and their instruction collectively.

In contrast to Del Catillio (2015), Barrett (2014), and this study’s findings, Vargas et. al (2021), found that using choreographed coaching which allows teachers to practice a strategy in isolation with a coach before using it in a classroom led to more instructional change and allowed for greater evidence-based reflection. Although this study did not supply teachers with an opportunity to practice the strategy before implementation, the questions used during the coaching conversation allowed teachers to reflect upon strategy implementation before using the strategy during their second classroom lesson.

**Finding 2: Teachers learn by reflecting on their practice.** All teachers received professional development that outlined how to implement the chunking strategy in their classrooms. However, as teachers reflected on their implementation of the strategy after they taught the lesson, they discovered new ideas or generated new questions about their instruction. In some instances, teachers brainstormed a new technique or scaffold to better support students in using the strategy or teachers were able to change their initial implementation after their coaching conversation. This finding is in alignment with Desimone’s (2011) definition of professional learning. Desimone (2011) proclaimed that teacher’s learning is a natural occurrence that happens with a teacher’s daily context and as the teacher reflects upon her practices.

**Finding 3: Teachers find that self-reflection supports implementation of instructional strategies.** Coaching conversations with guided questions supplied a foundation for teachers to have deeper cognitive shifts in their own learning and teachers
were more confident in their instruction including decisions that they needed to make to move to the next step. They were also more patient with themselves and their students once they were able to see students using the chunking strategy independently or with a partner effectively. When students were not successful in using the chunking strategy independently teachers sought to figure out how to make those differences occur but teachers that saw differences were more apt to implement the things they discussed.

Teachers’ confidence with strategy implementation grew from the first coaching conversation to the second coaching conversation. This was attributed to teachers talking through their questions and concerns about implementation with someone instead of being left to their own devices. The more teachers were able to verbalize their choices and question why their choices were or were not working via the questions in the coaching conversation, the more confident teachers were in their instructional decisions.

This finding is confirmed by Darling-Hammond et al., 2017 ideas about effective professional learning. Darling-Hammond et al., 2017 concluded that professional learning must offer a level of coaching, reflection, and be sustained over a period of time. Due to time constraints, my study presented a beginning of coaching and guided reflection for participants instead of an extended period of time as Darling-Hammond et al, 2017 noted in their study. Based upon my study’s findings, the introductory work that teachers completed with Cognitive Coaching positively impacted teachers. A continuation of Cognitive Coaching over time would have allowed for further review of the impact of Cognitive Coaching.
While Moody (2019) concurred with Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and this study’s ideas about supplying sustained coaching, Moody (2019) noted that pairing coaches and teachers correctly, giving coaches effective training, and producing data that indicates coaching effectiveness are also necessary for coaching to be effective. This study did not explore these elements as the study’s focus was reflection with the coaching conversation.

**Finding 4: Cognitive Coaching fosters more intentional lesson planning.**

Teachers shared that reflection improved their planning because it caused them to consider the entire scope of the lesson, focus on areas that were done well and needed improvement, as well as consider long range planning with the strategy. Teachers moved from being concerned about student struggle to considering diverse ways to implement the strategy that would allow students to use the skill independently. The reflection built an invisible connection between careful planning, strategy implementation, and student success.

This finding was similar to Rogers, Hausermann, & Skyatt (2016) quasi-research study of principals and Goker’s (2019) study of elementary teachers. In both studies researchers found that using Cognitive Coaching as a part of their professional learning programs increased participants’ level of planning, knowledge, and effectiveness of practice.

Based upon the literature and the study’s findings, it is concluded that reflective coaching impacts teachers’ instructional decisions because it offers a structure for teachers to reflect over their practice, to identify effective and ineffective strategy
implemenation, and determine changes in their current instructional practices. Moreover, the structure of cognitive coaching conversations guides teachers to reflect more deeply and increases teachers’ agency to alter their practice based upon their students. Lastly, findings show that teachers find value in reflection.

