

INSTRUCTIONAL COACH JOB SATISFACTION:
AN EXPLORATION OF ROLE STRESSORS

BY

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Abstract

This mixed methods dissertation examines the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role conflict and job satisfaction within a convenience sample of American instructional coaches ($n = 46$). Theoretically, this analysis is formed by Merton's idea of role-sets and how instructional coaches, because of their boundary spanning roles in schools, have role-sets that overlap those of teachers and administrators. Because of these overlapping roles, role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload are likely to influence instructional coach job satisfaction without structures in place to moderate these roles. Through bivariate analyses between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction measures, strong, negative correlations were found between role conflict and supervision satisfaction and role ambiguity and supervision satisfaction, and medium, negative correlations between role conflict and growth satisfaction and role ambiguity and growth satisfaction. Qualitative data collected through structured interviews ($n = 6$) support quantitative findings and provide a pattern of experiences common to highly satisfied instructional coaches.

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Dedication

Above all, I thank God for the opportunity to participate in the ELPS program and the strength and perseverance necessary to complete it.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teachers are held responsible for ensuring the collective success of their students. In order to accomplish this oft-daunting task, teachers must continuously equip themselves with high-quality instructional, behavioral, and motivational strategies. The skills needed to implement these strategies seem to develop naturally for some teachers, while other teachers acquire them through teacher preparation programs, and still others through classroom practice. Hoping to continue their professional growth, some teachers work toward advanced degrees, but despite financial incentives provided by many school districts to seek higher education, not all teachers choose to continue formalized coursework. In addition, the outcomes of such coursework are not entirely clear. With that in mind, school districts are seeking other ways of providing ongoing professional development to their teachers, increasingly with an eye toward teaching colleagues.

Professional Development Through Teacher Leadership

Using teachers to support non-classroom teaching roles in schools is a common practice, and teachers serve on committees, mentor new colleagues, and assist school leaders in accomplishing tasks. Tasks teachers undertake have grown increasingly administrative in nature, as “schools are viewed as too complex...to lead alone” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 258), requiring administrators to depend more upon teachers for assistance with certain operational aspects of the school. School improvement is one of those aspects. As school improvement needs increase, so too does the implementation of structures supporting teacher

leadership, allowing administrators to rely on a readily available source of assistance and knowledge (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) to “improve the culture and instruction in schools such that learning is enhanced” (p. 261). By using this expertise, those schools that lack the ability to hire additional administrators can hire teachers to lead and support school improvement efforts.

States, recognizing this additional source of leadership, are turning their attention toward teacher leadership as a means of supporting administrative leadership in schools. Kansas, Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, and Massachusetts all provide some form of teacher leadership endorsement or recognize standards for teacher leadership (Shelton, 2009). Kentucky's program goes further to provide a pathway to building principalship. It is possible that more states will recognize the potential that teacher leadership can provide in schools, thus teacher leadership licensure will likely become increasingly common.

Progressively, teacher leaders are utilized as an alternative to, or balance for, existing professional development practices. In many cases, existing professional development fails to consider the needs of individual teachers (Wapole, 2005) and often assumes the teachers' abilities to implement innovations while neither ensuring teachers understand the innovations' benefits (Fullan, 1982; Guskey, 2002) nor have access to ongoing support and feedback regarding innovation implementation (Guskey, 2002). Teacher leaders are well suited to the professional development role, having taught in the classroom, and are able to contribute positively to professional development (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). These teacher

leaders, as teachers themselves, have “front-line knowledge of classroom issues and the culture of schools, and they understand the support they need to do their jobs well” (Paulu and Winters, 1998, p. 7). In addition, teachers, as technical core members of an organization, are better able to provide technical innovations (i.e. teaching strategies) to other teachers than are administrators, assuming a highly professional staff (Daft, 1978). One increasingly institutionalized means of teacher leadership that provides relevant, continuously supported, technical-core strategy knowledge to teaching colleagues is instructional coaching.

Instructional Coaching: A Provisional Definition

In spite of its increasing institutionalization in school settings, instructional coaching takes on many forms and uses a variety of approaches, making it difficult to identify a universal, specific set of job roles instructional coaches exercise. Currently, a variety of instructional coaching models exist, including literacy coaching, coactive coaching, cognitive coaching, and instructional coaching (Knight, 2007). While there are differences between these coaching models, all of them involve coaches working with teachers for purposes of instructional improvement. Perhaps because of the emergent implementation of instructional coaching, no agreed upon or all-encompassing definition of this sort of educational intervention has emerged (Denton and Hasbrouck, 2009).

I use the term “instructional coach” in a broad sense, including parts of specific instructional coaching models that Knight (2007) and Makibbin and Sprague (1997) present. For this dissertation, an instructional coach is defined as a professional development specialist, working in a school setting in a non-evaluative

role as a teacher leader, who collaborates with teachers and administrators to improve classroom-level teaching practices (Knight, 2007; Makibbin and Sprague, 1997). The research methodology employed in this research is based upon this definition of instructional coaching and it is the lens through which I explore instructional coach job satisfaction. While I attempt to bring clarity to the instructional coaching role to inform this research, instructional coaching roles can be anything but clear—and quite problematic for the instructional coach.

Lack of Clarity in Instructional Coaching Roles

There is not a clearly defined set of roles that all instructional coaches share. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) summarize the problem, stating

Unfortunately, the rush to implement coaching before strong theoretical models, or even well-defined job descriptions, were in place has caused a good deal of confusion related to the role and the focus of coaching...

Coaching is, in essence, different things to different people (p. 155).

In some schools, instructional coaches perform significant numbers of administrative duties; in these schools, instructional coaches are viewed as assistant principals on a teacher's salary. In other schools, instructional coaches focus their efforts on guiding teachers, observing classrooms, and planning professional development activities; in these schools, instructional coaches are viewed as teacher leaders focused on professional development. Because of differing views and practices in relation to instructional coaching, instructional coaches can be caught in between roles—the assistant to the administrator or the teacher leader—depending upon both the instructional coach's definition of the role and the administrator's

definition of the role. Where the instructional coaching role is ill defined, tension between the roles can occur, providing job stress that can not only reduce the instructional coach's job satisfaction, but also can reduce the ability of the instructional coach to perform the core function of his or her job: providing ongoing, collaborative professional development support to teachers.

Collaborative professional development requires instructional coaches the flexibility to engage in decision-making that enhances professional learning. Instructional coaches need to make important decisions, yet are often working within organizational structures that thwart their ability or authority to reasonably so do. Assuming good intentions, instructional coaches seek coaching positions to facilitate change through teacher-driven professional growth. Such change efforts require mental processes that challenge instructional coaches, challenges that, to a point, are perceived as positive benefits of the job rather than role stressors; conversely, "constraints on decision making, not decision making per se, are the major problem" (Karasek, 1979, p. 303). Lack of definition in instructional coaching job roles only further constrains the ability for instructional coaches to make decisions by preventing clear guidance to instructional coaches that defines when and how such decisions should be made. In a highly demanding "active job" (Karasek, 1979) such as instructional coaching, instructional coaches should be experiencing high levels of job satisfaction. However, because decision-making processes are inhibited by this lack of definition, instructional coaches are experiencing reduced job satisfaction.

Though instructional coaching is an increasingly implemented model of professional development, there is a paucity of literature regarding instructional coaches' job satisfaction. While teacher and administrative job satisfaction has been examined, such research has not occurred in regard to instructional coaches. By exploring job satisfaction in this research, specific instructional coaching experiences are explored in more detail, illuminating the interactions the instructional coach has with both teachers and administrators. By using role stressors as a lens through which those interactions are investigated, this research explores the most negatively impacting influences on the instructional coach's unique role as both a mediator between teachers and administrators and a source of innovations to teaching colleagues. In describing this relationship between job satisfaction and role stressors within the context of the instructional coach's unique role in a school, this research informs our understanding of how a lack of instructional coaching job clarity can be detrimental to an increasingly relied upon role in schools by addressing the following research question: What are the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction among instructional coaches?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Focus of the Literature Review

This dissertation explores the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction. To address these relationships, I focus on two veins in the literature: (1) the relationships between instructional coaches and potential sources of stress and (2) the job-based role stressors an instructional coach might experience. To explore the relationships between instructional coaches and other professionals, I focus on role-sets and boundary spanning, complimentary concepts that characterize instructional coach-colleague relationships while explaining potential sources of tension within those relationships. These role stressors—role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload—become the foundation of this research. To conclude, I review how these role stressors interact with facets of instructional coach job satisfaction.

Instructional Coaching and Sources of Stress

Role-sets. Instructional coaches interact with a variety of people within schools, but, in the professional development role as previously defined, they collaborate primarily with administrators and teachers. In order to explain the instructional coach's relationship with these two groups, I look to Merton's (1957) characterization of role-sets. I believe Merton's classic research informs this study for three reasons: (1) the idea of role-sets highlights the differences between teachers and administrators, (2) the idea of role-sets helps explain the inability of

instructional coaches, as teacher leaders, to enjoy full membership in either the administrative or teacher role-set, and (3) the idea of role-sets helps explain why instructional coaching roles can vary, even within schools, through mediation processes. To summarize, Merton (1957) presents the idea of role-sets as an explanation for role tensions between various organizational members because a “single status in society involves...an array of associated roles” (p.110), and these roles require mediation in the face of disharmony.

In schools without formalized teacher leadership, the established employee groups consist of administrators, teachers, and support staff; almost everyone employed in a school is a member of one of these categories. Administrators, in their role-set, are advocates, supervisors, managers, observers, professional developers, and facilitators. The teachers’ role-set includes that of a learner, content expert, caregiver, communicator, evaluator, and data collector. Support staff role sets are more varied, but include supporting the school’s mission, providing assistance, ensuring student safety, and communicating needs. These lists are not exhaustive, but are presented to highlight differences among the role-sets. In this case, (more) clearly defined boundaries exist between the role sets, and, while overlap is bound to exist, such overlap seems unlikely to disrupt the relationship between the role sets.

Teacher leadership within in a school provides a complex and potentially disruptive layer, allowing the relatively tidy teaching and administrative role sets to bleed into one another. An examination of teacher leadership roles begins to reveal areas of commonality between administrative and teaching roles—as might be

expected by the term “teacher leader.” Instructional coaching, as a form of teacher leadership, institutionalizes these areas of commonality between roles, performing tasks associated with both administrators and teachers within schools. Consider the administrative and teaching roles for which instructional coaches assume responsibility. Administrative roles include observing teachers and providing feedback, conducting goal setting meetings with teachers, completing paperwork, managing support resources and budgets, analyzing data, and serving on leadership teams. Teaching roles include modeling instruction for teachers, identifying research and teaching resources and sharing these with teachers, conducting student observations, and serving as instructional interventionists with students. Again, though not exhaustive, this list demonstrates experiences that instructional coaches may, and often do, share roles with administrative and teaching staff members.

If administrators and teachers are members of role-sets, each role-set possessing mostly well defined, and non-overlapping roles, in what role-set do instructional coaches belong? After all, instructional coaches possess both administrative and teaching roles within their role sets. Merton (1957) would posit that instructional coaches possess their own unique role-sets. While theoretically tidy, complications of association result, as instructional coaches are neither teachers nor administrators. The support staff role-set seems to be the obvious answer, yet most support staff members are not responsible for both administrative and teaching roles; only instructional coaching has the potential reach into both role-sets significantly enough to muddy the roles. Instructional coaches, as teacher

leaders, are not administrators, though they perform many administrative tasks, including teacher observation; instructional coaches may lack the credentials necessary to be an administrator, and as collaborative equals with teaching colleagues, such an association would serve as a disadvantage. Finally, instructional coaches, while typically certified teachers, coordinate and provide professional development to adult learners, not classroom students, and on some level serve expert roles, at least according to the teachers with whom instructional coaches work.

In short, instructional coaches, despite their high levels of collaboration with administrators and teachers and attributes of both groups, function within independent role-sets. Within these role-sets exist fellow instructional coaches, principals, teachers, students, community members, district officials, and countless minor characters that influence an instructional coach's job. However, not all role-set members possess equivalent levels of influence (Merton, 1957) and, therefore, the demands that various role-set members place upon instructional coaches are unequal. In this imbalance within the role-set, the instructional coaching role-set must mediate processes to resolve differences of influence.

For instructional coaches, intra-role-set mediation is triggered from either or both of the vastly different teaching and administrative membership groups inherent in the instructional coaching role-set. Consider the scenario where an instructional coach has been working with a teacher wanting to attempt a new innovation in her classroom, an innovation that is contrary to the educational philosophy and demands of the principal. On one side is the principal, making a

demand of the instructional coach about what will not happen in her building; on the other side is a struggling teacher who finally finds hope in a solution that she will never be able to implement. In the middle is the instructional coach, balancing the needs of the principal with the needs of the teacher. Now, let us add a layer. On one side is the principal, chief evaluator of the school, a person with whom an instructional coach must have a symbiotic relationship (Knight, 2007); on the other side is a teacher, whose instructional improvement—through the maintenance of a strong relationship—the instructional coach is responsible for supporting (Knight, 2007) while maintaining the collegial relationships necessary to be effective teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The instructional coach is caught in the middle attempting to balance competing demands—and is doing so in many cases without possessing complete clarity about the position’s specific roles.

Merton (1957) would posit that the instructional coach mediates these conflicting role-set demands by weighing the importance of statuses, using the differences in power, insulating the role from observation, trumping up the observability of conflicting demands, seeking mutual support, and, as a last resort, abridging the role set. Ultimately, the instructional coach would establish task priorities based upon this mediation, and would have whatever knowledge experiences with instructional coaching he or she possesses (including role definitions) to serve as a guide to informed decision making. The aforementioned scenario is nothing new in the workplace—supervisors issue edicts to subordinates every day. What is unique about this scenario is the dual-role position that instructional coaches possess within the school. In this position, instructional

coaches are members of an individual role-set that combines the seemingly contradictory dichotomy of teaching and administrative roles, neither possessing the full responsibilities associated with classroom teaching nor the administrative authority to fully act independently. These shared roles, when lacking definition, complicate the mediation, leading to increased miscommunication, disagreement, and overreach. Clarity is not likely to be found in profession-based specificity, however, as even the profession itself cannot agree on a definition of instructional coaching (Denton and Hasbrouck, 2009) despite a variety of coaching frameworks. Between the mediation processes unique to each instructional coaching situation and the lack of professional unity in specific instructional coaching roles, the instructional coaching role varies significantly depending upon the circumstances. Without this specificity, intra-role-set definitions are unclear. Logic would suggest then that, without a clear internal understanding of the job-specific roles, it becomes more difficult to define intra- and inter-role-set relationships. This is problematic, as instructional coaches must interact with other role-sets as school-based boundary spanners.

Boundary spanning. Boundary spanning is the glue that binds the instructional coaching role set to the administrative and teaching role sets. By serving as specialized technical core (in this case, teaching) mediators between administrative leadership and teacher professional growth needs, instructional coaches serve as boundary spanners. As part of this role, instructional coaches are filtering relevant information between the teaching and administrative role-sets. Also, instructional coaches interact with role sets beyond the organization (Aldrich

and Herker, 1977), providing new technical information, including teaching strategies, new technologies, to influence and enhance professional growth.

Recalling Merton's (1957) role-set concept, instructional coaches possess a unique instructional coaching role-set consisting of both teaching (job-embedded professional development, classroom observation, mentoring) and administrative roles (building-level professional development, building-level decision-making, assignment of administrator duties). Concomitantly, this instructional coach role-set mediates the administrative role set and the teacher role set in a boundary-spanning manner, providing information about professional development and feedback to both groups. In the instructional coaching role, these boundary-spanning positions must remain flexible and adaptable in order to transmit new information to occupants of the various role sets (Aldrich and Herker, 1977), filtering what is important from what is not. The level to which the instructional coach can flexibly bridge the teaching and administrative role-sets determines their ability to cultivate and maintain their legitimacy. Instructional coaches are able to provide stability to those role-sets they mediate through the maintenance of organizational legitimacy and satisfactorily balancing organizational policies with emerging trends (Aldrich and Herker, 1977), harvesting power in the process (Keller and Holland, 1975). Without this power, administrators would not trust instructional coaches, reducing the ability for instructional coaches to develop competency of roles and autonomy to perform their boundary-spanning role, effectively reducing their power (Thompson et al., 2009). Nor would instructional coaches be able to build meaningful relationships with teachers—both conditions

required for an instructional coach to be successful in his or her position (Knight, 2007; Silva, et al., 2000).

For instructional coaches, filtering guidance comes from both professional norms and administrative authority delegated to them to perform their tasks. The clarity of this guidance is based on teacher and administrative knowledge of instructional coaching responsibilities, which itself may be further compromised by inconsistently applied definitions of instructional coaching. Moreover, this filtering guidance is subject to the role-mediation processes resulting from the differing role-set member influences within the instructional coaching role-set.

As a result, while interacting with members of both the administrative and teaching role set, information transmitted through instructional coaches can provide direction that conflicts with established instructional coaching role expectations, is ambiguous, or that can overload instructional coaches if too much information or too many tasks are provided (Kahn, et al., 1964). When information reaches instructional coaches that is conflicting or ambiguous, instructional coaches are forced to mediate their role-set, potentially damaging the boundary spanning nature of the instructional coaching role if the filtering guidance provided is insufficient to mediate their role-set without resorting to isolation and culling of relationships.

Role Stressors

To identify potentially damaging influences on the boundary-spanning nature of the instructional coaching role, previous research into other boundary-spanning roles is used as a foundation for this research. Previous research into

boundary-spanning salespersons identified three role stressors—role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload—as being negatively correlated to job satisfaction among boundary-spanning salespersons (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Singh, Goolsby, and Rhoades, 1994). As a result, role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload lead the focus of this research into instructional coach job satisfaction because of the boundary-spanning nature of the instructional coaching job. To address the research question concerning the effect of role stressors on instructional coach job satisfaction, the constituent components of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Singh, 1998; Etough, Chang, Miloslavic, and Johnson, 2011) must first be defined.

Role conflict. Role conflict is the incompatible expectations of multiple role set members (Singh, 1998). Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) define role conflict as “the compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impinge upon role performance” (p. 156). In the instructional coaching role, role conflict is found in conflicting demands of the instructional coach between teachers and principals, conflicting demands of the instructional coach among various administrative levels, or conflicting philosophies of the instructional coaching role among the teaching, administrative, and instructional coaching role-sets.

Consider again the scenario where an instructional coach is caught between a teacher wanting to integrate a quality instructional strategy that is not supported by the building principal. In this case, the instructional coach must choose between

damaging her relationship with her principal by disobeying the edict to avoid the given strategy or damaging her relationship with her teacher by refusing to help implement the teacher's favored idea. In this situation, the instructional coach is receiving two conflicting instructions from the teaching and administrative role-sets, both of which she must maintain positive relationships. Another form of role conflict comes in the form of competing demands for time (Hecht, 2001).

Continuing our example, let us assume that the instructional coach was supposed to be conducting a peer observation of a teacher, yet she was called into a meeting with her administrator. Forced to reconcile between two situations with disparate role-set influences, the instructional had to prioritize one situation over another, opting to meet with her supervisor at the detriment of her teaching colleague.

In both of these examples of role conflict, the instructional coach was forced to reconcile the incompatible demands of role-set members, and in so doing, was forced to choose between the different role-sets. When forced to choose between role-sets, mediation processes occur that can damage relationships between the instructional coach and either the teaching or administrative role-sets, damage that ultimately influences job satisfaction. Instructional coaches can only be effective boundary spanners if they are able to mediate both the teaching and administrative role-sets; quality mediation requires solid relationships and legitimacy as a boundary spanner. In situations where positive relationships exist, it is then reasonable to posit that instructional coaches are more satisfied when they are better able to carry out their roles.

In light of role conflict research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Role conflict will be moderately, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction.

Role ambiguity. Role ambiguity involves unclear expectations about how an organizational member should perform a role adequately based on role-set member expectations (Singh, 1998). Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) characterize a person experiencing role ambiguity as “[lacking] the existence or clarity of behavioral requirements, often in terms of inputs from the environment, which would serve to guide behavior and provide knowledge that the behavior is appropriate” (p. 156). In the instructional coaching role, role ambiguity is found in unclear or vague job expectations, inconsistent applications of instructional coaching roles, and an administrative or teacher lack of understanding of the roles instructional coaches perform as part of their jobs. For instructional coaches, as teacher leaders, to develop quality instructional coaching programs, clarity of role expectations is necessary (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

Consider a scenario where an instructional coach works in two separate schools, each with its own administrator. At Southern Cross Middle School, the principal makes professional development decisions with the input of the instructional coach, seeking supportive research, reflecting potential ideas off of the instructional coach, and maintaining an environment of honesty above agreement; the principal not only understands the role of an instructional coach, he utilizes the instructional coach based on clearly defined roles guiding role-set relationships.

At Oceanside High School, the principal makes professional development decisions with no input from the instructional coach, yet expects the instructional

coach to be supportive of decisions and implement them without fail or ongoing support; Oceanside's principal neither understands the instructional coaching role nor utilizes the instructional coach to her potential. As a result, the instructional coach has attempted to fill in the void at Oceanside by implementing new strategies independently. The implementation initiative has been met with strong resistance by Oceanside's principal from a lack of role clarity that defines the role-set relationships, providing frustration for the instructional coach resulting from role-set mediation processes.

The difference of interactions presented in the scenario involves a difference in relationships, administrative philosophies, expectations, and clarity, any of which can create a situation where the instructional coach is unsure of her specific instructional coaching job roles in either school. This developed role ambiguity inhibits teacher leadership (York-Barr and Duke, 2004), causes the most potential for task disruption, and is highly correlated to decreased job satisfaction (Eatough, Chang, Miloslavich, and Johnson, 2011; Gilboa et al., 2008; Rizzo, 1970).

Unfortunately, roles are more susceptible to ambiguity in rapidly changing organizations, including those incorporating new technologies (Khan et al., 1964), such as in schools with technology improvements or initiatives. It is within these organizations that instructional coaches often find themselves, as they are another means of supporting large initiatives.

In this situation, the inconsistent utilization of the instructional coach stemming from a lack of understanding in the instructional coaching role created confusion of expectation, confusion that the instructional coach attempted to

mediate through independent action. Instead, the instructional coach became frustrated with Oceanside's principal, a situation that can benefit neither side of a boundary-spanning relationship that requires cooperation.

In light of role ambiguity research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Role ambiguity will be strongly, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction.

Role overload. Role overload occurs when an organizational member perceives a greater number of tasks are expected of them that they are able to complete in light of limited time, motivation, or ability (Singh, 1998; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). In an instructional coaching role, role overload presents itself in the form of tasks directly unrelated to instructional coaching duties that drown the primary professional growth responsibilities to which an instructional coach must attend. These duties can range from recess duty to the administration of budgets and title programs to student-based consulting roles.

Consider a scenario where an instructional coach, in addition to her work with teachers, is responsible for technology as it relates to student assessments. Recall that an instructional coach's core task is to improve classroom instruction through job-embedded professional development (Knight, 2007), yet testing is an area to which attention is required. Place a veteran educator with similar levels of education, training, and a flexible schedule with a busy administrator, and suddenly a school is presented with a less-expensive administrative leader. Combine core instructional improvement activities with administrative paperwork, meetings, committees, classroom coverage, conferences, and other administrative tasks, and it

becomes clear that more tasks must be done than what time allows, requiring task prioritization based on role-set mediation processes (Merton, 1957). This task prioritization has the potential to detract from the instructional coach's primary role of professional developer, particularly if the administrative members of the instructional coach's role set exert more influence than the coexisting teacher roles. Even when the coach is able to collaborate with colleagues—a cornerstone of the instructional coaching position (Knight, 2007)—inadequate time to collaborate effectively inhibits teacher leadership (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

By taking on job responsibilities not involving the professional growth of teachers, instructional coaches risk being unable to complete their primary teacher professional development responsibilities. As such, instructional coaches risk being unable to maintain their boundary-spanning role because they focus mediation efforts upon one-half of the boundary relationship to the detriment of the other, reducing their coaching effectiveness.

In light of role overload research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Role overload will be moderately, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction.

Effects of Role Stressors of Job Satisfaction

When combined, role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload all contribute to role stress, although role overload's negative correlations to task performance are less than that of role conflict and role ambiguity (Gilboa et al., 2008; Tubré & Collins, 2000). Furthermore, role overload has mixed effects. When viewed as a challenge, role overload can increase one's motivation to work to a

point (Beehr, Walsh, and Taber, 1976; Singh, 1998), and organizations, and arguably the instructional coach, stand to gain benefits from the increased work motivation and productivity. Finally, role overload has less of an impact on psychological well-being than does role conflict (Hecht, 2001).

Role conflict and role ambiguity are “associated with negatively valued states; e.g., tension, absenteeism, low satisfaction, low job involvement, low expectancies and task characteristics with a low motivating potential” (Schuler et al., 1977 as cited in Conley and Woolsey, 2000). Gross et al. (1958) as cited in Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) concluded that a “significant negative correlation between perceived role conflict and three of four measures of job satisfaction” exists. According to Keller (1975), role conflict is correlated to supervision, pay, and promotion opportunity dissatisfaction. Role ambiguity, on the other hand, causes the most potential for task disruption and decreased job satisfaction (Kahn, et al., 1964 as cited in Rizzo, 1970; Gilboa et al., 2008; Tubré & Collins, 2000) while possessing a strong negative correlation toward the work itself (Keller, 1975). Fried, et al. (2011) went farther still and posited that role conflict and role ambiguity are dynamically linked stressors that influence one another. Their research found that as role conflict and role ambiguity increased, job performance decreased.

A gap exists in the literature with regard to boundary spanning among instructional coaches and job satisfaction. To gain insight into instructional coaching through the perspective of a boundary-spanning role, I use a proxy group of boundary spanners to provide guidance throughout my research: salespersons.

In two studies of boundary-spanning salespersons, Brown and Peterson (1993) and Singh, Goolsby, and Rhoads (1994) found low to moderate negative correlations between role ambiguity and role conflict and job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Role overload provided similar, smaller negative correlations in all areas except job performance, where a low positive correlation was observed. In role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload, there were low to moderate positive correlations with propensity to leave. While instructional coaches and salespersons have significantly different role definitions, both role-sets exhibit boundary-spanning attributes.

In addition, Hackman and Oldham (1975) posit that job satisfaction is a composite of the “critical psychological states” of experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of results of the work activities, each containing “core job dimensions.” This composite leads to “personal and work outcomes.” In so doing, they find that experienced meaningfulness of the work and experienced responsibility for work outcomes are moderately to strongly correlated with internal motivation, general satisfaction, and growth satisfaction. For a task to be significant an employee must feel invested in his or her position. Investment in a position occurs when an employee can contribute within the context of a clearly defined role. When clear role expectations exist, the employee can recognize when those expectations have been achieved.

In jobs where autonomy exists, such as instructional coaching, it becomes important to recognize that autonomy without limits does nothing for focusing on tasks. However, bounded autonomy within a position comes from an organizational

definition that provides the foundation upon which the instructional coach can build his or her program. Without such boundaries, autonomy can have potentially damaging influences on instructional coaching positions; variations in instructional coaching expectations may not provide the consistent bounded autonomy from which instructional coaches could benefit. In a study of boundary-spanning industrial salespersons, Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1976) found a positive correlation between close supervision and job satisfaction; they concluded that because of the ambiguous and independent nature of their profession, salespersons may benefit from more specificity. Instructional coaching positions, with their independent and often open-ended role definitions, also possess high levels of ambiguity. This autonomy must be carefully managed, however. Singh's (1998) research presents two useful conclusions for this study: (1) not enough autonomy, presented in the form of too much role specificity, can increase job tension, and (2) in highly ambiguous environments, too much autonomy can result in increased job tension.

While role overload has fewer negative effects on job satisfaction, role conflict and role ambiguity have negative correlations to job satisfaction. For instructional coaching programs to operate with satisfied instructional coaches, it is important for administrators to ensure a minimal level of institutional role stressors. To minimize these role stressors, it is important to first identify them; by exploring the job satisfaction of instructional coaches, this research provides practitioners with a tool to begin reflecting upon instructional coaching programs.

Control Variables

Four controls were identified as being particularly informative to this research. As is found in much educational research, the socioeconomic status of the students is important to consider with regards to instructional coaching. In schools with increased levels of poverty, less experienced, lower quality teachers exist in higher numbers than in schools of comparably lower poverty (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler, 2006). As a result, these less experienced, lower quality teachers have increased support needs of instructional leaders (McGee, 2003), support that an instructional coach would be responsible for providing. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: In schools with lower socioeconomic status, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist.

The second consideration is relative to the teacher-to-instructional coach caseload. Because instructional coaches must be able to provide ongoing support to teachers, instructional coaches must be reasonably accessible to teachers. With increased numbers of teachers for which instructional coaches are responsible, and because of the supervisory-like feedback provided by the instructional coaches to teachers, quality support that can be provided to teachers may be reduced (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). With reduced support to the teacher role-set, instructional coaches will experience reduced satisfaction with an increasingly large caseload not only because of time constraints, but also because of increased opportunities for

role mediation due to the boundary-spanning role (Kahn et al., 1964). As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: In schools with higher teacher to instructional coach ratios, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist.

The third consideration is from the administrative the role-set, particularly through the number of supervisors to whom instructional coaches report. With increased numbers of supervisors, not only are there more opportunities for role mediation due to the boundary-spanning role of instructional coaches, but there may be too much guidance that could lead to overload (Kahn et al., 1964), guidance that could also influence role conflict and role ambiguity. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6: In schools with higher principal to instructional coach ratios, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist.

Finally, the gender of the instructional coach is considered because of the relational nature of the instructional coaching role. Instructional coaching relies partly on quality relationships, relationships that depend on collaboration rather than directive action (Knight, 2007). Women are associated with “democratic leadership” while men are associated with “autocratic leadership” (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau, and Johnson, 1992). Consequently, I posit that women will experience increased job satisfaction compared to their male counterparts because they will have the relationship skills that are closer to those needed in

collaborative instructional coaching relationships. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7: Women will have lower negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction when compared to men.

Chapter 3

Research Method

Research Question and Study Design

This dissertation explores the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction among instructional coaches. In so doing, this dissertation does not seek to redefine role stress or job satisfaction; rather, this dissertation, as an extension of knowledge, seeks to apply those well-studied constructs to an emergent professional field of increasing implementation: instructional coaching.

To provide further insight into these relationships, this dissertation employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data are derived from a questionnaire measuring role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload in instructional coaching positions; the role stress data was then correlated to job satisfaction measures gathered through the same instrument. These correlations served as the gateway into the deeper exploration of coaching situations, providing areas upon which qualitative methods were focused. To personify the quantitative data and identify potential relationships, qualitative data was collected through structured interviews with instructional coaches. The qualitative data was then used to explain what the quantitative correlations looked like in an instructional coach job setting.

Sampling and Participants

Quantitative methods. A convenience sampling method was used in this study for the following reasons. First, I experienced difficulty in gaining access to

lists of employed instructional coaches upon contacting several large school districts in order to conduct random sampling. Random sampling would have been ideal given the potentially significant numbers of instructional coaches to participate in the research. Second, by focusing on local school districts, the number of districts needing to provide the employee information necessary to reach a large number of coaches would have increased significantly, likely with the same concerns of the larger school districts. Third, an opportunity arose to access a group of instructional coaches and I decided to take advantage of that opportunity to see what additional insight could be gleaned.

In order to recruit instructional coaches, I attended two instructional coaching conferences hosted by a major Great Plains university in January 2013. During the recruiting process, I discussed the nature of the research, presented as instructional coaching roles within schools (not as role stress and job satisfaction) to avoid bias in recruiting. In addition, participants were given informational pamphlets with links to the online survey and encouraged to distribute the informational pamphlets to their instructional coaching colleagues. Upon invitation from the conference facilitator, I also posted Internet links to the electronic survey instrument on the conference social networking websites.

In order to participate in the research, participants had to be practicing instructional coaches, working in a public school setting, collaborating with teachers and administrators to achieve professional development goals; participants had to confirm this fact during the survey completion. Of the instructional coaches presented in this sample ($n=46$), 44 were female and 2 were male. On average, in

the schools where instructional coaches worked, instructional coaches were responsible for working with about 37 teachers ($M=37.18$, $SD=28.62$) and about 2 administrators ($M=1.65$, $SD=1.63$). The instructional coaches were employed in a range of socioeconomic working conditions, as determined through free and reduced lunch percentages ($M=49.37$, $SD=27.95$).

Due to the lack of gender statistics for instructional coaches, and the teacher leadership nature of instructional coaching, I compared the present sample to the general teaching population. Based on Institute of Education Sciences (2012) data from 2008, females represented 76% of the teaching force while males comprised 24%; in this sample, 95% of teachers reported female with 5% male. Data to compare the instructional coach to teacher or instructional coach to administrator ratios is unavailable, and comparisons to administrator to teacher or teacher student ratios seem unreasonable given that (1) instructional coaches serve as teacher leaders, not administrators and (2) adult and child learners have disparate needs and resulting approaches.

In general, the use of convenience sampling does not allow for generalizations to a broader population. However, that does not mean that the quantitative research is without purpose or meaning, as it provided the gateway to specific instructional coaching experiences explored further using qualitative methods.

Qualitative methods. In order to provide specificity to the general, but non-generalizable, quantitative data gathered through convenience sampling, a basic

interpretive study, utilizing interviews with instructional coaches within the quantitative sample, was conducted.

In order to provide the most informative examples of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload instructional coaches may experience, as well as examples of the most likely scenarios under which instructional coach job satisfaction can flourish, interviews were conducted based on extreme case sampling using the initial quantitative survey. With identifiable participant information removed, composite satisfaction scores, based on the constituent components of supervision, growth, social, and general satisfaction, were compiled for each instructional coach; each component possessed equal weight, and means were generated. These composite scores were then ranked, and five highest and five lowest satisfaction composite scores were selected. Each resulting participant within both the highly satisfied and poorly satisfied coaching group was contacted, and three participants from each group agreed to participate in structured interviews ($n = 6$). A list of participant descriptive characteristics can be found in Table 1 with listings of high and low job satisfaction groupings in Tables 2 and 3.

Insert Table 1 about here

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

Data Collection

Quantitative methods. Data was collected using an Internet-based electronic survey instrument. Participants confirmed their willingness to participate twice: at the beginning of the survey by agreeing to an informed consent statement (Appendix D) and at the end of the electronic survey by confirming their desire to submit responses. Responses to the survey itself were anonymous, unless the participants chose to provide their name and contact information in the event that follow up questioning was necessary. A pilot survey was given to a local group of instructional coaches in January 2013 ($n=6$) to ensure the survey was presented in an easily navigable manner. Only minor changes were made to the survey layout, to correct typographical errors, and to eliminate a repetitive survey item. This survey then became available to the research group for a four-week period from mid-January to mid-February 2013.

Qualitative methods. Interview participants provided oral consent to Human Subjects protocols as presented in Appendix D. The interview protocol used is presented in Appendix B and includes advisor-approved questions based upon satisfaction categories provided through Hackman and Oldham's (1974) *Job Diagnostic Survey* and demographic questions necessary to provide quality background information. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Quantitative Measures

Role stressors. To address Hypothesis 1, questions regarding role conflict were derived from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman's (1970) research. Eight questions (α

= .702) were present and asked participants to select from a seven-item Likert scale ranging from very false to very true. Sample questions included “I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment,” “I receive incompatible requests from two or more people,” and “I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.”

To address Hypothesis 2, questions regarding role ambiguity were derived from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman’s (1970) research. Seven questions ($\alpha = 0.910$) were present and asked participants to select from a seven-item Likert scale ranging from very false to very true. Sample questions included “I feel certain about how much authority I have,” “Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job,” and “Explanation is clear of what has to be done.”

To address Hypothesis 3, questions regarding role overload were derived from Beehr, Walsh, and Taber (1976). Three questions ($\alpha = .702$) were present and asked participants to select from a seven-item Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample questions included “I am given enough time to do what is expected of me on my job,” “It often seems like I have too much work for one person to do,” and “The performance standards on my job are too high.”

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction measures, used to correlate to role stressors in Hypotheses 1-3, were derived from the “Short Form” of the *Job Diagnostic Survey* (JDS) (Hackman and Oldham, 1974) and measured job satisfaction in four areas: supervisory (3 items, $\alpha = .944$), growth (4 items, $\alpha = .704$), social (3 items, $\alpha = .944$), and general satisfaction (5 items, $\alpha = .662$). Various seven-point Likert scales were present and changed dependent upon statements or questions

presented. Sample questions included “To what extent do managers and co-workers let you know how well you are doing on your job?”, “The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills,” and “A sense of worthwhile accomplishment in my work.”

Control measures. In order to account for potential outside influences on instructional coach job satisfaction, four control measures were surveyed. To address Hypothesis 4, socioeconomic status was defined as a percentage of free and reduced lunch, a consistent federal metric, as provided by the most recent data available, all for the 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 school years, through state departments of education. For instructional coaches working at a single school site, the percentage of free and reduced lunch for the school level was used. For instructional coaches employed at multiple school sites, the district percentage of free and reduced lunch was used. To address Hypothesis 5, the ratio of teachers-per-instructional coach was collected through a questionnaire item asking for the number of teachers the instructional coach is responsible for working with. To address Hypothesis 6, the ratio of principals-per-instructional coach collected through a questionnaire item asking for the number of principals the instructional coach works with. To address Hypothesis 7, respondents were asked to identify their gender as female or male on a questionnaire item.

Suggested improvements. To gain insight into potential follow-up interview questions and provide participants an opportunity to provide follow-up information, one questionnaire item seeking suggestions for job improvements was

asked. Participants were asked “What advice would you give policy makers, administrators, and researchers that would help them make your job easier?”

Other Questions. General demographic questions were asked of participants, including those seeking contact information and work location. Participants were also asked if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

A complete list of quantitative questionnaire items is available in Appendix A.