**Recommendations**

Based on the study’s findings it is recommended that school districts and schools partner to implement Cognitive Coaching as a structure to support teachers in reflecting over their instructional practices. These recommendations include training instructional leaders in Cognitive Coaching via a cohort model, creating time for reflective conversations during the school day, and developing a system to share and document the impact of Cognitive Coaching within the school district and individual schools.

**Recommendation 1: To develop a system of reflection, use a cohort model to train and implement Cognitive Coaching within the school district and high schools within the school district.**

This study found that teachers learn by reflecting on their own practice. Cognitive Coaching provides a structure to support this reflection. Since Cognitive Coaching follows a set of reflective questions within a specified cognitive phase, it is essential that educators using Cognitive Coaching understand the model and have an opportunity to practice the model. While it is ideal to hire one to two instructional coaches for a building to implement Cognitive Coaching, the financial demands and demands of having one to two people responsible for coaching all teachers is a challenge.
To support this finding, the school district should train their district secondary content specialists, high school principals and assistant principals, content department leaders, and one to two teachers in each department on the Cognitive Coaching model. If funding permits, schools should hire at least one instructional coach and identify one teacher to act as half-time coach. Both coaches would be a part of the first cohort. This first trained group would serve as the first cohort. Initial training may be conducted by using the Cognitive Coaching conversation maps, completing the three-day training provided through an outside trainer, or through individuals in the district already trained in Cognitive Coaching.

After learning the Cognitive Coaching model, the first cohort should practice using Cognitive Coaching. This practice could include the district content specialists practicing by coaching department leaders. In turn principals and assistant principals could coach each other within their school and even coach other principals and assistant principals in other schools. Likewise, department leaders could coach teachers that are in the cohort at their school or could coach other department leaders at other schools. Teachers could practice by coaching other teachers in the cohort. During follow-up sessions cohort participants may share their successes and areas of concern. Once the cohort feels confident, the same cycle of training should continue by adding a cohort of 3-5 teachers from each school.

**Recommendation 2: Develop a schedule that allows time for reflective conversations to occur.**
This study found that Cognitive Coaching fosters more intentional lesson planning and positively affects teachers’ perception of self-reflection by supporting teachers’ implementation of their instructional strategies. However, for reflective conversations to occur, there must be a dedicated time for these conversations.

Development of a schedule that dedicates time for these conversations to occur is necessary. One way to develop such a schedule is to repurpose planning time or professional learning communities/professional learning teams’ meeting times. The instructional leader offering Cognitive Coaching should create and advertise a schedule that slates 20 minutes of time to meet with a teacher for the reflective conversation. Having a schedule that is preplanned for at least one month in advance allows for better preparation. It may be beneficial for the instructional leader to schedule a time to view the lesson or have the teacher record themselves and share the lesson that will be the focus of the coaching conversation. An alternative to providing time with individual teachers would be to meet with groups of teachers during their designated professional learning time. Grouping teachers with a similar instructional priority or strategy or content area would best support this alternative. As a group, teachers could share portions of their lessons and engage together in reflective conversation.

Recommendation 3: Develop a system to document and share the impact of Cognitive Coaching.

This study found that Cognitive Coaching has a positive impact on teachers’ depth of reflection. While this study provided the beginning stages of coaching and reflecting due to the time frame of the study, it was evident that the more teachers
reflected the more in depth their reflections became. I recommend that schools develop a system to document teachers’ reflections and share the impact of Cognitive Coaching because it will allow current participants and future participants the ability to document their personal growth as a result of reflection. To support this recommendation instructional leaders should create an electronic sharing system, such as an electronic folder or website, that teachers can create a digital portfolio of their written reflections or brief videos of their reflections. Using some of the guiding questions from the Cognitive Coaching framework teachers could share their reflections about their instruction as well as how the reflection impacted them.