Qualitative Measures

Interviews commenced by asking participants to describe their instructional coaching job situation. Then, a series of questions regarding supervision satisfaction, social satisfaction, growth satisfaction, and general satisfaction, 13 in total and based on Hackman and Oldham’s (1970) *Job Diagnostic Survey*, were asked of participants. An open-ended response opportunity inviting participants to provide any additional information was provided following the structured interview. At the end of the interview, participants provided demographic information necessary to tell a complete story of each case. A complete overview of the interview protocol is provided in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Sample analysis. To answer the research question, correlations between the role stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) and job satisfaction categories (supervisory, growth, social, and general) were to be established. Data was received from 74 respondents. For each participant, responses were analyzed to ensure data was present for all questionnaire items

except participant name and email, completion of which were based on a willingness to participate in follow-up research. During this analysis, it was noted that within responses where the questionnaire was incomplete, missing responses were in the second half. Because of this trend, and the potential bias such a pattern could introduce into the data analysis, these data were subject to listwise elimination. Using the remaining cases, participant-provided data was used with the exception of free-and-reduced-lunch-percentages, as participants were inconsistent with how free-and-reduced-lunch percentages were reported when assigned to multiple schools. While free-and-reduced-lunch information was readily available for the majority of participants in the sample, free-and-reduced-lunch information was neither reported by respondents nor accessible through accessible state databases for 12 respondents. To maintain consistency within the data, the responses with unavailable free-and-reduced-lunch data were subject to listwise elimination. Because of the already small sample size, a lack of significant outliers as viewed on scatterplots, and a lack of normality within the data as indicated by a Shapiro-Wilks test ($p < .05$), no outliers were removed from the sample, resulting in $n = 46$.

Role stressors and job satisfaction. Analyses were conducted on the questionnaire items. Because of a small sample size ($n = 46$), exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were inappropriate. Chronbach's alpha analyses revealed acceptable reliability for role conflict ($\alpha = .702$) and role ambiguity ($\alpha = .910$) questionnaire items and low reliability for role overload ($\alpha = .572$) questionnaire items. The reported reliabilities of the role conflict, role ambiguity,

and role overload questionnaire items were reasonable when compared to those reported by the original questionnaires' authors (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970; Beehr, Walsh, and Taber, 1976). Chronbach's alpha analyses revealed acceptable reliability for supervision satisfaction ($\alpha = .944$) and growth satisfaction ($\alpha = .704$) and questionable reliability for general satisfaction ($\alpha = .662$) and social satisfaction ($\alpha = .657$). The reported reliabilities of the job satisfaction subcategory questionnaire items were reasonable when compared to those reported by the original questionnaire's authors (Hackman and Oldham, 1974).

Role conflict responses from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), being framed as negative statements, were preserved as is. The role conflict responses were then summed. Role ambiguity responses from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), being framed as positive statements, underwent reverse coding to transform them into negatively framed data. This was completed to ensure accurate, clean comparisons with role conflict and role overload responses, as both sets of responses were framed as negative statements. The role ambiguity responses were then summed. Two role overload items from Beehr, Walsh, and Taber (1976), being framed as negative statements, were preserved as is; responses from one positively-framed statement were underwent reverse coding to be transformed into negatively-framed data. The role overload responses were then summed.

Items from the *Job Diagnostic Survey* (Hackman and Oldham, 1974) were scored according to the directions provided in the survey instrument, and those

scores were reported in their respective categories of supervisory, growth, social, and general satisfaction.

Confounding variables. Socioeconomic status was defined as a percentage of free and reduced lunch as provided by the most recent data available (as of March 2013), through state departments of education. For instructional coaches working at one school, the percentage of free and reduced lunch for the school level was used. For instructional coaches working in multiple schools, the district percentage of free and reduced lunch was used. The ratio of teachers-per-instructional coach was determined by dividing the number of teachers the instructional coach works with by the number of full-time equivalent instructional coaches that work in the school or schools to which the instructional coach is assigned as reported in the survey data. The ratio of principals-per-instructional coach was determined by dividing the number of principals the instructional coach works with by the number of full-time equivalent instructional coaches that work in the school or schools to which the instructional coach is assigned, reported in the survey data. Gender was defined in biological terms, female or male, as reported in the survey data.

Bivariate analysis of quantitative data. Pearson's correlation, while considered, was not selected due to non-normal data as assessed by a Shapiro-Wilks test ($p < .05$). Instead, Spearman's rank-order correlations were conducted to assess the relationships between role stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) and job satisfaction categories (supervisory, growth, social, and general) in instructional coach job situations.

Sample sizes, means, and standard deviations pertaining to the variables are presented in Table 4. Visual examinations of the scatterplots suggested both linear and monotonic relationships for role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, socioeconomic status, teacher to instructional coach ratio, and principal to instructional coach ratio when compared to the job satisfaction measures (social, supervision, growth, and general). Spearman's rank-order correlations were conducted to address the research questions, as linearity within the data allowed the use of nonparametric analyses. To address potential confounding variables, Spearman rank-order partial correlations were then conducted controlling for both individual confounding variables and the three confounding variables combined.

Qualitative analysis. Upon completion of the transcriptions, each interview was analyzed. During the analysis, participant statements were coded based on Hackman and Oldham's (1974) satisfaction categories, Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman's (1970) role conflict and role ambiguity attributes, and Behr, Walsh, and Taber's (1976) role overload attributes, using codes created by summarizing questions from the quantitative survey. The researcher, using the using TAMS Analyzer software package, coded each transcript. As a result of the coding, reports of participant quotations were compiled. From there, the quotations were analyzed to identify common themes present not only within specific interviews, but also across interviews. This data was then used to explain the bivariate analyses and enhance the meaning of the quantitative data.

Trustworthiness

This research sought to be as trustworthy as possible by unifying the advantages of quantitative and qualitative research while grounded in a consistent, established theoretical framework. By utilizing quantitative measures based on established instruments, this research applied existing tools to an untested area of study: instructional coach job satisfaction. When analyzing survey instrument items, construct validity was comparable to that realized in previous research. Using quantitative data as a gateway to relationships to be further explored, qualitative research provided additional depth to the bivariate relationships. Structured interviews, grounded in the theoretical framework, allowed for the use of thick description of participant experiences, providing voice to statistical calculations. These voices expressed themselves through the extensive use of participant quotations, quotations archived through audio-recorded and transcribed interviews and minimally modified to eliminate distracting interjections (e.g. *um*, *uh*). This research relied on the symbiotic relationship between quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide relevant and responsible insight into instructional coaching job satisfaction.

Furthermore, I believe as though I am uniquely able to provide insight into instructional coaching job satisfaction, as I have worked as an instructional coach. In my instructional coaching position, I worked in a variety of settings and partaking in a variety of experiences—both positive and negative—and in doing so, have spent much time contemplating potential influences on my own job experiences. Considering my closeness to the subject, I worked to be as objective as possible to

avoid bias in conducting this study. By using my experiences to guide the conceptual framework and identify relevant relationship, while concurrently comparing and contrasting the quantitative and qualitative data, I believe I have balanced personal experience and objectivity in a reasonable and responsible manner.

Limitations

While every attempt is made at making this research trustworthy, trustworthiness is determined, in part, on the limitations of this research. Because this research was conducted using a convenience sample, it is unclear if the results are generalizable to the broader population of instructional coaches. To enhance the convenience sample concerns, the relatively small sample size ($n = 46$) prevented the use of more robust statistical analyses and is potentially masking the statistical significance of the smaller correlations.

Carefully considered and theoretically grounded control measures were included, though this research would likely have benefited from additional control measures, particularly the inclusion of gender—a control unable to be accounted for in this research. In spite of limited control measures, this research demonstrates correlations between role stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) and job satisfaction categories (supervisory, social, growth, and general), when accounting for the existing, meaningful controls, and it does so in a statically significant manner

A final limitation is in the mixed reliability of the questionnaire items. While role conflict and role ambiguity questionnaire items demonstrated acceptable

reliability, role overload demonstrated poor reliability. In addition, supervision satisfaction and growth satisfaction items demonstrated acceptable reliability, while social and general satisfaction items demonstrated questionable reliability. In spite of the mixed reliabilities of these tools, it was deemed important to test the theoretical framework utilizing existing, established measures, testing that resulted in data supportive of those constructs. However, this research could benefit from more reliable measurement instruments.

Where limitations upon this research exist, it is up to the reader to determine the usefulness of this research. At a minimum, this research can serve as a catalyst for instructional coaching program reflection and discourse.

Chapter 4

Results

To address the quantitative research questions, Spearman rank-order correlations and Spearman rank-order partial correlations were conducted using the SPSS statistical software package. Statistical calculations were based on the responses of instructional coaches to role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, job satisfaction, and worksite characteristic questionnaire items. An initial Spearman rank-order correlation was conducted to identify relationships among all of the research variables. Spearman rank-order partial correlations were then conducted using potential confounding variables to determine the strengths of the relationships of the research variables. Elaboration upon the findings of the quantitative research was the role of the qualitative research, providing job-based examples, through the use of structured interviews, that provided clarity and personified the quantitative data.

Quantitative Results

The initial Spearman rank-order correlation was conducted to determine potential relationships that existed among all of the research variables, and as such, does not control for confounding variables. As a result, this initial correlation provided criterion data to highlight differences with the control-based partial correlations. The baseline correlation indicated that there was a strong, negative correlation between role conflict and supervision satisfaction ($r_s = -.618, p < .005$) and a moderate, negative correlation between role conflict and growth satisfaction ($r_s = -.408, p < .01$). There were no statistically significant relationships between

role conflict and other job satisfaction measures or confounding variables. Role ambiguity was strongly, negatively correlated to supervision satisfaction ($r_s = -.701, p < .005$) and moderately, negatively correlated to social satisfaction ($r_s = -.336, p < .05$), growth satisfaction ($r_s = -.385, p < .01$), and general satisfaction ($r_s = -.417, p < .005$). There were no statistically significant relationships between role ambiguity and any of the confounding variables. There were no statistically significant relationships between role overload and any job satisfaction or confounding variables. The results of the initial correlation are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Spearman rank-order partial correlations were conducted to address each of the research hypotheses. It is within these partial correlations that the quantitative research conclusions are based, and they are discussed within the context of each research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Role conflict will be moderately, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the three control variables of socioeconomic status, teacher-to-instructional coach ratio, and principal to instructional coach ratio (Table 5). As a result, there was a strong, negative correlation between role conflict and supervision satisfaction ($r_s = -.618, p < .005$) and a moderate, negative correlation between role conflict and growth satisfaction ($r_s = -.408, p < .01$). There were no statistically significant relationships between role conflict and other job satisfaction measures. There were no

statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Because the relationship was stronger than anticipated, but still negative, the null hypothesis can be rejected for supervision and growth satisfaction but not growth or general satisfaction.

Insert Table 5 about here

Hypothesis 2: Role ambiguity will be strongly, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the three control variables of socioeconomic status, teacher to instructional coach ratio, and principal to instructional coach ratio (Table 5). Role ambiguity was strongly, negatively correlated to supervision satisfaction ($r_s = -.701, p < .005$) and moderately, negatively correlated to growth satisfaction ($r_s = -.385, p < .10$), and general satisfaction ($r_s = -.417, p < .005$). There were no other statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Overall, the relationships were significant, allowing the null hypothesis to be rejected for supervision, growth, and general satisfaction but not social satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Role overload will be moderately, negatively correlated with instructional coach job satisfaction. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the three control variables of socioeconomic status, teacher to instructional coach ratio, and

principal to instructional coach ratio (Table 5). There were no statistically significant relationships between role conflict and supervision, social, growth, or general satisfaction. There were no statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Because there were no statistically significant relationships between role overload and job satisfaction measures, the null hypothesis is unable to be rejected.

Hypothesis 4: In schools with lower socioeconomic status, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the control variable of socioeconomic status (Table 6). There were no statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is unable to be rejected.

Insert Table 6 about here

Hypothesis 5: In schools with higher teacher-to-instructional coach ratios, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the control variable of teacher-to-instructional coach ratio (Table 7). There were no statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job

satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is unable to be rejected.

Insert Table 7 about here

Hypothesis 6: In schools with higher principal-to-instructional coach ratios, stronger negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction will exist. To address this research hypothesis, a Spearman rank-order partial correlation was conducted that controlled for the control variable of principal-to-instructional coach ratio (Table 8). There were no statistically significant differences between the role stressor and job satisfaction correlations found in this partial correlation as compared to the initial correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was unable to be rejected.

Hypothesis 7: Women will have lower negative correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and job satisfaction when compared to men. Because the sample is heavily skewed toward women in a manner inconsistent with the general population, this hypothesis was not tested because of perceived bias in the data.

Insert Table 8 about here

Qualitative Results

The structured interviews focused on supervision, social, growth, and general satisfaction and asked participants to describe their instructional coaching experiences through questions based on attributes of each satisfaction subcategory.

Resulting from these interviews were two findings: the linking together of role conflict and role ambiguity in instructional coaching experiences and the role overload's lack of contribution to instructional coaching job satisfaction.

Role conflict and role ambiguity play a unified role in contributing to instructional coach job satisfaction. Throughout the interviews of both satisfied and dissatisfied instructional coaches, a relationship emerged between role conflict and role ambiguity, a finding not surprising given the strong, positive correlation between role conflict and role ambiguity ($r_s = .702, p < .005$). In every instructional coaching situation, administrators played key roles in the job satisfaction levels of the instructional coaches, an expected finding given the strong, negative relationships between supervision satisfaction and role conflict ($r_s = -.618, p < .005$) and supervision satisfaction and role ambiguity ($r_s = -.701, p < .005$).

In high-satisfaction instructional coaching scenarios, administrators possessed a thorough understanding of instructional coaching roles, providing specific knowledge of instructional coaching that moderates role ambiguity. Presumably using this knowledge of instructional coaching roles, administrators developed visions of instructional coaching with which the instructional coach could operate, maintaining administrator-instructional coach communication through continuous support and guidance. By providing this guidance, administrators provided specificity to the instructional coaching roles that moderated role conflict. Based on this vision of instructional coaching, administrators provided instructional coaching role definition, delineated the instructional coaching roles, and communicated those roles clearly through discussions or institutionalized coaching

structures. By providing a publicized framework within which instructional coaches operate, administrators provided an understanding to both the teaching and administrative role-sets of how they are to interact with boundary-spanning instructional coaches, moderating role conflict by reducing the ambiguity associated with the instructional coaching roles. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Dissatisfaction in instructional coaching job roles occurred when various attributes of the proposed model were violated. In each of the three low-satisfaction interviews, participants indicated that their administrators had minimal or unclear knowledge of instructional roles, making it difficult for their administrators to clearly articulate a vision of instructional coaching. In two of the cases, this perceived lack of administrative knowledge translated into an unclear vision of instructional coaching, contributing to confusion of how instructional coaching should function; in one case, this knowledge was perceived by the instructional coach to be a violation of instructional coaching job roles. With an unclear vision guiding role definition, instructional coach-administrator collaboration to specify instructional coaching roles became problematic, entrenching rather than moderating a lack of clarity. This lack of clarity contributed to eventual conflicting roles among all three dissatisfied instructional coaches. Even when some clarity of instructional coaching roles exist, failure of administrators to communicate and ensure an understanding of instructional coaching roles to teachers, while also adhering to those same understandings, provides increased opportunities for role

conflict and role ambiguity to influence job satisfaction. Each of the three instructional coaches experienced situations in which they experienced role conflict with the teaching and administrative role-sets because of a perceived failure of administrators to adequately communicate their coaching roles and adhere to the same.

Role overload, within the context of this study, contributed little to instructional coach job satisfaction. Within both the high and low satisfaction instructional coaching groups, role overload played a minimal role, a finding not surprising given the lack statistically significant correlations between role overload and the four job satisfaction measures. All of the interviewed instructional coaches were busily engaged in their jobs, a pace of life that few complained about. Even in the few situations where instructional coaches wished they had more time, most understood the needs of the job and considered the hectic nature as normal, while being able to effectively balance the needs of their jobs. There was, however, one case that involved role overload deemed detrimental to her instructional coaching role. However, this scenario is unique in that her job was structured as two separate and philosophically opposable roles. While this coach's job experience unlikely typified dissatisfied instructional coaching experiences, it did provide insight into challenges schools face in providing teachers instructional coaching support.

Summary of Results

In exploring the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction, this mixed

methods research found that, when controlling for socioeconomic status, teacher-to-instructional coach ratio, and principal-to-instructional coach ratio, that statistically significant, negative relationships to certain job satisfaction subcategories existed for role conflict and role ambiguity.

Upon examining specific instructional coaching job situations, these relationships could be explained, in part, by (1) knowledge of instructional coaching used by the administrator to develop a workable vision of the instructional coaching program; (2) instructional coach-administrator collaboration that provides specific, actionable processes to instructional coaching roles; (3) administrative publication of these role definitions to teaching role-set and enforcement of the same; and (4) ongoing instructional coach growth and support opportunities. As a result, instructional coaches were able to efficiently perform mediation processes associated with the boundary-spanning nature of their positions through role definition and role clarity.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction among instructional coaches. These instructional coaches serve as boundary spanners, connecting the teaching and administrative role-sets within their schools, and, in these roles, become vulnerable to role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload. By exploring role stressors' relationships to job satisfaction, this research identifies and examines organizational situations that strengthen or weaken the boundary-spanning role vital to the maintenance of instructional coaches' legitimacy within their schools. This research found that role conflict and role ambiguity are negatively associated to some job satisfaction subcategories, relationships explained, in part, through principal and instructional coach behaviors that clarify and communicate instructional coaching roles. To illustrate these relationships, this discussion is grounded in the job experience attributes of highly satisfied instructional coaches (Figure 1).

Role Stressors and Job Satisfaction

Boundary spanners connect major role sets within their organizations, and, as such, become vulnerable to role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload. In the face of these potentially conflicting demands on their time, resources, and connections, boundary spanners must be stable links between the various constituencies within their organizations. Instructional coaches, in their emerging

roles as teacher leaders and professional developers, mentors, and junior administrators, are no strangers to the same role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload that other boundary spanners face. This study found that some job satisfaction subcategories were negatively correlated with both role conflict and role ambiguity. These findings are similar to those discussed in Singh's (1998) research.

Where these role stressors' influences were most pronounced was in supervision satisfaction. Considering the inconsistent definitions of instructional coaching roles, and their varying interpretations by different supervisors, it is logical role ambiguity was strongly, negatively correlated to supervision satisfaction in this study. Recall Singh's (1998) definition of role ambiguity, summarized as involving unclear expectations of how an organizational member should perform a role adequately based on role-set member expectations. Instructional coaches experience high levels of autonomy in their professional practice; while their positions revolve around professional development, implementation approaches vary across schools, departments, and classrooms. Various levels of knowledge of and experience with instructional coaching, combined with school-level influences, provide ripe conditions for inconsistent instructional coaching role definitions; where unclear definitions of roles exist between role-set members, broader ambiguity exists (Singh, 1998). In highly ambiguous situations, it is no surprise that instructional coaches are unsure of the most reliable paths to goal completion, even if the goals are clearly stated. Recall Churchill, Ford, and Walker's (1976) positive correlation between close supervision of tasks and overall job satisfaction; they

posit that salesperson roles were too ambiguous and that salespersons desired more direction. Where instructional coaches are concerned, such guidance will moderate role ambiguity, and teacher leadership research suggests that reducing role ambiguity facilitates quality teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Based on this study, it appears that even though the definition of instructional coaching is not settled, specificity of roles would improve instructional coaches' satisfaction with supervision, both because expectations regarding required tasks are clearer and because such clarity helps to maintain relationships with the teaching and administrative role-sets—clarity that must come from the supervising administrator. This is particularly important because instructional coaching success relies upon collaborative relationships between instructional coaches and administrators, people who are likely to serve both as primary supervisors and professional development collaborators. For instructional coaches, such specificity is presented through clear delineation of administrator roles, teacher roles, and instructional coach roles—through job descriptions, evaluation criteria, and continuous education—with administrative enforcement of those roles as necessary. The biggest struggle in defining these boundaries will be in maintaining freedom within form. By providing too much specificity to this role, administrators are in danger tying the instructional coach's hands together; where less feedback is given—a possibility when working with autonomous instructional coaches—too much regulation can increase role stress (Singh, 1998). Conversely, Singh argues, too much autonomy in a highly ambiguous environment will also increase role stress. Within reason such strategies would provide clarity of roles for

the instructional coaches and allow bounded autonomy within those roles, improving supervision satisfaction. To this end, including the instructional coaches in this definition process is vital to considering instructional coaching needs within the framework of evolving common goals and the actionable steps necessary to attain them.

Where the balance between ambiguity and specificity is not maintained, instructional coaches are left with few clear guidelines defining how the coach should bridge the administrative and teaching role sets; where they do exist, they are subject to the fluid changes associated with unclear roles. As such, the instructional coach is placed in a position where he or she is unable to develop proficiency in sorting the relevant and irrelevant tasks submitted to him or her and mediate the resulting conflicts; it is difficult to develop proficiency when the rules are continuously changing. This inability to filter and communicate could have particularly damaging effects on instructional coaching programs by not only forcing role-set mediation processes but also reduces feelings of job security. In Sverke, Hallgren, & Näswall's (2002) study of job insecurity, the most negative correlation with job security is that of trust; this is also potentially the most damaging for an instructional coach (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Strong instructional coaching programs are built on continuous collaboration between the instructional coach, teachers, and administrators. When trust suffers, so too does the ability of the instructional coach to further meaningful collaboration and participation between and within the role-sets, excluding teaching or administrative role-sets and destroying the boundary-spanning nature of instructional coaching.

Role conflict, defined by Singh (1998) as the incompatible expectations of multiple role set members, in this study, is also negatively correlated with the instructional coach's satisfaction with supervision. Returning to the boundary spanning nature of instructional coaches, recall that instructional coaches receive information, instructions, and direction from both the administrative and teaching role-sets—and must reconcile this information within their individual instructional coaching role-sets. For this information to emerge and enter the system, it would have to survive the mediation processes within the instructional coaching role-set to which the information would be subjected (Merton, 1957). As such, the expectations that administrators and teachers have for instructional coaches should be harmonious with those instructional coaches have for coaching programs. As was the case with role ambiguity, this means that expectations of instructional coaching roles must be clear and clearly articulated to all stakeholders. However, with role conflict, such clarity of expectations focuses not on the relationships between the instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators, but rather ensures that the role-associated norms are not violated.

Support comes in many forms, social support among them; in this study, instructional coaches' social satisfaction had no significantly significant correlations with either both role conflict and role ambiguity, though the qualitative results provide contradictory insight. Perhaps this is because social collaboration is key to any successful boundary spanning role, including that of the instructional coach, as mediation between boundary spanning role sets—namely administrators and teachers—is a continuous process. For this information to flow continuously and

inter-role conflicts to be resolved, instructional coaches must have a strong social pulse and ability to access all levels of the organization. Yet, high levels of role conflict are negatively correlated with social support from coworkers (Acker 2004), making this a more difficult feat given stressful working conditions when the support of colleagues wanes. Include the conflicting demands from groups of teachers, and this concern becomes cyclical. In addition, recall that as boundary spanners with an independent role set, instructional coaches are neither fully teachers nor fully administrators. Sometimes, these unclear social relationships can provide for tenuous instructional coach-colleague relationships.

Even when teachers value instructional coaching job roles, some instructional coaches are viewed as teacher evaluators and assistant administrators, a source of frustration for many. Defining—and clearly communicating—instructional coaching roles can improve the instructional coach-teacher relationship, reducing tensions between instructional coaches and teachers while reinforcing the peer nature of instructional coaching, yielding purposeful, thoughtful collaboration. Educational leaders should minimize systemic role conflict to avoid contributing to the varying levels of conflict that instructional coaches will inevitably face when conducting boundary-spanning roles. Administrators can reduce role stress by establishing and communicating clear expectations of the relationship between teacher leadership roles—in this case, instructional coaches—and the teaching staff. In addition, by providing a structure where teacher leaders collaborate with teachers as opposed to managing them, a positive instructional coaching environment will mature (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

In order for the instructional coach, as a boundary spanner, to continuously feed the professional development system with new strategies and research, it is important that they remain on a continuous diet of professional growth. However, growth satisfaction, in this study, is negatively correlated with role conflict and role ambiguity, and growth satisfaction is key to further self-development. Through professional growth, instructional coaches gain access to new instructional strategies, the latest technology trends, and other insightful research that informs their professional practice. As boundary spanners, instructional coaches must be able to disseminate gained knowledge (e.g. strategies, research, and resources) among the various role sets. In Acker's (2004) study of health care professionals, a positive correlation between job satisfaction and opportunities for professional development emerged and increased professional opportunities was negatively correlated with desire to leave. While this study researched health care professionals, it stands to reason that professionals who are interested in their jobs and their professional growth, while believing that their employer is interested in their continuous development, will continue their professional growth. However, if instructional coaches are not motivated to grow, it affects more than the instructional coach's professional development. Rather, when the person charged with a school's professional development, no longer is invested in professional growth, the flow of new ideas into the professional development system will ebb to a trickle, weakening the bridge between the administrative and teacher role sets.

How role overload informs this research is less clear, as there were no statistically significant correlations between role overload and any of the job

satisfaction measures in this research. I will, however, offer two postulations regarding role overload among instructional coaches. First, some instructional coaches seek out this role in order to take on leadership responsibilities, being aware of the increased workload, and willing to take on new challenges. Others take such involvement a step further and use instructional coaching as a means of career advancement, potentially to the detriment of their teacher leadership role (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In both of these situations lies a common denominator: the motivation to get ahead and the drive that comes with such motivation. In addition, Karasek (1979) found that high levels of work demands, when combined with high levels of decision making authority, do not necessarily create job stress—to a point. My second postulation is job security. When there is a significant amount of work to be done, work that cannot be completed in a single day, one becomes overwhelmed. At a time where resources are limited for many schools, perhaps a sense of purpose makes it more difficult to eliminate a position.

Patterns of Experiences Among Highly Satisfied Instructional Coaches

To understand the dynamic associated with instructional coaching job satisfaction, consider the pattern of experiences exhibited by those instructional coaches with high job satisfaction. This pattern consists of four parts: (1) knowledge of instructional coaching used by the administrator to develop a workable vision of the instructional coaching program; (2) instructional coach-administrator collaboration that provides specific, actionable processes to instructional coaching roles; (3) administrative publication of these role definitions to teaching role-set and enforcement of the same; and (4) ongoing instructional

coach growth and support opportunities. As a result, instructional coaches were able to efficiently perform mediation processes associated with the boundary-spanning nature of their positions through role definition and role clarity. Through this pattern of experiences, the theoretical conceptualizations are transformed into areas upon which administrators should focus when implementing or evaluating instructional coaching programs.

Developing an Instructional Coaching Vision

Administrators, as leaders of schools, are responsible for the implementation of various programs and initiatives in schools and districts with which they are charged. In managing aspects of the student learning experience, quality administrators possess a thorough knowledge of the inputs and outputs influencing this experience. Particularly where administrators rely on instructional coaches to perform teacher leadership roles, it is important for administrators to have a firm knowledge of how these leadership roles will operate. Possessing knowledge of instructional coaching roles provides administrators occasions to reflect upon applications of those roles within their schools, identifying the benefits and challenges that accompany instructional coaching positions. Using this knowledge, administrators are able to craft visions of instructional coaching practices within the contexts of their schools.

Crafting visions based on previously amassed knowledge provides several benefits for instructional coach job satisfaction. Knowledge of instructional coaching allows administrators to proactively meet the needs of the teaching and administrative role-sets, identifying potential tensions between role-sets that can be

eliminated or moderated through role definition and role clarity. Applying this knowledge, administrators are equipped to devise interim definitions of the boundary-spanning interactions, providing themselves ambiguity-fighting role clarity while mapping their status within instructional coaching role-sets. Based on this interim definition, administrators are able to create profiles of employees who are able to operate autonomously within the instructional coaching role, profiles used to guide hiring decisions. By making effective hiring decisions, administrators select instructional coaches best able to achieve administrative visions, solidifying relationships and trust necessary for instructional coach effectiveness (Knight, 2007). In the process, instructional coaches can develop competency that establishes legitimacy in their boundary-spanning role (Thompson et al., 2009). In conclusion, when administrators create visions of instructional coaching, based upon firm, research-based knowledge of expected instructional coaching roles, role ambiguity is reduced through clarity of expectation, concurrently reducing role conflict by providing interim definitions of coaching responsibilities that guide collaborative creation of roles with their instructional coaches.

Experiences of satisfied instructional coaches. Administrators took a variety of approaches to drafting instructional coaching visions. In Cynthia's school district, the focus on professional improvement and continuous growth began at the top with the Pleasant View Board of Education and district administrators. The district administration cultivated a culture of continuous improvement through professional development. Instructional coaching played a key role in this

professional development, and this instructional coaching is available to all—
whether teachers believed they needed it or not:

Our district has an instructional coaching philosophy that everybody in our district can be coached to be better, so we don't necessarily follow the philosophy of waiting for people to ask us for help. We don't see asking for help as a weakness. We do get special requests from teachers and principals for certain things, but in our district, our philosophy is that everybody can improve, and we improve ourselves as coaches. And so we actually have allocated time we can meet with each team, setting goals and expectations for the teachers and their classroom modeling. We do a lot of prioritizing of district needs and teacher needs.

By having a strong district-level vision that established instructional coaching expectations as part of the district culture, opportunities for role conflict are reduced, as it is known by everyone that instructional coaching is not an invitational process.

Ginger's instructional coaching situation was based upon a strong administrative vision of instructional coaching originating from the building level. The administration of Ginger's school took a weakly-defined district job description and created a vision of coaching that deeply embedded her into classroom instruction through a cycle of coaching:

I am hands-on in the classroom with the teachers and the students...and the intention was for me to start doing [the instructional coaching] cycle with all four of the departments... But that has sort of grown into what I do now

through the needs that we had at our school based on what our principal and vice principal decided, especially for me to put my experience to use. The district office, beyond the job description, did not determine the decision about what her specific job looked like at her school, a situation that could have provided opportunities for role ambiguity and role conflict to enter Ginger's position. However, Ginger's principal, her evaluator, used a strong vision of instructional coaching moderated the lack of clarity the district provided.

Samantha's school appreciated the importance of collaboration, a vision that started with Samantha's supervisor, the assistant director of special education. The mantra that best describes the role of the instructional coaching team is "we're not here to fix the bad teachers, we're here to assist all the teachers," a mantra supported by the supervisor's team approach and attitude of "nobody's trying to go it alone." This spirit of collaboration is a foundational concept in instructional coaching (Knight, 2007); the practices inherent in Samantha's instructional coaching program were based upon this vision of collaboration. By providing this vision of collaboration, role conflict is moderated through the expectation of working through potential conflicts as equal partners.

Experiences of unsatisfied instructional coaches. In contrast, Nola's principal had a narrow vision of instructional coaching that accounted for only the classroom-based aspects of her role. However, in addition to Nola's classroom coaching roles, she was responsible for conducting research and planning to provide teachers with innovations and resources, tasks Nola believed were within the realm of her instructional coaching duties. Generally, she believed her principal's vision of

coaching was not aligned to actual coaching practices because he lacked an understanding of instructional coaching:

I feel that my principal has a misunderstanding of what my job really is. He thinks that coaching is spending all of my time within the classroom so he only considers the time that I'm coaching to be actually in the classroom and working. He doesn't understand the groundwork that goes into it—the research that I have to do to stay on top of the game, on top of what the newest things are in literacy, on top of the research-based practices, you know? So I feel like he doesn't have a very good understanding of what the role is.

The lack of administrative understanding of instructional coaching roles translated into a perceived lack of administrative vision, leading Nola to seek the vision through engagement following a role conflict scenario with her principal:

I apologized, was apologetic, and you know, kind of tried to have a conversation about 'what is your vision for me,' 'I want to make sure I fulfill what you would like me to be doing.' But I don't know that I always get clear answers. I try to do exactly what is asked of me, so I guess when sitting down and having a conversation...I don't feel like it's ever really clear what I am supposed to be doing all of the time.

By not having an understanding of instructional coaching roles, it becomes difficult to create a vision of quality instructional coaching, and nearly impossible to provide the specificity necessary to moderate the role conflict and role ambiguity inherent in the instructional coaching role.

Even where quality instructional coaching visions exist, they are subject to change. Rhonda's school was undergoing a leadership transition with the arrival of an inexperienced principal with less knowledge and guidance of instructional coaching roles. Consequently, the previous and current principals displayed different approaches to working an instructional coach, increasing opportunities for role ambiguity through inconsistent role expectations. The outgoing principal had prior experience working with instructional coaches, allowing for dialogue to occur that provided some clarity to the instructional coaching role-set that the current, inexperienced principal lacks:

My first principal here was an older principal, he was kind of at the end of his career. He had worked in previous districts with an instructional specialist or instructional coach or different terms—pretty much the same job. He sort of has a feeling for what the position was supposed to be. He also realized that the additional duties that our district has given us have really expanded upon that. And so, he and I worked closely to figure out some guidelines of things that might be in my lane and things that probably wouldn't be in my lane.

The outgoing principal's definition of instructional coaching was more encompassing of administrative duties, or at least provided Rhonda the perception of an instructional coach as a quasi administrator, a vision that stood in contrast to the current principal:

He had a very broad view, and he was of the opinion that even though I don't have administration credit for what I do, it is essentially an administrative

job. So, pretty much anything an assistant principal would do, I would do— with the exception of discipline and the teacher evaluations. So, he really called me in on quite a bit.

The change in administrative visions within the same instructional coaching role left Rhonda unclear of her role's boundaries. Rhonda was able to navigate the instructional coaching role through collaboration with her previous principal and based on his vision of what instructional coaching was to look like. This collaborative clarification of roles stood in contrast to Rhonda's experience with her current principal.

The incoming principal is a first year principal with no experience collaborating with an instructional coach prior leading Rhonda's school. As such, Rhonda feels as though the incoming principal's lack of experience has altered the school's instructional coaching vision:

Our recent principal this year is younger, this is his first principal job. He has not really worked with an instructional coach before, and so he doesn't really have a feel for it yet. So, he has tended to narrow my job a little bit, just until he feels a little more comfortable about what I can do and what I can't do. ...And that's not to say anything bad about my current principal, but he's finding his vision and his way, and I would expect my job would probably broaden back out again once he has his own vision of what he wants things to be here.

It can be argued, however, that such as narrowing has more to do with the new principal's philosophy rather than a lack of experience. Still, Rhonda experienced

increased supervision satisfaction “with the previous principal, just because he had a clear vision of what he wanted the school to look like, and how he wanted the program to be, and he trusted me.” The specific vision of instructional coaching presented by Rhonda’s previous principal likely resulted in less role ambiguity than what she is currently experiencing.

In Allison’s dual speech pathology and instructional coaching roles, she had a great amount of leeway to conduct her job. She viewed this leeway as an advantage due to the small size of her school district:

Our school is in a very small district, so we have one elementary school. We don’t have some of the problems that other districts have where everybody in the district has to be doing something the exact same way. I’ve been given pretty good leeway in creating my job and what that will entail rather than being told I have to fit a mold that 40 other people in other buildings are doing. So the administration has not really said ‘I have to do this this way.’ I have the ability to create the program that I see fit.

This particular arrangement may work well for Allison, as she had to balance her instructional coaching role with her speech pathology role. Another explanation for the latitude provided by the administration is the administration’s lack of knowledge of instructional coaching. When asked about clarity of administrative communications of the instructional coaching role, Allison’s response was

Not clear at all. I think that my administrator probably doesn’t understand a lot of what I do, but I have found that he does trust me. Between my recommendations and our conversations, I think he listens to what I’m telling

him and makes decisions based off of what I'm telling him. But I don't think he understands anything about what I do every day.

This lack of knowledge of the instructional coaching role provided increased opportunities for role ambiguity to occur, because the resulting lack of guidance allowed the position to develop on its own accord. While this flexibility has advantages, it is greatly dependent upon the instructional coach's abilities to work within an environment of little guidance.

The bottom line. By having a knowledge of instructional coaching, administrators can develop a vision of instructional coaching that provides a foundation for role clarity that mediates role conflict and role ambiguity. This acquired knowledge and developed vision becomes foundational to defining specific instructional coaching job roles.

Defining Specific Job Roles in Collaboration with the Instructional Coach

While an administrative vision of an instructional coaching program is a sound initial step, providing the knowledge base upon which administrators can draw to create actionable job roles, it is through defining of instructional coach job roles that provides the greatest opportunity to reduce role conflict and role ambiguity. By defining specific job roles, administrators and instructional coaches provide definition to the boundary spanning nature of the instructional coaching position, allowing for the efficient filtering and mediation processes necessary to balance role-set needs and introduce innovations (Aldrich and Herker, 1977). In providing specific instructional coaching role definitions that are appropriate to quality coaching, clarity of roles is provided that mediates the unclear expectations

about role performance (Singh, 1998) and provides specific “behavior requirements...which would serve to guide behavior” (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970) in the instructional coaching role. As long as these “behavior requirements” (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970) are compatible with role-set member expectations (Singh, 1998), points of tension between the instructional coach and the teaching and administrative role-sets with which they work can be minimized, reducing role conflict.

An important caveat is that such definition of job roles ideally occur between administrators and instructional coaches rather than be developed out of administrative fiat or instructional coach independence. Recall that instructional coaches are boundary spanners and that their role-set incorporates aspects of both administrative and teaching role-sets. While instructional coaches are not administrators, they perform feedback and professional development roles often associated with administrative roles—the difference being that instructional coaches provide instructional support while administrators provide instructional support *and* conduct evaluations and teacher discipline. If instructional coaches are to be expected to carry out the administrative visions of schools, while serving as semi-autonomous implementers of visions, then instructional coaches and administrators must operate in tandem. When these roles are developed in tandem, administrators and instructional coaches are able to strike a balance between too much and not enough role definition, the extremes of which both create negative scenarios (Singh, 1998). By weaving instructional coaches’ knowledge of classroom needs into administrative visions of instructional coaching programs, the

collaborative efforts to develop specific job roles provides clarity to the instructional coaching role necessary to enhance the instructional coach's ability to be an effective teacher leader (York-Barr, Duke, 2004).

Experiences of satisfied instructional coaches. The defined roles varied from school to school, but among satisfied instructional coaches, they existed as a result of instructional coach and administrative collaboration. Through various methods of role definition, grounded in the administrative vision, instructional coaches and administrators have enhanced views of how instructional coaching in action is expressed.

Based on the principal's vision of the instructional coaching program and how Ginger can best utilize her time to further the instructional goals of the teaching staff, Ginger met with English and math teachers on a structured, consistent schedule. In so doing, Ginger worked through a month-long cycle of planning, coaching, and reflection based on teacher, student, and building needs. These interactions were clearly defined by the administrators and fit Ginger's philosophy of coaching, defining roles for all involved. By so doing, opportunities for role conflict and role ambiguity are reduced because all involved are aware of the instructional coaching structure and goals, both of which are specific enough to eliminate unclear expectations of Ginger's role:

I work with them on a daily and weekly basis, and meet with the departments twice a week for their PLC time. During this time, we do lesson studies and we plan lessons together. We have a focus the following week; I do a coaching cycle with them where I am interacting as a coach with them.