**Implications**

This research has implications for instructional and content school-based coaches in K-12 education, district professional development facilitators and coaches, and school based instructional leaders, such as principals and assistant principals of instruction that supply professional development or professional recommendations for teachers. These implications include using a framework for reflection with teachers and using reflection in conjunction with teachers’ instruction. While this study’s participants were high school English teachers at high schools in the southeast, the study’s use of the Cognitive Coaching framework and data collection methods are transferable to other K-12 public school settings.

The research gathered in this study showed that Cognitive Coaching had a positive impact on teachers’ depth of reflection and that teachers found value in self-reflection. Cognitive Coaching supplied a model to support reflection and supplied a
structure for teachers to follow which allowed their reflections to advance from
generalized to more specific. The Cognitive Coaching model provided a guideline for
reflection and planning with teachers. Each phase of the Cognitive Coaching model had
questions that can be used by other coaches/instructional facilitators with their teachers.
The questions are phrased to support a coach/instructional facilitator in asking questions
that cause the teacher to consider the question in reference to the desired cognitive shift.
Use of these questions with a focus on each phase further informs an understanding of
the impact of each phase on teachers’ self-reflection and instructional decisions.

For example, in the reflecting phase of the conversation the model gives questions
that are focused on intentional reflection. In the first phase/first question the Cognitive
Coaching model provides coaches/instructional facilitators with question stems that ask
teachers to recall evidence from their lesson to support their impressions of the lesson.
This step in the model is essential when replicating this study because it allows the
coach/instructional facilitator to understand how the teacher viewed their instruction and
what items the teacher considers valuable.

The next two questions/phases within the reflecting phase of the model support
coaches/instructional facilitators in cognitively moving teachers from their first thoughts
about their lessons to considerations of how other factors impacted their lessons and what
they may learn from these factors. The questions that are offered in this phase allow
coaches/instructional facilitators to move teachers from a generalized reflection of the
lesson to a reflective analysis of the lesson. The last two questions in the reflecting phase
support the coach/instructional facilitator in guiding the teacher to commit to new
approaches as well as share whether the reflection process supported their thinking. The
questions within each phase are transferable because the Cognitive Coaching model supports instructional leaders, instructional coaches, and professional development facilitators by supplying a roadmap to guide reflective conversations with teachers using a detailed model.

During the study, the coaching conversation occurred after teachers implemented the strategy into their instruction. By allowing teachers to use their own instruction with their own students as a basis for understanding, teachers were able to reflect and learn from their experiences. The process of first conducting a classroom observation with teachers and then having teachers reflect over their instruction and plan for future instruction is a process that can be replicated in any K-12 public school setting. Using the same cyclical process of classroom observation followed by a coaching conversation within four days of the classroom observation allows the coach/instructional facilitator to anchor the teacher’s reflection and future instruction in the context of their own classrooms. Continued use of this cyclical process informs the connection between reflection and adaptation of instructional practices.

In addition to the cyclical process, the questions supplied within the planning phase of the Cognitive Coaching conversation can be replicated by a coach/instructional facilitator. The first three questions are centered around guiding teachers in clarifying future goals for their students, specifying evidence that can be gathered to show evidence of those goals, and selecting approaches to accomplish the goals set. Replication of these questions support further understanding into how reflective planning increases intentionality of teachers’ planning. The cyclical process in conjunction with the questions in these phases connect reflection and learning. The idea of learning being
reflective of one’s own experiences and reflection is also centered in Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning theory. Instructional leaders, instructional coaches, and professional development facilitators that replicate these processes can best support teachers’ reflection over their practice because of the connectivity between teachers’ daily reflection and teachers’ daily practice.

**Implementation plan**

As my current role includes creating and providing professional development for teachers, my implementation plan includes using my research in my daily work by proposing a reorganization of how professional development is structured in my current district and sharing my research via national conferences/learning academies.