And then, the third week, we debrief on the particular skill that we're all working on together. We debrief, we talk about it. We decide what we want to do next if it went well, if it didn't go well, if there was something that went well with some people and didn't go well for others, we discussed that. We process everything. We debrief. Then, the following week [fourth week], we do walk-throughs. So let's say we are focused on structured pair sharing. We look at how we can use pair sharing to engage our English-language learners in particular, but all students as well. But you can also use the structured pair sharing opportunities to engage in higher order questioning, and we plan our lessons according to that. We do the interactive coaching, we debrief, we do a walk-through with that particular skillset in mind.

This process was structured and consistent, and at the present, used with the English and math teachers. For next year, the intent was to implement this coaching cycle in the social studies and science departments while concurrently continuing its use in the English and math departments, though because of funding reductions, further implementation will not occur. By having a consistent cycle where Ginger is guaranteed access to collaboration and assistance opportunities, Ginger developed quality social interactions with her peers within role structures that ensure her relationships are clearly defined.

Cynthia's role definition was more collaborative and continuous in nature. Based upon the district's strong vision of coaching, Cynthia gained role definition through coaching-like experiences with her principal. Such discussion allowed for clarity of expectations and early identification of potential conflicts or unclear roles.

Through this coaching, Cynthia's principal helped her identify additional areas in which she could work with teachers while providing the principal a meaningful understanding of how the instructional coaching program was operating. In addition, discussions transpired regarding principal, teacher, and district level needs in order to continuously improve the instructional coaching program:

The principal will also ask us 'what is our next step. What is the next thing we are going to be doing with the teachers,' which really helps us because it kind of keeps us having a momentum with the teachers. It's not that they can check us off their list; I've had an instructional coach meeting, that's now fulfilled. That it's kind of the sustainable, ongoing process that everybody can be coached—everybody should be coached. We've had coaches in our district for such a nice length of time that it's part of our culture.

Based on these discussions, principals identified teacher needs and determined areas of focus for the instructional coach through observations and teacher discussions, focusing the instructional coach on specific coaching roles. By providing these coaching the coach experiences, focus on specific tasks was provided that clarified expectations of the instructional coach, expectations supported by the entrenched district culture of instructional coaching importance.

Samantha's role definition was more dependent upon her background as a special education teacher, as she serves as a special education coach in a newly created special education coaching position. Because of the program's newness, Samantha and her administrators relied heavily on collaboration to define her instructional coaching roles. In taking a collective approach, Samantha, as part of an

instructional coaching team, collaborated with the building administrators, “looking at the building goals and looking at what the administrators find important for the building and that they want to have happen.” In so doing, the administration was “very supportive” of the instructional coaching roles.

This collaborative approach continued between the instructional coach and the building principal, and they met frequently with various members of the special education team. In collaborating to determine common goals, needs, and approaches to situations, role ambiguity opportunities were reduced because common expectations were established:

I do try to keep very close contact with the principals who are in charge of the special education program. That being said, also touching base with the head principal because normally they will be assistant principals. ...We have weekly meetings where there is just a core group of special ed teachers and three special education agency staff, and we meet to go over student concerns, or some scheduling issues—just basic building-wide or specific student issues. And we also have monthly meetings with the special education department in both my buildings, and those I normally have some part in either giving some information, clarifying something, saying what’s coming up. So I’m a small role in each of those.

In meeting with the various special education department team members, Samantha not only participated, but also was provided a leadership role within the group. Through these continuous collaboration opportunities, Samantha was able to focus

on specific areas of need, tied to the administrator's vision of coaching, that allowed her to work autonomously to reach the building's instructional goals.

Experiences of dissatisfied instructional coaches. Working in situations where instructional coaching roles are poorly defined or inconsistent created confusion, increasing the difficulty of role-set mediation processes and resulting in tumultuous role implementation.

Rhonda, working in a school that has undergone a recent leadership change, worked to define her coaching role with her principal; recall that her principal did not have a fully developed vision of instructional coaching, as he had neither the background knowledge of coaching nor the experience of working with an instructional coach. While Rhonda accepted that her principal was working to understand her position, she exhibited frustration with the district's inability to define her coaching role in a manner consistent with her building roles. As a result, Rhonda often felt pulled between responsibilities delegated by the district-level supervisor and the building principal with whom she worked closely:

Our deputy superintendent is our curriculum director, and often she pulls the four of us out to do things that are on a district-wide scale, like the curriculum maps or whatever, sending us to conferences, to present information or gather information and bring it back to present to the entire district. And so there are times when we operate as the district team or department and there are other times when we are just our building CIS (curriculum integration specialist). And so the unspoken rule is our curriculum director basically trumps—our deputy superintendent trumps—

everyone else. So if she calls and says she needs us for something, she wins. And so that kind of puts us outside the chain of command in terms of sometimes she wants us to do things that conflict with what the building principal would like us to do or has asked us to do, the schedule that we're supposed to keep. And so we constantly feel like we're stuck between the two of them; 'okay, who wins today?'

In this particular situation, not only was Rhonda unable to ascertain to whom she is expected to report during ongoing projects, the resulting role conflict forced Rhonda to reprioritize ongoing tasks or initiatives at the building level. In so doing, she was unable to keep a consistent schedule or perform consistent duties—a situation that could be problematic when collaborating with teachers or conducting building-level projects on a reliable basis.

The frustration present resulting from Rhonda's instructional coaching role ambiguity is the "only" part of the job she dislikes:

The only part of my job I don't like is just the ambiguity. It's just not always a very clear picture of 'you need to do this' or 'you need to do a whole bunch of that by this time.' It is just, everyday, we are just trying to figure out where my lane is, what I am supposed to be doing today? What part of this needs to be accomplished by me and what part do I need to delegate and hone? It is that part that I don't like so well just because I don't have the authority to do it.

In Rhonda's case, inconsistent expectations and a lack of unity between administrative layers made it difficult for her to perform her boundary-spanning

role in a manner supportive of job satisfaction. Rhonda's frustrations were only compounded, however, by the inability of the various administrative layers to define her job—simply because administrators possessed little knowledge of her job should entail:

Sometimes, my higher-ups don't really know either, so it's just really this ambiguous no-man's land of 'well, do you what you think is best,' which may or may not lead me in trouble if I make the wrong decision, because that wasn't my decision to make.

Nola was also been subjected to differing, ambiguous expectations of administrative layers, resulting in serious conflict and significant frustration with her building administrator. These frustrations were further compounded by the lack of knowledge—and resulting lack of vision—her building principal had for an instructional coaching program. Based on the district's expectations of instructional coaches, instructional coaches performed district-level professional development duties. However, the facilitation of district-level professional development duties by Nola was a continuing point of contention between Nola and her principal, as her principal believed the instructional coach's primary focus is at the school level. Consequently, Nola was caught up in role ambiguity, being unsure of exactly what her specific district professional development role and fearful that she will be unable to participate in future district professional development opportunities:

I was put into a situation earlier this year where the district ...wanted to use me for district-wide training. And my principal really felt like that was taking away time at my building level. And so, he went head-to-head with my boss

at central office and was kind of saying that I could no longer participate—I could no longer do district-wide training because he felt like it was taking away from my school. And so, I got kind of reprimanded for signing up for district-wide training, being in charge of it, when that is in my job description, and that is what the district requires all of the coaches to do... So I have had to take a back seat position to that sort of role this year by request of my principal. And my principal and the administration don't see eye-to-eye on what my role is, which as made it really, really stressful for me.

Nola attempted to work through uncertain instructional coaching roles through collaboration with her principal, on advice of her supportive district administrator, though her efforts were met with little success. A lack of role clarity remained with Nola, as her principal's expectations of her remained inconsistent and subject to change:

He was questioning me on my weekly report as to what I was doing, and he told me 'this is what I want you to do. I want you to go into their collaboration meetings,' which are the grade levels' weekly meetings, 'go in and ask them how you can come into their classrooms and help them out.' And I'm thinking in my head I have this clear picture of my schedule and I really don't have time to go into classrooms because my schedule is full of intervention. At this point, I have been through the SIT [student improvement team] process that has been approved by him, and so I kind of had to talk him through. 'Okay then, when would you like me to do this? What do you want me to do? For instance, you know you have told me that I

need to work with this student, so when would you like me to do that?' And so he took my schedule and started penciling it in. 'Well, you should do this from this time to this time, and do this from this time to this time.' And then he started penciling everything in, and I said 'okay, and state accommodations,' because I'm giving accommodations for state assessments, and then penciled the collaboration meetings. And then he told me I was going to have to cancel groups for those. And I said 'okay,' and he goes 'do you have any questions?' And I'm like 'and when am I supposed to go into classrooms?' And then he looked at my schedule and was like 'oh, okay, never mind.' And I think we have to walk through everything and he doesn't see quite what I'm doing, even though I give him a schedule every week. I still think it's kind of hard for him to see what I'm doing. So, I think we try to solve problems through just an open discussion. But a lot of times it has to be him making the decisions.

When Nola was working to implement competing district- and building-level instructional coaching visions, she was forced to choose between two, often conflicting, visions of effective instructional coaching, mainly because "[my principal] doesn't do a very good of directing me towards what I should be doing." The role conflict that she experienced while attempting to mediate the competing visions of instructional coaching, stressful in its own right, was further compounded by the principal's lack of instructional coaching knowledge, leading to role ambiguity and Nola's fear of deviating from the ill-defined boundaries of her role.

This resulted in “the stress [that] comes when there’s a mismatch between what’s expected in the coaching position from the district and then from the principals.”

Allison worked in a small school district not subject to the administrative layers that are often present in larger school districts. As a result, Allison was given significant latitude to guide her own position, though such latitude results, in part because her “administrator probably doesn’t understand a lot of what [she does].” And while trust exists between Allison and her principal, he has allowed for the creation of an instructional coach/speech pathologist split position—two extremely diverse positions possessing vastly different role requirements for the incumbent.

As a result of her dual roles, Allison was not only divided between the teaching and administrative role-sets (as an instructional coach), she was also divided between the instructional coaching and speech pathologist role-sets. By this dissertation’s definition, instructional coaches collaborate with teachers for purposes of professional growth, whereas speech pathologists typically provide direct services to students to diagnose and modify speech problems; by mixing the two roles, Allison was exceptionally open to role ambiguity by taking on unnecessary tasks (when explored from a purely instructional coaching perspective):

I am a certified teacher of speech pathology in [a Great Plains state]...and I think they don’t know how to make meaning [of my role]. I’m not really a classroom teacher. I’m not really a special education teacher. I’m not an administrator, but I have overlapping roles with all of those sets of areas, including administrative meetings and conversations. The principal and I

meet often together to discuss certain students and curriculum issues, so I do a little bit of that with the administrators. And then I am responsible for the instruction of some students, so there is my overlap and teaching also. I am kind of in no man's land.

By allowing Allison to perform both roles, the principal institutionalized the role conflict and role overload enhanced by performing two, differently structured roles. Through her dual role, Allison's is unique in that she not only serves as a boundary spanner between the teaching and administrative role-sets, she also is a member of the speech pathologist role-set. It can be challenging enough being an instructional coach, moderating the coaching role-set while filtering information between teachers and administrators. But when the discordant speech pathologist role is introduced, resources are taken from her instructional coaching role, preventing her from performing instructional coaching duties at a level to which Allison perceives ideal. Finally, with the lack of administrative guidance in the structuring of these roles, Allison is left to moderate all of these role-sets independently—a difficult task indeed.

The bottom line. Instructional coaches and administrators should sagaciously define instructional coaching roles in a manner that adheres to sound principles of instructional coaching. When defining these roles, administrators should create roles that are tied to a unified vision of instructional coaching as a unique and independent role within schools.

Administrative Communication and Enforcement of Instructional Coaching Roles

Having established instructional coaching definitions, administrators must communicate those definitions to members of the teaching and administrative role-sets with whom the instructional coaches will work. It is also important for administrators to communicate definitions to members of the instructional coaching role-set, though this action is assumed through the collaborative process of defining instructional coaching roles. The act of communicating instructional coaching roles is important because providing definition to instructional coaching roles without ensuring that members of the teaching and administrative role-sets understand and apply those roles does little to ease the mediation processes inherent in a boundary spanning role. Publicized definitions of instructional coaching roles establishes fixed expectations to the teaching and administrative role-sets of acceptable interactions with instructional coaches, removing potential sources of role conflict by assigning tasks to the instructional coaching role-set that are legitimate, enabling instructional coaches to employ administrative permission to strain illegitimate requests.

Once roles are communicated to the respective role-sets, role-set members, through administrative enforcement, must adhere to the associated role expectations. Through an understanding of and adherence to instructional coaching roles, tensions between the teaching and instructional coaching role-sets are moderated because the coaching behaviors are defined within the context of legitimate role-set expectations. Through these relationships, teachers and

instructional coaches, working as peers, can define their relationships, leading to reduced ambiguity of relationship behaviors and improved instructional coach social satisfaction.

Similar thinking applies to the administrative role-set, except now, because of defined behavior expectations, administrators have access to measurable behaviors and expectations; the resulting measurements become the focus for feedback to benefit the instructional coaching and teaching role-sets. Because the administrator is able to evaluate the instructional coaching program using data from both the teaching and instructional coaching role-sets, the administrator is able to provide meaningful feedback and appropriate support, thus improving instructional coach supervision satisfaction.

Experiences of satisfied instructional coaches. The strongest example of administrative communication of instructional coaching roles was present in Cynthia's school. One explanation for this communication is the importance her board of education placed upon coaching as a professional growth mechanism. Because of the culture of continuous improvement in her school and district, Cynthia understood that by the time she was to intervene to improve professional practice, the principal had already suggested collaboration with Cynthia to the teacher needing assistance. During meetings with the teacher, Cynthia remained focused on the teacher's needs grounded in collected data. By keeping the discussion based on data, an expectation of the instructional coach, Cynthia was able to focus the discussion on professional improvement rather than the feedback being viewed as a personal attack. Instead, Cynthia served as a diagnostician, attempting

to diagnose a problem and identify potential remedies to help the teacher. Even when teachers resisted assistance, the assistance was predicated upon collected data:

By [the time I am brought into a directive situation], the principal has already brought us up in part of their support [of the teacher], and if the teacher just disagrees, a lot of the times we are able to go around that by being able to go in and observe if what a principal thinks is there is a weakness that a teacher needs to work on. Then we have a conversation with the teacher about whatever that particular area is, and if the teacher doesn't see it that way themselves, it helps that we go in and do some observation. We can make notes noticing the way that something was or was not an instructional practice and make suggestions on how that could be done differently.

Situations such as these unavoidably involve role conflict based on what teachers and instructional coaches view as necessary to improve professional practice. But by recognizing that the coach will be involved in the teaching and learning process regardless of teachers' perceived needs, role conflict and role ambiguity is moderated through the prior communication of established instructional coaching roles.

This process was continuously monitored by Cynthia's principal, with whom she "share[ed] everything that we've been doing with different teachers and what some of our goals for the teachers are." In these discussions, the principal continued seeking the "next step" and ensured continuous progress toward instructional goals. The principal held responsibility for ensuring teachers worked with the coaches and

ultimately assumed responsibility for the instructional coaching program, particularly where difficult situations with teachers arose:

I think if we got some pushback from teachers, that responsibility of fulfilling expectations of how we coach in our district falls on the principals going back to the teachers and asking them ‘why haven’t you contacted the coaches’ or ‘why are you not having the coaches in your room,’ because we are not administrative. We are not really policing whether or not people are doing what they are supposed to be doing with us. It falls on our administrators in our district.

Because the administrators took responsibility for the instructional coaching program, Cynthia did not have to manufacture administrative authority that could have blurred the line between instructional coach and administrator roles. Since the building principals were the ultimate source of power in her instructional coaching program, Cynthia could focus on the instructional coaching and maintenance of positive teacher relationships without the negative role perceptions sometimes held by teachers of administrators.

Cynthia was also subject to the same contract and evaluation processes in which her district’s teachers participated, though the curriculum director conducts Cynthia’s evaluations. For Cynthia, these evaluations consisted of a cycle of goal-setting and full evaluation years. During a goal-setting year, Cynthia established her own goal and monitored progress to that goal through data collection. During her full evaluation cycle next year, she will be evaluated

...based on an observation of a lesson that I will model similar to a classroom teacher when they have the principals come in and evaluate them where they are actually in front of students and teaching a lesson. That's how we're evaluated right now solely because we are, again, on a teacher contract and not seen as different.

Cynthia perceived this approach to evaluation effective because of the relationship that quality teaching has to the instructional coaching position. Because "instructional practice is the core" of her job, Cynthia believed that if she is not being observed on such practices, then "you don't really know how I'm doing in my job." With that said, Cynthia expressed desire to be evaluated on the other aspects of her job, including the collaboration with the teachers, management of materials, and other coaching responsibilities:

Although [modeling instructional practices] is a big piece and probably the most important piece of what we do, ...we obviously do spend a lot of time coaching teachers and meeting with teachers, and I would like to see that as part of our evaluation tool because those interpersonal skills are so important.

Through provision of such feedback, accountability could be enhanced that reduces role conflict and role ambiguity by providing measurable specificity to the instructional coaching role. Cynthia's curriculum director does, however, made an effort to provide feedback on other aspects of the coaching experience even if it was not part of the evaluation tool itself; Cynthia is "very much appreciative" of that feedback because of the importance of those additional roles.

Ginger was involved in an intense cycle of deeply embedded instructional coaching, a cycle that very likely required administrative communication. Based on the administrative vision that guided the cycle's creation, coupled with ongoing administrative support, it is likely that the principal played a role in communicating the process to the teaching role-set, if not the expectation. This, however, is conjecturing based on personal experience and the potential role conflict that could be present had the administrator not communicated expectations. Given Ginger's level of instructional coaching satisfaction and the positive relationship she had with her principal, it is likely the principal played a role in communicating expectations.

Ginger's principal appeared to ensure role-set adherence to instructional coaching roles through Ginger's ongoing communication with her principals. Ginger described her principals as encouraging an open and honest relationship through an open-door policy:

What's lovely is that I'm very fortunate in that my administrators here at my site have a very open-door policy—a very wide-open-door policy—and if I have any questions or concerns, that any time I can go in and ask and talk to them. Or if I feel like something isn't working, I can go in, and we can have a very frank conversation about what I think is going on and what needs to happen. It's always been beneficial for everyone, I think.

This support provided Ginger many opportunities to talk to her administrators, pursuing assistance as necessary that was dependent upon the instructional coaching program's needs. Because she felt able to “talk to the principal and

without breaking confidences of any teachers...get advice and direction from [her] principal," she was able to use the principal's guidance to help her navigate situations that required administrative authority and backing for instructional coaching initiatives. In so doing, Ginger and her principal were able to clarify the instructional coaching role, define the authority of the instructional coach and reduce prospects for role conflict and role ambiguity to enter the instructional coaching role:

If there's been anything that I've asked teachers to do that was a little sticky, they wouldn't enjoy doing, or knew that they wouldn't immediately go 'that's a great idea' or when change is hard or if I felt like they would give me some pushback, I always had an out with my principal. He always said 'the buck stops with him' so if there's anything I need, I can always said, well 'Mr.

DeSota [pseudonym] has asked us to do this' or something like that. So it's not just the needs, but there's a little bit of authority behind it, if necessary.

Overall, Ginger described her principal's support of her instructional coaching role as highly positive, stating that she was "overwhelmingly supported by them. I am in a wonderful situation in my school, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate my administrators. They have my back at every second."