In my current role, I offer professional development for teachers and that professional development has been void of any reflection. Using my research, I plan to alter my creation of and facilitation of professional learning to add an element of reflective coaching with Cognitive Coaching. To begin this process, I plan to share the rationale for the shift in my practice by referencing the data and findings of this study with my direct supervisor, the executive director of secondary education and my team, five other secondary content specialists. During a team meeting I would share my findings and model the process of Cognitive Coaching. I would propose that as an academic professional development support team, we alter our practice. I would propose to the executive director of secondary education to send the entire team to a three-day intensive training course to learn how to supply Cognitive Coaching to teachers.
The second portion of the proposal would include a phased-in approach to supplying Cognitive Coaching to teachers within the district. The proposed alteration would begin with a first-year goal of offering Cognitive Coaching to interested teachers after a professional development session and/or offering Cognitive Coaching to teachers after a classroom observation. As a team, the content specialists would model the process of Cognitive Coaching to the assistant principals of instruction at each high school, department head leaders at each high school and middle school, and the curriculum support teacher at each middle school.

Following this, my team of content specialists and I would offer Cognitive Coaching to our content teachers. During the first year, the Cognitive Coaching would be optional for teachers that are interested. As a team we would share the impact of Cognitive Coaching with each other and the schools monthly. In the second phase of the proposal school leaders would be able to request Cognitive Coaching for three to five teachers within each content area at their school.

I plan to share this work with peers that also create and facilitate professional learning. My primary means of sharing this work would be through presentations at conferences and coaching learning academies such as sharing this work at the Learning Forward Academy as a member of their next cohort. The Learning Forward Academy is a cohort model of professional learning facilitators from various areas across the country. In this cohort participants develop their skills, share practices, and learn new ways to improve teacher practice. Being a part of the cohort would allow me to present at several conferences hosted by Learning Forward as well as share my findings with the other students selected for the next cohort.
Reflection on action research and methodology

As I reflected over the process, I have gained several insights that are of personal and professional value. For instance, as a creator and facilitator of professional development I have discovered that presentation of professional development does not equate to implementation of the strategy. Professional learning that I have created and/or facilitated prior to this study I failed to offer a dedicated time for reflection and implementation support. During this study, it was evident that while all participants received the same information about the chunking strategy each participant implemented the strategy in a different manner. Moreover, each participant’s level of understanding and needs with implementation was slightly different.

I have also discovered that while all teachers may attend the same professional development and receive the same resources implementation of professional development is contingent upon teacher’s context. That context encompasses things within the teachers’ sphere of influence and items outside of influence. These items include the climate of the school, students’ needs, teachers’ comfort level and understanding. For example, one of the research sites had more students that had more academic challenges than the other site. Teachers’ understanding of these needs showed up in the additional questions/supports they needed as teachers to bridge the needs of students. Additionally, one research site had more a culture of encouraging teachers to try all methods to support students opposed to the other site that seemed to have more of a traditional means to facilitate instruction.
Furthermore, the study has refined my understanding of modern/today’s professional development and further clarified the differences between teaching and coaching. For instance, professional development was previously viewed as an opportunity for teachers to be given information via a traditional workshop method. This information was often taught to teachers by either stating the information or providing teachers with a list of steps to follow or implement.

Today’s professional development focuses upon teachers having an opportunity to collaborate, select professional development that meets their needs and interests, has a level of duration, and provides an opportunity for reflection. Since coaching allows an opportunity for teachers to work one-on-one with someone that supports them in their professional areas of interest, guides their thinking as a thought partner, and creates a structure for reflection, coaching is also deemed as professional development. The difference between supplying professional development that only teaches versus professional development that coaches impacts teachers’ support with implementation of instructional strategies.

With these areas in mind, personally I have learned to value the uniqueness of each teacher’s context. It is through these contextual factors that teachers show up individually in their classrooms and for their students. These lessons have impacted me personally as I have lessened the personal attack and disappointment that I once attached to teachers not implementing the professional learning that I created/facilitated. I now understand that implementation has many sides and for most I am not a factor. Professionally, a lesson I have learned is the importance of creating professional development that has reflection and multiple entrances for teachers. As I craft future
professional development, I must consider how I am supporting the ability for teachers to use this authentically with their students and get support in the implementation process of that strategy. These lessons have affirmed that the challenge of professional learning is creating professional learning that includes time and resources to honor teachers’ ideas via reflection and conversation.

**Limitations of the study**

Three limitations that impacted the study were the number of participants, the lack of variation in the research sites, the time of year the study was conducted, and the length of the study. The study intended to use at least five participants, each reflecting representation from one of the five high schools in the school district. This range of participants would have allowed for more comparisons between participants. However, as the study was voluntary, two high schools did not have a participant and one of the four participants ended the study after giving consent, leaving a total of three cases. Having representative participants from each high would have allowed for a comparison between diverse student populations and teachers’ reflection variation in response to students. This lack of individual school representation limited the ability to understand the impact of varying contexts across schools within the district.

Another limitation of the study was the time of year it was conducted, which was within the last two full months of school, which limited the teacher representation and timeframe of the study. The study coincided with mandated state testing, making it difficult to get teachers to commit to the study and limited the range of participants to English teachers who were not within the testing window. Lastly, the brief timeframe of
the study was a limitation. Although Cognitive Coaching recommends a sustained time period, this study only included two classroom observations and two coaching conversations. This limitation impacted participants’ opportunity to learn the phases of Cognitive Coaching well enough to complete the steps of Cognitive Coaching independently. An extension of the study would have provided participants with more exposure to the phases and questions associated with Cognitive Coaching.

**Recommendations for future research**

The findings in this study were that (1) Cognitive Coaching positively impacts reflection and instructional decisions and (2) learning and daily reflection are connected. This study found that Cognitive Coaching positively impacts reflection. However, as Cognitive Coaching involves numerous phases and various questions, further research into which questions resulted in a more in-depth reflective response may be beneficial. While this study used a qualitative case study, altering the study to a quantitative experimental research design could support this change.

To accomplish such a study, the data collection methods would remain the same but the study would follow the structure of a true experimental design with randomized participants assignments to the control or experimental group based on the number they are on the email response list that is generated from the order consent forms are submitted. Every odd number participant is a member of the control group, and every even number participant is a member of the experimental group. The control group and the experimental group both receive the same one-day professional learning workshop on the metacognitive strategy, chunking the text. Both groups would implement the
metacognitive strategy, chunking the text, with one of their classes. The experimental group would receive the intervention of the Cognitive Coaching cycle and observation. The control group will only be observed but will not receive the Cognitive Coaching cycle. Instead of just recording the experimental group’s responses to the Cognitive Coaching conversation, each phase would be tallied if the response indicated an alteration in thought for the participant. Researching which questions were attached to a more in-depth reflective response would uncover which questions are more apt to support a cognitive shift.

Additionally, extending the time of the coaching cycle with the quantitative study would allow for an examination of the reflective conversation over the course of time. Extending the time could further reveal whether teachers’ reflections have added shifts. Also, an extension of time could further reveal whether teachers’ initial changes in practice continue and whether additional changes are noted.

In this study, teachers’ reflection impacted their learning in reference to their own daily practice. The teachers in this study were all high school English teachers with struggling readers and two of the participants were located at the same site. Since a teacher’s instructional practice is impacted by the students, school culture and leadership, and their own understanding, having more participants would allow for more understanding to context as it relates to reflection on daily practice. Selecting teachers that have a range of teaching experience to include novice teachers with less than two years’ experience to veteran teachers with more than fifteen years of experience would allow for a comparison of reflection and alteration of practice based upon experience. This would also inform whether veteran teachers respond differently to coaching than
new teachers. Since this study only had two ethnicities represented and only females as its participants, adding participants with a range of culture and ethnicities might provide perspective in how culture, race, and gender impact responsiveness to self-reflection and alteration of practice. This exploration would enlighten how these constructs and societal expectations based upon race, gender, and culture impact how the participant sees himself/herself during self-reflection.