With regards to Ginger's evaluations, they were conducted by her building principal. Ginger's evaluation experience is similar to that experienced by many teachers, and it consisted of a goal-setting phase, classroom observation, and feedback session similar to that used by the district's teachers. Because the evaluation was non-specific to the instructional coaching role, the evaluation

process provided an opportunity for role ambiguity to enter the instructional coaching role through a lack of full accountability for all aspects of the instructional coaching roles. Ginger describes her typical evaluation experiences as follows:

I set my goal based on the California standard for teacher practices. I set my goals, what I would like to do. 'This is where I am now, and this is how I like to see myself at the end of the year,' and then I am evaluated based on meetings I have with the department. So just like a principal going and observing teachers' lessons over the course of a couple of days, my principal and vice principals will come in and observe my facilitating the circle of inquiry or facilitating a PLC time or facilitating a coaching cycle. So then he wants me to come in and interactively coach with the teacher, and they will of course observe any professional development that I am presenting to the whole staff or two departments or that sort of thing. They will take that sort of thing from there and will use it to fill out basically the same evaluation form that the regular classroom teachers would have.

Despite the weaknesses of the evaluation tool, its flexible application to the instructional coaching role could reduce role ambiguity so long as the goal setting process is focused on instructional coaching needs. Ginger seemed satisfied with using the teacher evaluation process to evaluate her performance as an instructional coach. In addition, the tool was "tweaked a little bit because my job is a bit different than how a classroom's teacher's evaluation would be," allowing for specificity and relevance that provided role clarity. Overall, Ginger is "not uncomfortable at all" with the process and felt that the evaluation method was "all very good."

Samantha does not address the administrative enforcement of teacher role-set adherence to instructional coaching directly, though she provides insight as to why this may be the case. Principals have come to rely on Samantha, a veteran special education teacher, for her expertise in ensuring compliance with various aspects of the special education program. Because of the highly technical nature of special education, and the comparative lack of administrative experience in this area, it is possible they deferred to her for ensuring the teacher role-set adheres to instructional coaching norms. Principals were able to receive information into teacher progress through formal meetings and informal discussions with Samantha. Being an emergent program, it remains to be seen whether this approach is successful and maintained over time.

With that said, Samantha is socially satisfied, social satisfaction she was able to attribute to the establishment of positive relationships and flexibility in the instructional coaching role. Samantha enjoyed meeting new teachers, an opportunity she has had because she transferred to her current school at the beginning of her instructional coaching position. In working with her new colleagues, she enjoyed getting to know them and watching their growth:

I have really enjoyed my first year in this job, and I think a lot of it is meeting new people, having new relationships, and to be able to see an influence. I'm watching how my teachers are learning, and they are slowly implementing the things that we talked about. So, just as I would be looking at my students learning and what I did in the classroom affecting students that I taught, I am hoping that by being able to share work with other teachers, that some of the

strategies that I found successful are helping a wider number of students than just those in my classroom that I taught last year.

Through watching their growth, Samantha was able to develop knowledge of her teachers, knowledge that will ultimately assist her in building more effective relationships with her teaching colleagues. This knowledge of teachers is essential because it builds trust and rapport between the teacher and the instructional coach. By having a trusting, respectful relationship, honest collaboration that will both reduce ambiguity and help ease role conflicts in difficult situations is more likely. While working with teachers to challenge their teaching practices and engage them in growth, Samantha recognized the role that a respectful posture plays in establishing a collaborative, non-threatening relationship:

When you're looking at things like a very personal situation, and you have to go about that in a very respectful way and let them know that I'm not there to tell them what you want to do but that I'm there to give them options: 'You could continue with what you're doing right now, or you could try this. What else do you think? Who else do you think you could resolve the situation?'

If Samantha approaches difficult situations with an authoritative or threatening posture, teachers will be less receptive to her guidance and reject her collaborative role as an instructional coach, establishing the differing expectations that create role conflict.

Samantha was able to maintain positive relationships by approaching challenges in a respectful, collaborative manner, remaining able to sustain positive relationships with her colleagues. Part of this ability to continue these relationships

was due to the consultant-based training on handling conflicts and being effective instructional coaches. Through consultant-facilitated reflection upon difficult situations that other instructional coaches experienced, Samantha developed tools that she harnessed to ensure conflict was minimized. When conflict did occur, it was important to Samantha to explore all sides of the conflict and ensure that a lesson was learned to prevent such conflict from arising in the future:

When we do have a conflict or difference of opinion on something, how do we look at what we're doing and take a step back and try to make sure that I understand all points of view, which is sometimes hard because I think that on some things, I think I really know what I'm talking about. Taking that step back and say 'okay, so why do I think...that it needs to be this way or what is best for students. So I do think that really taking that conflict and making it a positive spin [is important] because if we have a conflict, and we don't learn from that, we're very destined to repeat it again.

In addition, when exploring conflicts with others, Samantha believed that keeping the concern professional, rather than making it personal, is important for an instructional coach. By recognizing that “nothing ever productive is going to happen when emotions are high on either side,” she understands that regrouping and removing—or at least reducing—emotions is key to a collaborative approach. Through a levelheaded approach, Samantha was able to see the role conflicts that arose and resolve them.

Also key to a collaborative approach is the ability to be flexible. This flexibility was demonstrated by Samantha's role in monthly special education

department meetings where she presented information based on the needs of the students and staff. Perhaps this came easily for Samantha, as again, she compared instructional coaching to working with classroom students with regards to teaching and how it requires knowledge of those students being taught:

Looking back, I kind of laugh. Instead of teaching my classroom kids, I have my buildings of teachers that I'm trying to teach—except my structure is obviously a lot different. All of it is. But you have to understand your buildings and the teachers in your buildings, and I know that there are teachers that I approach differently than other teachers.

This flexibility was expressed in her need to adapt to the needs of her teachers, meeting the teachers where they are professionally. Samantha valued this knowledge of others, helping to explain her social satisfaction.

This knowledge of others provided further flexibility in how she approached teachers, accepting of the fact that instructional coaching was an evolving role based on teacher needs. While such evolution can open Samantha up to prospects of role ambiguity, her ability to collaborate to resolve concerns appears to have alleviated role conflict and role ambiguity. Again, previous classroom experience informed her ability to be flexible and adapt to the needs of her teachers:

I'm okay with [change]. I was a classroom teacher and I didn't mind taking something that we're working on in a somewhat different direction if it was appropriate and it was meaningful then I would go there. See you kind of take the lead and you go with what your students' needs are. So as a coach, I'm going with what my teachers need. So if we need help with writing

quality IEPs, then that's what I'm going to give them assistance on, and those that are struggling more, I'm going to give them more assistance—just like I would if they were the students in my classroom.

By remaining flexible and recognizing that some role ambiguity is inherent in any instructional coaching position, Samantha was prepared to handle a variety of needs. Through collaborative opportunities, role conflict concerns can be addressed early before they become problematic—a very important need in an emerging instructional coaching program.

Like Cynthia and Ginger, Samantha underwent performance evaluations. Samantha was evaluated by her supervisor, the assistant director of special education; her supervisor conducted teacher evaluations using the standard district-wide teacher evaluation process. Thus far, the observations of teaching were based on “watching me give professional development to... both of my buildings at different times” and formal and informal observations of teachers. However, the supervisor would not observe during independent coaching sessions with teachers, an aspect of the evaluation process illustrative of the supervisor's understanding of instructional coaching roles:

She understands that when we are doing one-on-one coaching that that is not the place for her to come in and observe, because I've worked really hard being in the buildings building relationships with my teachers and getting that trust, that I'm not here to evaluate them. So my supervisor realizes that is a unique relationship, and she knows that it would be very awkward to try come in and have me try to coach somebody and have her being over my

shoulder. So I do really appreciate that ability to go into my job but I'm working one-on-one with the teacher to have that confidentiality.

While the supervisor was knowledgeable of instructional coaching roles, Samantha was unsure whether the roles that an instructional coach has beyond teaching teachers would be evaluated. As part of her job, Samantha was also responsible for individualized education plan (IEP) compliance and ensuring quality transition services were in place for special education students as they grow into their post-secondary lives. However, Samantha was unsure "if I'm evaluated on [those aspects of my job] and I would almost say no. In fact, this is a good question for my evaluation visit, and it's been a little different not knowing exactly." By not evaluating all aspects of the instructional coaching role, the supervisor was not ensuring compliance to all standards of the instructional coaching role. This lack of accountability could open up opportunities for role ambiguity and role conflict if left unchecked.

Despite the lack of complete clarity with regards to the evaluation process, Samantha appears pleased with the supervisory support she receives as an instructional coach.

Experiences of dissatisfied instructional coaches. Because of a lack of administrative efforts to ensure that the teaching role-set fully understood instructional coaching roles, Nola experienced challenges in working with classroom teachers that could become serious concerns if not addressed. Nola cited the lack of administrative support for how classroom-based coaching situations are supposed to function. The resulting scenario risks not only short term losses in instructional

coaching effectiveness, but long-term instructional-coach-teacher relationship damage—and its resulting reduced boundary spanning legitimacy and access to teachers—if not resolved administratively:

There are times when I go model a lesson. For example, a six-trait writing lesson. I'll go in and model a lesson or a teacher and they think I'm just there to teach and they will say, 'oh, I'll be back. I'm going to run some copies' or something when they're supposed to be in there watching the lesson and picking up on things from the lesson. And I feel like I haven't really been able to address that situation. I feel like sometimes when I go in and I model, they don't have a clear understanding of what I'm doing in there. They just think I'm coming in to do a lesson for them, and that is kind of like a break for them. And I feel like that is not, maybe it is my place. It's hard for me in my position, without the backing of my administrator, to say 'hey look, you know you really need to be in here and watching what I'm doing and this is the purpose of this [lesson].' I feel like there is kind of a lack of direction on their part as to why I'm in the classroom.

Some will argue that perhaps Nola should have been more forthcoming with her expectations of the teaching role-set, a point that has merit. However, in exploring the reasons why Nola did not take that approach, validity must be given to her fear of damaging relationships with teachers by attempting to administrate without administrative authority. It is important to remember that coaching is a supportive role, and it is to the instructional coach's advantage, as a supportive role, to not be perceived as an administrator by teachers. Administrators are expected to make

tough decisions and not please everyone; such actions come with the territory and are even admired as quality leadership traits. Instructional coaches who lack authority to make the tough decisions are at best seen as poseurs, and at worst, power hungry. Neither viewpoint is productive for working collaboratively with teachers in a sensitive area such as personal professional improvement. Again, by providing clarity to the instructional coaching role and reducing role ambiguity, the administrator can define productive boundaries and norms which will guide the relationship between the instructional coach and the teaching staff.

A particularly interesting finding was that Nola rated social satisfaction highly (7.0) in the initial survey. From this, I suggest two possible conclusions. First, Nola provided examples of negative social situations that are rare, and that the positive social interactions she experiences far outweigh the negative ones—and the positive examples did not come to the forefront. The second conclusion is direr: that perhaps she is unaware of the dangers that these situations pose to her long-term success as an instructional coach.

Little doubt existed in Nola's perceptions of her supervision satisfaction. Being caught between two conflicting definitions of instructional coaching—district vs. building administration—Nola considered the role her performance evaluation played in mediating the conflicting demands. In her school district, the district administrator managed the district's instructional program, yet the building principals, the most frequent contacts the instructional coaches have, are charged with conducting performance evaluations of instructional coaching roles. Because Nola attempted to mediate her instructional coaching role set, and not all role set

members held the same status, Nola felt compelled to satisfy her principal's requests:

The stress comes when there's a mismatch between what's expected in the coaching position from the district and then from the principals... When it really comes down to it, there's not a whole lot that, even though she's my boss, and I report to her at central office, I'm not totally convinced 100% there's anything she can do if he tried to fire me.

And even though Nola attempted to meet her principal's needs through early and continuous collaboration, her principal provided negative marks on her evaluation, stating, "I needed to follow through with an administrator's request."

Fortunately, the need to balance the building and district administrative demands was understood by the district administrator. In fact, this year, the district administrator and Nola began meeting more frequently to discuss mediation strategies and concerns, a move that Nola felt has been helpful for clarification's sake:

She comes out to my school and we discuss anything that is going on, any questions that I have or problems that arise or anything like that... And that is something that has changed for this year. ...This year she's started coming and discussing our roles and any problems or concerns that we have, and talking through any issue that there may be with us—which has helped to make sure I can ask questions and address things...and make sure that what I am doing is what I'm supposed to be doing. Making sure that what I'm doing as a coach is matching up with her vision as far as what coaching is supposed

to be—questions like ‘well this kind of came up, and should I be doing this or is this something that is not part of my job.’ And I kind of feel like I have that support with her, and anytime I need her I can call her on the phone. I feel like she has a really good understanding of what our position is and what we should be doing.

Yet, even with the ability to reach out to the district administrator, Nola felt as though the district is contributing to a lack of clarity through a lack of enforcement of instructional coaching norms; in Nola’s perspective, this lack of enforcement led to role inconsistency across the district:

There is a lot of talent out there that’s being wasted because the district isn’t taking the initiative and pushing, not just laying out the guidelines for what the coaches should be doing. ...We’ll be at a meeting, my principal and I, they’ll [district administrators] say what the coaches should be doing, but they don’t back it up. And so, it’s real loosey goosey and in every single school my district, the coaches have different roles. Because of that, it makes it very difficult for us.

Further compounding the concerns surrounding instructional coaching roles were evaluations inadequately evaluating the entirety of instructional coaching roles. Recall that Nola’s instructional coaching role was comprised of small group and individual student intervention as well as teacher collaboration, modeling, and feedback. In order to provide Nola adequate feedback on all areas of her job, the evaluation tool would address each of those areas. However, this was not the case, providing additional occasions the inconsistencies present with role ambiguity to

surface. The evaluation tool used to evaluate Nola is the standard evaluation instrument used to evaluate teachers:

This is my third year doing [instructional coaching] and [the evaluation tool] is still kind of a huge mess to me really. There are standards, and I don't know how many of them there are, and each of them lists things you should be doing. It's a document, and you go in and pick two of the different standards to have goals for, and then write goals for them. And then you work toward the goals all year long. And the others, you just list some evidence. ...And then the principal or your evaluator comes in and observes you however set number of times and then gives you feedback on that. I don't know that it's a very effective tool. ...In my situation, he will come in and observe me in my groups, and I never get evaluated on the coaching side of my job. Like he doesn't see my interactions with teachers and what I do with them and that sort of thing. So I feel like it's only evaluating one part of my job and not a holistic kind of evaluation. ...It's not specific to what your job skills are, and I believe next year they're going to a different one anyway. So who knows what it's going to look like.

Within this type of evaluation, the principal evaluated her based on working with her intervention groups, only a portion—and arguably unnecessary—portion of her job. He was unable to provide her additional feedback on the other aspects of her performance, most importantly, the coaching aspects of her performance that are at the core of Nola's job. Rather, the principal is only focusing on the aspects of her role that are, based on the definition of instructional coaching presented in this

dissertation, tasks unrelated to instructional coaching. While the principal is partially responsible, and could possibly find other ways to evaluate additional practices, the institutional evaluation tool was itself ineffective because it was not comprehensive; the tool itself further promotes role ambiguity because it did not reasonably address instructional coaching definitions. Perhaps this is because there is no central definition of instructional coaching upon which the evaluation instrument can be based—a definition made more difficult to pin down with an ever-changing vision of instructional coaching.

Rhonda was also subject to an ever-evolving instructional coaching role, though hers was due to a leadership change. In this process, administrative methods of ensuring teacher adherence to the instructional coaching role have changed. Rhonda's current principal believed in the importance of teachers arriving at decisions through their own actions, allowing them to find their way through situations; such an approach appeared to have stood in contrast to the actions of her previous administrator. As a result, Rhonda believed that sometimes, difficult situations lasted too long, causing additional angst and confusion among the teachers with whom she works:

I understand he wants them to come to it themselves; he doesn't want to have to be the one to tell them to 'do your job' or whatever it is, but there does come a point at some time where I feel—and this is me—that you have to draw the line and say that the cussing and discussing, dragging your feet and whatever, it's got to come to an end. We've talked, we've collaborated, we've brainstormed, we held our hands, we've banged our heads against the

wall. We've done all of that, and now we need to move forward. We just need to move forward, and sometimes I don't always feel like we move forward, we tend to drag things out longer than they really need to be drug out to the point that the teacher sometimes feels like they're winning. And then all of a sudden, the teachers realize, oh, I do have to do something. We've wasted a lot of time and we've built up a lot of hard feelings where if somebody said 'no, I understand, but you've got to do it anyway, we could have cut out some drama and gotten there a little bit faster.

While Rhonda may desire a different leadership approach from her principal, she recognized the principal's decision-making authority within the building and her relationship to her principal within that decision-making process. Through this understanding, boundaries existed that reduced role ambiguity. When a decision was ultimately made, she recognized that it is her role to support the decision, regardless of her satisfaction:

Well, I don't really get to disagree, but simply my administrators are my supervisors. They're my bosses. But we do have the opportunity, when it is in a collaboration so we are in that talking mode, you can be the loyal opposition, bring up other points, things to consider, roadblock and problems that might be coming with a certain plan of action or a certain decision. But ultimately when the decision is made by administrators about what we are doing to do, then you do what you're supposed to and you find a way to make it work.

Rhonda's ability to "make it work," however, does not mask the inconsistency under which she operates. The inconsistent expectations, compounded by a lack of unity between administrative layers, made it difficult for her to perform her boundary-spanning role in a manner supportive of job satisfaction. Rhonda's frustrations were only compounded by the inability of the various administrative layers to define her job—simply because the administrators do not know what her job should furthering role ambiguity, ambiguity compounded when no person in a position of power was able to provide the necessary leadership needed to define the instructional coaching role.

The inconsistency and lack of administrative unity provided Rhonda with an unclear sense of authority, a lack of authority about which she has mixed emotions. By not having administrative-like authority, Rhonda believed that others view her as outside the administrative realm, a positive perspective:

The fact that I don't really have a whole lot of authority when it comes to being able to tell the teacher 'this is the way you have to do that,' I mean ultimately, I don't have that administrative 'oomph' with my job, and I understand why I don't. Overall, it's a positive thing to not have administrative power over teachers in my position. It does require me to always have to go to the principal to be the muscle, so to speak.

In contrast, lacking this authority required depending upon the principal assert his authority to make decisions, decisions that Rhonda feels she was capable of making. In waiting for these decisions to be made, it provided for a stressful experience, particularly when the conclusions arrived at were similar to her discernments:

Knowing what needs to be done, having all the paperwork and such ready to go to execute it, knowing that we can do a good job with it and make sure everyone comes out looking good, but not actually having any authority to do it, or waiting for someone else to finally come up with or finally come to the same conclusion we've come to because they don't want to hear from us those kinds of things. Where you just sit there and think 'okay, I know what to do. I just want to go in there and do it so I can fix it, so we can move on, so we can get to the next thing that students need' or whatever—those unnecessary delays are a source of frustration that is probably my biggest stress during the day.

The role conflict Rhonda experienced with her administrators arose from differing expectations of Rhonda's perceived and actualized job roles; these differing perceptions created stress enhanced role ambiguity and increased the difficulty of mediating role-set expectations. If left unchecked, this could become a potentially problematic situation where the administrative and instructional coaching role-sets must work closely together. Furthermore, the lack of clarity of expectations serves to increase the difficulty with which the instructional coaching program can be evaluated. Without a clear set of goals and objectives upon which all administrative layers agree—and adhere to—it becomes challenging to have data outputs able to identify instructional coaching strengths and weaknesses.

In spite of these challenges, Rhonda experienced multiple occasions to collaborate with colleagues, developing close relationships with them. In building relationships with teachers, Rhonda took her role as a collaborative confident very

seriously. To preserve relationships with teachers, instructional coaches preserve confidentiality with teachers to ensure that teachers do not perceive them to be evaluators, a behavior Rhonda acknowledged even within a sometimes-murky role:

We are kind of like a priest or lawyer or a client-lawyer kind of privilege that we are under no obligation to reveal or pass on information that teachers share with us to administrators unless we feel that in a professional sense there is something administration needs to know about in terms of safety or wellbeing or something that we feel we need to break that trust just because we're trying to do no harm. We're trying to make sure that everyone is taken care of.

In taking that approach, Rhonda established foundations of role clarity where she could build trust among her teaching colleagues, trust that ultimately provides additional opportunities to access classrooms and work with teachers because they know what to expect from collaborating with her. In spite of the increased stress from the role-mediation processes necessary provide her own role clarity, from these trusting relationships, Rhonda was able to collaborate with teachers to improve instruction. The results of these teacher growth opportunities provided her the satisfaction that she used to reap from her students during her classroom teaching days:

When I feel like what I've done has had a really positive, powerful impact on learning, or if I was able to help the teacher learn something or do something that made her life better, I mean, those are the things that you lived for now

instead of the great moments that you live for with your students in your classroom.

That is not to say that working with teachers was always a simple task.

Rhonda claimed that her biggest obstacle to instructional coaching effectiveness was working with teachers who “don’t really want to be helped—somebody stopping me from doing what I need to do” as an instructional coach and facilitator to professional growth. This role conflict, in the form of teacher resistance, was a source of frustration in Rhonda’s non-authoritative instructional coaching role:

The obstacles...come from teachers in terms of just trying to build those relationships, maybe with older teachers, that don’t really feel like they need any help or they don’t want to know about the technology, or they don’t want to bring lesson plans up to date to Common Core or whatever it is. There’s resistance on their part, so it’s hard sometimes to try to get what I need out to everybody to the level that they need it because of teacher resistance.

In any instructional coaching role, role conflict with teachers is bound to occur, particularly in change situations, because it is difficult for people to change.

However, stress associated with role conflict can be reduced through the use of relationship skills, providing teachers and instructional coaches structures within which problems can be resolved. Rhonda worked to take a positive, collaborative approach with teachers, “seeking to understand before I’m understood.” In so doing, she helped teachers to understand that, even in challenging times, teachers and the instructional coach are not opponents, but rather on the same team working toward the common good. While relationships skills certainly improve her ability to

work with challenging teachers, perhaps an alternative explanation for these obstacles is the lack of administrative role enforcement. By not providing clear expectations of instructional coaching, the principal fails to establish a culture supportive of positive instructional coaching. While the difficulties associated with change certainly have a role in teacher resistance, proactive administrative behaviors could only help moderate the role conflict Rhonda experiences.

Even when Rhonda was able to reach out to her colleagues, she was sometimes unable to provide teachers with adequate resources in a particular area, such as technology, because knowing everything about all of the potential assistance areas was very difficult. The myriad of needs to which Rhonda was exposed made it more difficult for Rhonda to be a quality resource for teachers in her boundary-spanning role, as she was expected to provide information in an area of weakness—potentially damaging future assistance opportunities with teachers. Some of this was explained by blurred boundaries between the curriculum integration specialist (curriculum-based instructional coach) and technology integration specialist (technology-focused instructional coach) roles. However, most of this blurring of boundaries resulted from the teacher needs arising from collaboration with the curriculum integration specialist:

We have curriculum instructional specialists and we have technology integration specialists, and the line between what in terms of technology CIS is responsible for and know about it, doing and helping, and what the TIS is responsible for doing and helping—that is a bit of a great murky areas as well. I feel like if I'm supposed to help a teacher that calls me up and says

'hey, can you help me with fill in the blank,' that thing, whatever, Blogster, Nearpod, blah, blah, blah, then I feel like I need to know what that is. I need to know what it is, what it does, how to help you in the classroom, and maybe even teach them how to do it.

Rhonda wanted to assist teachers with technology needs as necessary. However, she felt like she as unable to be as helpful as necessary to perform the role appropriately:

There's a lot out there, and what we can do. And I feel a little behind most of the time, and when I know about technology and how to help teachers, I know enough to be helpful but not enough to really be able to show them whiz-bang ways to do things everyday.

In her boundary-spanning role as an instructional coach, Rhonda was torn between her desire to help the teacher and her need to filter the instructional needs to the technology integration specialist. In helping the teacher, Rhonda risked providing semi-helpful information that could reduce the teacher's confidence in her abilities and reduce the legitimacy of the boundary spanning role; yet not providing any information could have ended in the same result. Ideally, Rhonda would have been comfortable performing the filtering necessary to remain a legitimate boundary spanner, preventing her from feeling dissatisfaction from her inability to provide technology assistance. Perhaps this filtering would have been easier had her instructional coaching job roles been clearly established and consistently enforced administratively.

Allison has an organizational advantage over both Nola and Rhonda, as Allison's smaller setting prevented her from exposure to multiple administrative layers. This was quickly offset, however, by her dueling instructional coaching and speech pathology roles, a situation likely arising out of the needs present in her small school.

Based on the collected data, it was not possible to determine the level of administrative efforts to enforce teacher adherence to the instructional coaching roles, though based on the principal's lack of understanding of the instructional coaching role, itself resulting in a combination instructional coach-speech pathologist role, it is possible that such enforcement is deficient.

In any event, Allison's social satisfaction was a mixed bag. By allowing Allison to perform both roles, the principal institutionalized the role conflict and role overload inherent from performing two, differently structured roles. This feeling of being caught between role-sets, while typical in Allison's opinion, contributed to feelings of occasional loneliness:

I think that's a position that most speech pathologists find themselves in, and having the question of who I am, not really fitting anywhere. You don't have many colleagues as a reading specialist. You're typically the only one in the building and if there are usually other speech pathologists, there might be one other person. We don't really have anyone else to bounce ideas off of that have the same training and the same perceptions that you do, and I can get lonely sometimes, I think. But I also have lots of different colleagues to discuss things with, and I don't deal with that too much, I don't think.

Such loneliness may be expected in a boundary spanning position, even seeming reasonable. However, this conclusion is only reasonable when viewing Allison's role as one of only instructional coaching. In Allison's situation, one has to also consider the contributions that her speech pathologist role-set contributes to the equation. Allison needs twice the resources to collaborate with, yet fully possesses neither.

Through her speech pathology role, Allison did share a sense of closeness with the special education staff, and felt as though she could "identify more with the special education staff than the general education staff." She viewed this as a positive aspect of her job, as it allowed her to prevent problems of role conflict can be caused when working with the regular education team. However, as her instructional coaching role involved collaboration with regular education teachers, this perspective is perplexing and potentially damaging to her boundary-spanning role.

The dual speech pathologist-instructional coach role that Allison possessed influenced her relationships with her teaching colleagues. Trust is of significant importance within an instructional coaching role, yet trust toward Allison's abilities through the eyes of her teaching colleagues was lacking. Allison viewed this lack of trust as her biggest barrier to her instructional coaching role:

I think the biggest barrier to my relationship with teachers and getting them to trust is that I have never been a classroom teacher. So that is something that seems to always get in the way when it comes down to it: 'well, you don't understand. You're not a classroom teacher. You don't understand why I can't help the student, and you need to take him. You need to instruct him

because I don't have the time for that. And if you were a classroom teacher, then you would understand that.' I think those types of comments that I've heard over the years, that's probably my biggest relationship barrier with the teachers. That's something that used to really upset me years ago when I first began, but I've come to terms with that is something I will never be. I'm not a classroom teacher. I cannot change that.

In Allison's situation, her dual roles are preventing quality access to teachers and teacher improvement, as she has not served as a classroom teacher. In exploring her role-sets more closely, not only is Allison having to navigate her boundary-spanning role between the teaching and administrative role-sets as an instructional coach, she is trying to establish credibility within the teaching role-set. By not having quality access to the teaching role set, she is not fully able to perform her boundary-spanning role, a dangerous position to be in as an instructional coach. As a result, her teaching colleagues would rather send her their struggling students rather than improve their teaching practices. Because working with individual students is an expected part of the speech pathology role, and Allison is also a speech pathologist, the teachers appear to view her less as an instructional coach, allowing her to fall back on her speech pathologist role.

In spite of the social difficulties created in mixing the speech pathologist and instructional coaching role-sets, Allison worked to get to know her teaching colleagues. By conducting surveys and meeting with grade-level groups, Allison had chances to identify the needs of her teachers. In addition, she learned to try to empathize with her teaching colleagues and avoid confrontations that turn teachers

off to her expertise while providing them the resources they need to work with challenging students in large classes:

Over the years, I've grown a little wiser and a little more flexible in my thinking. I think I'm better able to put myself in their shoes and look at the situation from their point of view a little better. So I try to avoid those types of confrontations anymore. You know, 'I can provide resources, and I can offer you help. I can come in and sit with you and discuss your problems. But I can't be what I'm not. I'm not a classroom teacher.' That's just something that they're going to have to overcome, and I tried to do my best to empathize with their situation in terms of how many kids they have in their class, how many special education [students]. The class sizes are to about 31 kids and eight special ed. students and two that don't speak English. I know things get difficult and hard to manage. I look at those things before I ask them to do one thing differently in the classroom.

Allison is working in a challenging social situation because of her dual roles, and it appears, despite the best of her intentions, that the tension between these roles still exists at her school. Perhaps this would explain why she sought additional opportunities to work with speech pathologists by hosting a speech pathologist professional development workshop.

Filling a gap in statewide professional development, Allison started a state conference for speech pathologists in her Great Plains state. As a result, she organizes a two-day workshop for about 200 speech pathologists. Allison collaborated with others to identify quality national presenters that could

participate in this workshop. Through this experience, Allison engaged in collaboration with fellow organizers as well as to other practicing speech pathologists. These collaborative experiences may be providing social experiences that she may not be getting in her own school through collegial and administrative collaboration. While benefits certainly exist, conducting this workshop only entrenches her dual role nature and its accompanying role ambiguity; such an institutionalizing of role ambiguity cannot help the instructional coaching program.

Allison was evaluated using the same instrument that classroom teachers are, a means of evaluation that Allison perceives to be inadequate to her instructional coaching role:

Our state has a brand new evaluation system, so that requires [administrators] to make direct observations of me each year because I'm in two positions at this point. So, they come in and watch me work with students, so that is just one part of my job that they come in for. They don't observe the conversations I have with parents or the assessments that I do. And they are not typically present for the interactions that I have with teachers, so overall, I think they have a very small window of what I do.

By not evaluating all aspects of Allison's instructional coaching role, the evaluation structure prevented Allison from receiving feedback on all areas of her role, areas that she could need additional guidance on and that are at the core of her position. With accountability present, some role clarity could be brought to the role that would reduce the currently existing role ambiguity. Also of interest is the apparent lack of clarity as to how her two roles are distinguished for evaluation purposes; it

appears as though they are simultaneously evaluated using a single instrument. While Allison's situation may be different, instructional coaches typically do not meet with parents except as necessary to support teacher professional growth; of course, there are exceptions to this scenario where coaches work directly with students or to support data dissemination roles. Based on the newness of the evaluation tool (and perhaps statutes that govern its usage) and the lack of administrative knowledge of the instructional coaching role, it is probably that a mixing of the roles is occurring within her evaluation.

The dangers of mixing the instructional coaching and speech pathology roles has already been established and will not be rehashed. However, by mixing the vastly different instructional coaching and speech pathology roles as implemented in Allison's school, and evaluating the position as having only one role, an inseparable and institutionalized tangling of the roles occurs that contributes to role ambiguity, role conflict, and possibly role overload at the least. More significantly damages the boundary spanning abilities necessary to adequately perform as an instructional coach by providing too many role-sets for an inadequate number of boundary spanners.

The bottom line. When administrators communicate instructional coaching roles to the teaching, administrative, and instructional coaching role-sets, role conflict and role ambiguity are reduced through a clear understanding of coaching expectations with role definitions to support the expectations. When administrators adequately enforce role-set interactions with instructional coaches, social satisfaction of instructional coaches is improved. Instructional coaches experience

increased supervision satisfaction when instructional coaching roles are enforced through scenarios able to provide meaningful feedback. This feedback then contributes to instructional coach growth satisfaction.

Ongoing Administrative Support for the Instructional Coaching Growth

Instructional coaches, in their boundary spanning roles, mediate the teaching and administrative role-sets. Concurrent with this process is the necessity of instructional coaches to provide new innovations to the role-sets with which they interact. Without continuous access to innovations, instructional coaches are unable to maintain boundary-spanning roles. With the massive amount of educational research, conferences, and university programs, not to mention the Internet, instructional coaches are wise to focus their efforts on those areas of greatest impact to teachers and their own ability to conduct the instructional coaching role. It stands to reason, then, that when instructional coaches are provided specific areas of focus, based on administrative feedback and teacher needs, that the boundary spanning nature of the instructional coaching role becomes easier to manage because their research and learning become manageable, preventing role overload. Furthermore, because of the focus on school-level needs as determined by administrators, providing boundaries of instructional coaching role expectations reduces role conflict and role ambiguity.

Experiences of satisfied instructional coaches. Cynthia's growth satisfaction was characterized by her district's emphasis on continuous growth through professional development. The board of education values growth, and was willing to commit resources toward not only instructional coaching, but also

broader professional development. Through these resources, Cynthia partook in a variety of professional development experiences recommended by the district or self-identified and of personal interest:

Our board of education really values professional development, and what has been such a blessing about this district is that in this position, there are a lot of opportunities for us to do some professional development within my own team. We frequently are asked to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops, and things like that over a variety of different topics that maybe we will be working on within our district. But we also have full support if there are things in which we seek out.

These areas of personal need came about because of Cynthia's reflective nature. If there is an area where Cynthia needs to grow, she believes it's her role to further her professional growth. She believes that, while instructional coaches are not experts in every topic, that instructional coaches should work to grow and learn:

We also don't claim to be the masters of every topic of every grade level of every subject area of every possible thing that public education can throw at us, so we really strive to be seen as students ourselves. Just as we expect our teachers ourselves to grow every year... we show that we also grow every year.

The district, through the well-communicated value they placed on personal growth, was supportive of this approach. When new initiatives are forthcoming, Cynthia identified resources that could be supportive of areas where she needs to learn more. She attended many conferences and participated in book studies. Cynthia

considers her instructional coaching team to be “very proactive and take initiative and start to develop our own knowledge base the best we can to support teachers.” Cynthia’s personal professional development goals have focused on bilingual education, as there was an increasing population of bilingual students in her school district. Within her school district exist bilingual education resources of which she was able to take advantage, as well as out-of-district trainings in which her district was supportive of her participation. These growth opportunities increased Cynthia’s ability to enhance her boundary spanning abilities, having increased innovations to supply the teaching and administrative role-sets and providing filtering guidance based on teacher and district-established needs.

With regards to instructional coaching specifically, Cynthia had multiple resources available to further her growth, the most impressive of which was locally sourced. In the county in which Cynthia’s district was located, there existed an instructional coaching network where coaches could discuss and reflect upon their coaching experiences:

We also have a pretty strong network in our county of instructional coaching and opportunities to get together with other coaches... It’s been so great in our county to have a coaching network because we are talking to coaches from all over our county, and a lot of them are doing similar things. They are steps ahead of us and are steps behind us, so we are kind of rolling along at different rates, but we have other closes very close. We’ve had time where we met face-to-face with some of them because they’re working on something similar to what we are at the same time. We have been able to

share a lot of resources and things like that with them just having a coaching network within the county.

Beyond the county-based and traditional professional development opportunities available, Cynthia took advantage of Internet-based communication tools stating that, “to be perfectly honest, I have become a much better educator in general through Twitter and social media. I can do my own professional development with topics from people all around the world.” While able to gain new strategies from a much broader online audience, Cynthia still relied on books to provide insight, and she “couldn’t even count how many coaching types of books we’ve read.” Again, however, these book studies were expanded beyond her instructional coaching team to other district teams in similar leadership roles, such as the school-wide enrichment and technology coaches; within these groups, all of the various district coaches collaborated and discussed applications of the books to their professional practices. By utilizing her access to both local and global collaboration opportunities, Cynthia had additional tools to improve her boundary spanning abilities and enhance her importance to the teaching and administrative role-sets.

Overall, Cynthia had a wide variety of professional growth opportunities available to her, opportunities of which she used to improve her growth. These opportunities were not only important to Cynthia personally, but they were also important parts of the district’s culture of continuous improvement, a culture in which Cynthia was a comfortable part.

Like Cynthia, Ginger participated in various professional growth opportunities provided by her district, collegial collaboration, and through

independent sources. From the start of her instructional coaching position, Ginger received training specific to her instructional coaching role. This training, Cognitive Coaching, provided her skills that have helped her approach her job more effectively by defining instructional coaching roles. This definition of roles reduces role ambiguity while providing the skills to ensure coaching expectations are the same between teachers and the instructional coach:

When I was first hired as a coach, [all of the newly-hired instructional coaches] went through an eight-day training called Cognitive Coaching, which was invaluable. It was really, really helpful in that it taught us to really listen what people are saying...and sort of read between the lines and getting if there is a problem, really to find out what the issue is. If they want to reflect on a lesson that they've done, or if they want to plan...so that we can get to the root of whatever is being discussed so that it can be coached most effectively. ...I've used those tactics on a regular basis and strive to continue to do that so I can be as effective with the teachers as possible.

In addition to the Cognitive Coaching training, Ginger has attended conferences with her teaching colleagues. Because she is an English teacher by training, she had much to learn about math, particularly with the implementation of the Common Core standards. As such, Ginger was encouraged to learn along with the math teachers and become part of the team—further enshrining her status as a teacher and collaborator:

I need to be able to coach a math teacher or science teacher or history teacher. So any kind of conference is available if it's not expensive, and of

course I don't have teacher responsibilities, I am encouraged to attend....ones with other math teachers so I can be with them and learn along with them as they are learning together so that I'm not the English teacher coming in to sell the math teachers on what to do.

By providing these growth opportunities for Ginger, the district helped her to not only learn new skills beneficial to her job, but also build rapport with teachers outside of her traditional content area. In so doing, Ginger is gaining useful innovations that can be disseminated through her boundary spanning role, concurrently enhancing her boundary spanning role by ensuring access to teachers—access gained through the development of collegial relationships.

The final way district administrators supported Ginger was through formal, regular meetings between the district's academic coaches and instructional coaches. During these meetings, the academic and instructional coaches focused on the Habits of Mind and the eight math [instructional] practices of Common Core Standards, trying out professional development on the instructional coaches. Not only were the instructional coaches able to learn more about upcoming initiatives and teaching practices, but they were also able to stay "one step ahead of our teachers...and can answer the questions we need to." This growth opportunity not only allowed Ginger to develop her skills, but also apply them in structured ways to support her instructional coaching role.

Internet resources have also had an effect on Ginger's personal growth, as she, like many others, has taken to online resources and social media to learn more about content, coaching, and best practices. She described herself as a Twitter

“fanatic,” with one particular collaboration source as a favorite for professional development:

I am also a fanatic for Twitter. A lot of my professional development takes place on Wednesday night with an educational coach chat which I participate in on a regular basis. That’s actually been one of my favorites for professional development because it’s something that I’ve chosen, and if I’ve chosen it, it’s more meaningful to me.