Summary

Grounded in Kolb’s experiential learning theory and Costa and Gorman’s Cognitive Coaching, this study examined the effects of cognitive coaching on teachers’ instructional decisions as well as their perceptions of self-reflection. It provided an understanding of the importance of professional development for teachers and examined the effectiveness of cognitive coaching to resolve the disconnect between current practices of whole-group professional development and resulting implementation in actual classroom practice by augmenting the professional development session with one-on-one observations followed by coaching conversations.

Using a qualitative case study method, the study collected data from classroom observations, coaching conversations, and a post-study survey. Data analysis led to the conclusion that Cognitive Coaching can impact teachers’ instructional decisions and to see self-reflection as a means of support by creating more confidence for teachers, more extensive lesson planning, and added awareness of the impact of their instruction. Overall findings suggest that using Cognitive Coaching to augment professional development can
support teachers in implementation of strategies learned during professional development.
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APPENDIX A

PLANNING AND REFLECTING CONVERSATION MEMORY MAPS
APPENDIX B

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Date:  
Time:  
Meeting Location: Virtual

Desired Outcomes
By the end of this session participants will:

- Gain information about the data tools and procedures of the study
- Understand the four dimensions of metacognition
- Understand how to implement the two metacognition instructional reading strategies chunking and identifying roadblocks
- Select a strategy to use with a class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frames</th>
<th>What We will Learn/Do</th>
<th>How We will Complete Our Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Gain information about the data tools and procedures of the study</td>
<td>PPT presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review purpose and structure of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review data protocols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain Cognitive Coaching intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td>Understand the four dimensions of metacognition</td>
<td>PPT Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Define and name each dimension; focus upon cognitive dimension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand how to implement the two metacognition instructional reading strategies chunking and identifying roadblocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain the purpose of each strategy</td>
<td>Model lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Model the steps of the strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Share resources to support strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select the a strategy to use with a class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Closure and questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

INVITATION EMAIL/LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

University of South Carolina
College of Education
Wardlow College
Columbia, SC 29208
April 13, 2022
Dear [insert teacher name],

I am writing to ask you to participate in a qualitative research study. Your name was among twenty random English teachers’ names in the district selected based upon the current courses you teach. The purpose of this study is to determine effective structures for professional development and provide English teachers with a professional development session and resource on how to implement metacognitive reading strategies with students that struggle with reading comprehension. I am planning to conduct this study with teachers that teach Reading Seminar, English 1 CP, and/or English 2 CP courses.

I am completing this study as part of my doctoral dissertation studies at the University of South Carolina. In this study I plan to provide you with professional development through a virtual workshop followed by coaching support and observe you teaching a metacognitive reading strategy to a class you select during the first two weeks of May 2022. In order to gain a better understanding of how to develop better professional development for teachers, I would like to collect data using observation of
lessons and coaching conversations. First, I would like to provide you professional
development on two metacognitive reading strategies intended to support adolescents that
struggle with reading comprehension. Second, I would like to observe how you
implement one of the metacognitive strategies with your students. Third, I would like to
have a coaching conversation about how you felt about the implementation of the
strategy. Last, I would like to get your feedback on a survey. The study is not in any way
evaluative of you or your students, is not connected to your current role in the district,
will not be recorded in the district’s system, and it will inform me on how to implement
professional development for teachers. I will take steps to ensure that the study is not
intrusive for you or students.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Participants can stop at any time, and all
information is confidential. If the results of the study are published or presented, I will
not use the names of people, names of schools, or any other information that would
identify participants, the school, or the district. Thank you for considering this
opportunity. I will be contacting you today by email with a link to a consent form to
participate in the study if you are interested. Should you have any questions or concerns,
please feel free to contact me via email at CHARRAI@email.sc.edu
Researcher: Charrai Hunter  
University of South Carolina  
College of Education  
CHARRAI@email.sc.edu

**Researcher’s Statement**

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to inform you of the study so that you have all the information you will need to decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the entire form in depth. You may ask questions about any aspect of the study, to include: the purpose of the research, your involvement, any possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is unclear. Once all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is referred to as gaining informed consent. I will send you a copy of this form for your records.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to examine whether reflective practices impact teachers’ pedagogical decisions. I would like to gain an understanding on how Cognitive Coaching as a means of reflection impacts teachers’ implementation of metacognitive instructional
reading strategies with adolescent struggling readers. I also want to better understand teachers’ perspective on the use of Cognitive Coaching.

**Procedures**

If you decide to participate in this study, I would offer a virtual professional development session, observe two of your lessons, and then meet with you 2 times for individual coaching sessions. The professional development session will be 45 minutes long and will take place on the first day of the study. The professional development session will provide you with information about the four domains of metacognition in relation to adolescent reading and how to implement two metacognitive reading instructional reading strategies. I will follow up with two informal observations of you implementing the strategy with one of your classes. Each observation will last a total of 30 minutes. After each observation I will follow up with a virtual coaching session. Each coaching session will last for 20 minutes. I will also ask you to complete a pre- and post-survey on your experiences. The study will last a total of 17 days but your involvement only requires one 45 minute virtual session, two 30 minute classroom observations, two 20 minute coaching conversations, and one 5 minute survey.

Data will consist of your instruction with metacognitive reading strategies, our individual coaching conversations, and your input on the survey. Data will be recorded in written and typed notes, during classroom observations, during coaching conversations, and review of post-survey answers. All written and typed data will identify you by
pseudonym only identifiable by me. Only I will have access to the video recordings of
the coaching conversations, which will be kept in a secure location.

Risks, stress, and discomfort
Participating in research may cause some people uncomfortableness because they feel it
invades their privacy. Additionally, some people feel self-conscious due to viewing my
role as evaluative. Others feel self-conscious when notes are taken or interviews are
recorded. I have addressed concerns for your privacy and that the study is non-evaluative
in the section below.

Benefits of the study
This research study may not directly benefit you. However, one possible benefit of this
study is learning about new ways to support adolescents that struggle with reading
comprehension and gaining new insights about coaching and self-reflection. The
information from this study is foundational to my doctoral dissertation.

Other Information
Participation in this study is voluntary and you may end your participation at any time.
Participation in this study is non-evaluative and is not connected to your current role.
Information collected during the study will not be housed in any district evaluation
platform and is not connected to formal or informal observations completed by your
school administrators or the district’s administrators. Information about you is
confidential. To maintain confidentiality, I will assign you a pseudonym and code the
study information. I will keep the link between your name and the pseudonym code in a
separate, secured location. The results of this study will be published and presented.
However, I will not use your name, or any other identifying information during publication or presentation.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact Charrai Hunter at the email listed at the top of this form. Thank you for your consideration and participation.

________________________________________________________
Signature of researcher Printed Name / Date

Participant’s statement

This study has been explained to me and I understand the study. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research, I can ask the researcher listed above. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

___ I give permission for this researcher to videotape my coaching conversations.

___ I do NOT give my permission for the researcher to videotape my lessons.

___ I give permission for this researcher to observe my classroom instruction.

___ I do not give permission for this researcher to observe my classroom instruction.
APPENDIX E

CRITERION SAMPLE ONLINE SURVEY
APPENDIX F

F1-OBSERVATION TOOL 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Code Name:</th>
<th>Observation Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 1st Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 2nd Observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Start Time of observation:</th>
<th>End Time of Observation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy: Chunking Text</th>
<th>Procedure for strategy</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Descriptive Field Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Name and explain the purpose for the strategy and instruct students to complete steps with the teacher.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Provide an electronic or paper copy of the model text for students.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Provide a purpose for reading the text.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Project and read aloud the text for students.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Model chunking the text for students by breaking the text into smaller parts to understand (by sentence or sentences).</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Model paraphrasing the chunks of the text by writing each chunk in your own words.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Transition into students practicing the strategy.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflective Field Notes
APPENDIX G

F1-OBSERVATION TOOL 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Code Name:</th>
<th>Observation Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 1st Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ 2nd Observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Start Time of Observation:</th>
<th>End Time of Observation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategy: Evaluating Roadblocks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure for Strategy</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Descriptive Field Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name and explain the purpose for the strategy and instruct students to complete steps with the teacher.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide an electronic or paper copy of the model text for students and a read-aloud template.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide a purpose for reading the text.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Project and read aloud a portion of the text for students.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Think aloud a confusion you encounter while reading the text.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Think aloud how you clarify your confusion OR think about your rationale for moving on.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Transition into students practicing the strategy.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflective Field Notes**


Appendix H
END OF STUDY SURVEY

Appendix G End of Study Survey
Thank you for completing this online survey. Please share your candid responses as this data will support gaining your perspective. Read each question and respond by selecting your response.

* Required

1. Prior to participating in this study, did you have a formal process to reflect over your instruction? *

   Mark only one oval.
   
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

2. Did your formal process for reflecting over your instruction help you improve your instruction? *

   Mark only one oval.
   
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ I did not have a process.

3. After participating in two Cognitive Coaching reflection conversations, describe your current view of self-reflection. *

   Mark only one oval.
   
   ○ I have more value for self-reflection after participating in two Cognitive Coaching reflection conversations.
   ○ My value for self-reflection has remained the same after participating in two Cognitive Coaching reflection conversations.
   ○ I have less value for self-reflection after participating in two Cognitive Coaching reflection conversations.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v5aqQwL-hcKXFEElbChlsZLtJG36JwPyVIGzaNY/edit
4. After participating in two Cognitive Coaching planning conversations, describe your current view of self-reflection. *

Mark only one oval.

- I have more value for self-reflection after participating in two Cognitive Coaching planning conversations.
- My value for self-reflection has remained the same after participating in two Cognitive Coaching planning conversations.
- I have less value for self-reflection after participating in two Cognitive Coaching planning conversations.

5. Select the level of impact for each phase of the Cognitive Coaching reflecting conversation had on altering your metacognitive instructional reading strategy. *

Mark only one oval per row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarize Impressions: How do you think the lesson went?</th>
<th>Significant Impact</th>
<th>Some Impact</th>
<th>Minimal Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze Casual Factors: What comparisons might you make between the lesson you planned/envisioned and the one you taught?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct New Learning: What learning(s) do you want to take away with you to future situations?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit to Application: So how might you apply your new learning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1u5e6QBljU-wmnt4xeuTFFELrKxG0iz2u-LJ2d5LjP4vY22aNYY/edit
6. Select the level of impact for each phase of the Cognitive Coaching planning conversation had on implementing changes to your metacognitive instructional reading strategy. *

Mark only one oval per row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Significant Impact</th>
<th>Some Impact</th>
<th>Minimal Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarify Goals: What do you want students to leave thinking or being able to do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Specify Success Indicators: What might success look/sound like?</td>
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<td>Anticipate Approaches: What might you need to do to be the best prepared you can be for this lesson?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Personal Learning Focus: What do you want to be sure you do very well?</td>
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7. Considering future professional development that you attend, rank how important it is for the session to have a self-reflection component. *

Mark only one oval.

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Extremely Important  Not Important
8. Rank the effectiveness of Cognitive Coaching as a tool that supports teachers with reflecting on their instructional practice. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Extremely effective □ □ □ □ □ Not effective

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