With the instant access the Internet provided, Ginger was able to learn when it is convenient for her. This worked well for her, as it aligned well to her philosophy of personal growth:

I think that’s my biggest ‘ah ha’—we are all on this journey together. And just like we say ‘all of our students can learn, just not at the same time and not in the same way,’ with teachers, we’re all just people while learning together. Not everybody is going to get to the same place at the same time, but everybody can get there.

By understanding the nature of personal, professional growth, Ginger was able to enhance her boundary spanning role by providing innovations to the teachers in a manner that will preserve her legitimacy and encourage additional teachers to view her as a resource.

Samantha, in addition to personal efforts to improve professional performance, had access to district resources, including a paid consultant who worked with the newly implemented special education instructional coaching program. Multiple contracted days to work with the consultant were provided for

the instructional coaches. The hired consultant specialized in special education instructional coaching and provided training regarding IEP compliance, state laws, and transition procedures as well as instructional coach identified needs. Needs-based sessions focused on what the instructional coaches were experiencing in their roles, providing opportunities for discussion and reflection:

We have contracted days with our consultant and we will look at different needs that we as coaches in the district have to help us with our job, and that one of those things was how do we deal with conflict. It was the situations in another building with one of the coaches and a teacher had a very, very big disagreement...and we've been able to go back and reflect with my coworkers in that position. How do we go back in and work with those teachers?

In addition, the training with the consultant reminded instructional coaches of how to handle concerns in a manner respecting all sides of the coaching process:

We have had a little bit of training on [conflict] with our consultant that has come in, and we're really looking at taking out the personal part of it and maybe saying, 'okay, maybe I need to process and need to take some time to really think about both side of the issue and make a time—especially if the discussion is very heated or emotions are running very high—to make sure that we take a step back because nothing ever productive is going to happen when emotions are high on either side.

By developing skills to avoid conflict or handle it appropriately when it arises, instructional coaches are better able to reduce the role conflict that can inflict damage on the teacher-instructional coach relationship.

Outside of the extensive consultant and supervisor growth experiences, the district did not provide specific professional development opportunities for instructional coaches. Consequently, Samantha employed an independent approach to growth. Samantha's overarching belief was that she is "always looking at ways I can learn more that I can help to benefit my students; how can I make a bigger difference?" In an instructional coaching role, however, the students the coach guides are teachers. Because of her audience, Samantha believed that what she shared with teachers must be beneficial and useful, a belief that she had in common with her supervisor and building principals.

Samantha's self-realized area of weakness was with the general education-special education co-teaching model, a method of teaching with which she was generally familiar but had not experienced as a classroom teacher. Recognizing that the co-teaching model was an area that she would need to focus on as an instructional coach, she sought out more knowledge to be effective for teachers. This desire to grow to support teachers was an important aspect of Samantha's instructional coaching role:

I tried to learn more about the co-teaching model because that was an area that was still somewhat new to me, not totally new, but I didn't co-tech frequently, but still an area where I feel that I need to learn a lot more about to make me more successful in helping teachers to do that successfully. Also,

looking at different coaching strategies, and how can I help teachers? How can I get the most bang for my buck when I'm working with them—'hey, can I provide you with some different strategies you can try?' So I need to keep increasing my strategy toolbox so I can help them.

Samantha's knowledge of her staff allowed her to tailor resources to meet their needs. Such usefulness of innovations enhanced the value placed by teachers on her boundary-spanning role while reducing role ambiguity by enshrining Samantha as a technical core resource. Dissemination of information was ongoing for Samantha, as she worked diligently as a teacher to become involved in participating in district professional development opportunities, the same ones that provided her leadership opportunities leading to her instructional coaching role.

Experiences of dissatisfied instructional coaches. Of the three dissatisfied instructional coaches, Nola appears to have access to the widest range of professional development sources, employing a mix of graduate education and district resources. She is currently completing coursework toward a Master's degree in order to earn a reading specialist certification. Nola credited her background in her previous school district for providing a strong foundation:

I'm currently taking Master's classes to get my reading specialist certificate. I feel like I've got a lot of background and training in [my previous state]. My school district there provided me with a lot of training—just embedded in the job. [Here], it's supposed to be some time for us to be able to do some research, read recent articles, keep up on those sorts of things.

At the same time, when compared to her current job, the training opportunities she was provided in her previous district were more formalized and role specific as compared to the current independent research approach. Nola, however, used independent research to her advantage when possible:

I do a lot of reading of current books that come out, looking online, trying to find different websites and things that offer some information and best practices and that sort of thing. Just kind of keeping myself up to date with those sorts of things.

That's not to say that the district provided no formalized training. Nola described monthly meetings with her district administrator that seemed to offer some benefit:

We as lit coaches have a monthly meeting where we meet with each other and go over what's going on in the schools and then we have trainings that are specialized for us that attend. And there's one specific coach in our district, very, very knowledgeable. She's gone out and received LETRS [best practices in literacy instruction] training, and she comes back and shares those with us. And, we've actually gone through the trainings as well.

While existing trainings provided benefit, Nola felt as though more training would be helpful. In fact, some instructional coaches in her district received additional training because funding allows for such trainings, trainings that Nola would have benefited from:

And so I feel like the district does provide some kind of—and I say some opportunities for growth—but I feel like a lot of it is on my own. And I think that it varies according to what school you go to and if they have Title I

funding or if they have extra funds for that. I am not at a Title I school where; we don't have extra funding for resources and ...workshops and things like that. So I don't get to go to a lot of those. But right now, I feel like some of my needs are being met through attending graduate school.

Still, Nola attended graduate school and received benefits from participating in individually initiated growth.

Nola appreciated her personal growth because of her ability to share her knowledge with others. By conducting district professional development trainings, she felt motivated to continue her growth. However, she was unable to participate to the fullest extent because of her building principal's admonition not to volunteer to conduct district trainings, an example of role conflict:

That's another time I feel really good—when I can go out at the district level or at the school level and do some trainings, and my hands are tied right now; I can't do any of that. And so, as far as me growing, I don't really have a lot of opportunities to share what I know, so yeah, what is the point of spending all this money and getting my masters!

With that said, Nola loved learning for the sake of learning. She claimed that she was "just that type of person" who strives to know as much as she can.

Rhonda depended heavily upon independent learning for her professional development, as she and her colleagues often created the district-provided professional development she "received." Consequently, Rhonda's professional growth focus was on her instructional coaching program, seeking ways "to improve,

to expand, to go to the next level, or take [it] deeper” to further enhance technology or enhance collaboration with teams and departments:

Whether you’re taking about a program on a weekly basis, or a program on an annual basis or even on an individual basis, you need to have a plan of action, and you need to run with the plan. Collect data and reevaluate your plan on a periodic basis to make sure you actually accomplish what you are trying to accomplish and if the plan is taking you where you want to go—the best route using the best resources. And so that periodical checking, I think, is really vital to make sure that organization or individual is on the right track and doing the best, and so I try to do that on a personal level.

Using the data gained from her program evaluation, Rhonda was able to make changes to her instructional coaching program and identify the professional development needs of her teachers, subsequently providing them relevant tools that increase her legitimacy as a boundary spanner while reducing role conflict. These needs are then addressed through district-provided professional development trainings, trainings encouraged by the district:

On a district level, we encourage everyone to keep up with their professional development, and we have a lot of professional development for staff and the teachers and such because, frankly, the CISs provide and write it and give it.

Because the instructional coaches provided the training for the teachers, teachers were able to grow professionally. However, the district, while encouraging all staff to participate in professional development, did little to provide professional development to instructional coaches. Consequently, instructional coaches were

often left to their own devices to learn and grow, growth that appeared to lack direction. Without direction, professional growth can steer itself in a direction oppositional to school or district beliefs or initiatives, opening up additional opportunities for role conflict to influence the instructional coaching role:

For us, I don't really feel like there's a whole lot—that is, we don't really have anything that we go to to make our growth better other than just 'hey, keep current,' kind of follow the direction that we sometimes get. So it's really on us to do that. The district doesn't really provide that for us, and there really hasn't been a direction about best practices for CISs.

Rhonda, desiring to grow as an instructional coach, assumed responsibility for her own professional development and undertook

...a lot of professional reading. I do a lot of reading of research, talking, collaborating with other professional groups, I belong to professional organizations. I'm always on the lookout for conferences or things that can give me more information or teach me something that I don't know that I can do that either improves me or that I can pass along to my staff.

Rhonda was satisfied with conducting her own professional development, as "I know what I need, and I am a self motivator and a self-starter." Even so, this personally focused professional growth was difficult because of the myriad of responsibilities Rhonda possessed and the vast amounts of knowledge prospects of which she could take advantage. With all of these responsibilities, there was little time for professional development built in to her position, requiring investments of

personal time. Again, direction with regards to growth would have made Rhonda's professional growth process more efficient:

You want to be a professional, but ["reading quantitative research," "going to every conference under the sun"] is not what you want to do every night of your life. I think a little bit of direction in terms of your professional development, 'maybe you should belong to this organization,' or 'you should try to read this many articles,' or 'you should try to take a class,' I think some direction would be helpful because otherwise, you just kind of wander around sometimes. Like 'okay, oh I need to know what's next.' There's a lot of it out there that is current. Really, can we narrow that down just a little? Such guidance from supervisors would have provided Rhonda the ability to focus on specific areas of professional development that would be useful and practical to the boundary spanning nature of her instructional coaching role.

Occasions to exert independence also factor into growth satisfaction, as they provide opportunities for instructional coaches the ability to think critically. Recalling Rhonda's supervisor satisfaction, we are reminded that Rhonda's instructional coaching role-set was "narrowed a bit" since the hiring of the her new building principal, reducing the number of opportunities in which she has to take independent action. In addition, there were many opportunities where Rhonda waited on the actions of others because she lacked the authority to act independently; this lack of independent action and ability to learn from her own successes and mistakes further reduced learning opportunities that Rhonda had available to her.

Although Rhonda did not enjoy the level of independence she preferred, she found challenge in the instructional coaching role, another attribute of personal growth:

It's never the same job two days in a row, so I think that's a good thing and a bad thing from time to time. But it's always interesting, and I like change, I like the fact that it's not always the same thing day in and day out. ...I just could see myself continuing to be a curriculum specialist just because the job is always changing. It's not something that gets static.

Various instructional coaching experiences were frustrating for Rhonda at times, but the variety inherent in her job made it satisfying enough for her to remain in her role.

Allison, on the other hand, worked under a significant level of independence; this independence also described her access to professional development. Most of Allison's professional development has come through personal learning opportunities borne from staff needs determined through survey deployment and analysis. To provide her professional growth philosophy, Allison states, "If I don't feel like I have it and I don't find it, then sometimes I build that for the entire school." In living her philosophy, she researched and identified supplemental materials to bolster teacher knowledge, and sometimes accomplished resource acquisition by attending national conferences. When attending the conferences, she looked forward to "learning more there and bringing that information back to my school." It did not appear as though much professional development was provided by the school, or at least was minimally addressed by the participant.

With that said, in finding ways to improve herself, Allison was able to find resources of benefit, though more sources are needed if Allison is going to be efficient in her boundary-spanning role. The level of information necessary for her to conduct her instructional coaching role, especially within the context of the dual instructional coaching-speech pathologist role, would be difficult to maintain through independent research alone.

Although Allison works in a challenging instructional coaching environment, she has proven herself able and willing to find information as necessary. Recall that Allison felt there was a gap in quality professional development for speech pathologists; in her search for solutions, she decided it best to bring the professional development opportunities to her by hosting a statewide speech pathology conference.

The bottom line. Instructional coaches need opportunities to grow professionally to ensure they are able to carry forth the boundary-spanning nature inherent to their instructional coaching role. Growth opportunities are reduced with administrators are unable to provide the coaching support and guidance necessary to effectively focus the instructional coach. This reduction in opportunity results in decreased growth satisfaction and potentially damage the instructional coach's ability to mediate the teaching and administrative role-sets.

Easing Role-Set Moderation Processes: Implications for Practice

To review, this research proposes that among highly satisfied instructional coaches, associated job characteristics consisted of (1) an administratively created vision based on knowledge of realistic instructional coaching roles; (2) the

definition of instructional coaching roles through collaboration between the instructional coach and administrator; (3) administrative communication of instructional coaching roles to the teacher, administrative, and instructional coaching role-sets while monitoring the role-sets to ensure adherence to the instructional coaching roles, providing feedback necessary for instructional coaching growth; and (4) instructional coach growth opportunities based on administrative feedback and teacher needs. Where these characteristics were compromised, job satisfaction was reduced due to increased role conflict, role ambiguity, and in an unusual circumstance, role overload.

In situations demonstrating positive instructional coaching satisfaction characteristics, instructional coaches have increased probabilities of efficiently mediating the teaching and administrative role-sets through Merton's (1957) role mediation processes, processes used to resolve conflicting role-set expectations (role conflict), provide clarity to roles where none presently exists (role ambiguity), or determine what tasks must be accomplished or neglected based on priority when faced with more tasks than time (role overload). Instructional coaches use a combination of these role mediation processes, starting with those less difficult to implement and working toward more severe options (Merton, 1957). The ultimate goal, then, is for administrators to ensure that Merton's mediation processes are efficiently performed, allowing for instructional coaches to focus on professional development duties as opposed to moderating role stressors. Each of Merton's (1957) moderation processes is discussed and provides suggestions of how practitioners can support positive instructional coaching satisfaction.

Weighing the importance of statuses. When using role mediation processes, instructional coaches first turn to weighing the importance of statuses. During this stage instructional coaches survey their role-set and determine which role-set members hold the most influence. Once this has been determined, instructional coaches then prioritize tasks or provide definitions to roles most likely to satisfy the most important status holders.

When it has been established by administrators to instructional coaches that administrators are highly important status holders within the instructional coaching role-set, it becomes easier for instructional coaches to select behaviors that align with the administrator's vision of coaching. This can be good or bad, depending entirely upon the level of administrative knowledge of instructional coaching roles. This is why it is important for instructional coaching job satisfaction that administrators create a vision of instructional coaching based on realistic expectations. When based on expectations typically associated with instructional coaching, alignment occurs between the instructional coaches' and administrators' visions of instructional coaching, making mediation processes less difficult. When administrators monitor and evaluate instructional coaching programs, while providing helpful feedback, they serve to strengthen this alignment and ensure mediation processes remain efficient.

Using the differences in power. In the absence of instructional coaching role clarity or role definition, instructional coaches will use the differences in power among the various role-set members to fill in the void. This can be good or bad depending upon the situation. Assuming that administrators are not among the

power holders in the instructional coaching role-set, instructional coaches may look to other teachers, instructional coaches, or outside research to provide role clarity or role definition. This is a helpful process when influential members of the instructional coaching role-set are knowledgeable about instructional coaching and are desirous of its implementation. This process can backfire when influential members provide inadequate or misleading information or are resistant to instructional coaching processes.

Assuming that administrators are among the influential members of the instructional coaching role-set, instructional coaches can utilize administrative power to define and enforce instructional coach-teacher relationships, providing institutionalized roles that enhance role clarity through role definition. In addition, when administrators are used to define and enforce relationships to instructional coaches, it removes instructional coaches from quasi-administrative leadership positions; such clarification of roles improves instructional coach social satisfaction by reducing the confusion associated with the administrative nature of the instructional coaching role. Administrators can also serve to resolve difficult situations, providing backing for instructional coaching initiatives while maintaining control over the instructional coaching program.

Insulating the role from observation. Instructional coaches, when acting autonomously, have many opportunities to shield coaching roles from administrative observation, particularly in situations where administrators possess little effective knowledge of instructional coaching or little communication with the instructional coach. In isolating the role from observation, instructional coaches

may claim to be working toward administrative goals but not delivering, resulting in unproductive wheel spinning that may be just as frustrating to the coach as to the administrator. When instructional coaches begin insulating their roles from observation, it risks damaging the boundary spanning relationship by diminishing the amount of information that passes through the boundary spanning position. With incomplete information, neither the teaching nor administrative role-sets are able to make informed decisions because neither group possesses all of the information necessary to do so. Misunderstandings and miscommunication can result that lead to mistrust—the kiss of death for an instructional coach whose position depends upon quality relationships founded on trust. It becomes imperative, then, to provide structures that prevent such insulation from occurring. Through adherence to the proposed attributes of satisfied instructional coaches, transparency is present that greatly reduces the potential of role insulation.

Trumping up the observability of conflicting demands. When role conflict and role ambiguity create dissatisfaction among instructional coaches, these roles are often made more obvious. Shedding light on problems in an obvious manner has both benefits and disadvantages. By highlighting concerns in a transparent way, the warning signs can be noted and the underlying problems addressed as soon as they are known. Conversely, when conflicting demands are significant, there is an increased likelihood that role-set members will stake out their positions on the issues, leading to divisiveness and a lack of acceptance of decisions made to resolve the concerns. In many instructional coaching scenarios where this occurs, say with large-scale technology initiatives, instructional coaches

can be caught in the middle of these conflicting demands and left to repair relationships damaged by the administrative and teaching role-sets. This is not an ideal position for an instructional coach, as they must maintain positive relationships with both the teaching and administrative role-sets to be effective boundary spanners.

Seeking mutual support. When instructional coaches seek mutual support, they seek the counsel of others to inform instructional coaching roles. Such counsel may include formal consulting support, resource distribution, or the informal friendly sounding board. In seeking this counsel, instructional coaches are able to use attained resources to provide role clarity and definition where it is lacking. While collaboration is often highly effective, even encouraged, it can be disadvantageous if none of the support is coming from the administrative role-set. It is to administrators' advantage to guide at least some of the message; after all, administrators, it is hoped, have established visions, provided role definition, and ensure compliance to established role definitions. To avoid role conflict, instructional coaches and administrators must be working together toward common goals. Administrators should provide instructional coaches professional growth opportunities aligned to the common goals, utilizing formalized collaboration times, outside consultants, relevant research, and opportunities to attend professional conferences to focus instructional coaches toward appropriate support resources.

For what it is worth, it is also important for instructional coaches to have informal support structures outside of the administrative role-set. Instructional

coaches need chances to vent—as do we all—and administrators may not an appropriate venting forum.

Abriding the role-set. Abriding the role set is what instructional coaches do when they feel they have no other options. When abridging the role-set, instructional coaches eliminate from their role-set the role-set members with whom they are unable to mediate role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload. When instructional coach job satisfaction is suffering significantly because of role stressors, instructional coaches may elect to stop working with the sources of conflict. Because instructional coaches work with the teaching and administrative role-sets, and because they serve a boundary spanning role that requires bridging the two role-sets, cessation of relationships with teachers or administrators is dangerous to the instructional coaching role when to its extreme. Instructional coaches are responsible for the professional development of all teachers with whom they work, not simply the agreeable ones. Administrators should provide resolution strategies aimed at identifying problems early and quickly resolving them. And, of course, adherence to the proposed pattern of positive instructional coaching experiences should only help reduce role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload opportunities.

Conclusion. This dissertation explores the relationships between role conflict and job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job satisfaction, and role overload and job satisfaction within a convenience sample of instructional coaches. In exploring these relationships, this research found that, when controlling for socioeconomic status, teacher-to-instructional coach ratio, and principal-to-

instructional coach ratio, that statistically significant, negative relationships to some job satisfaction subcategories existed for role conflict (supervision and growth satisfaction) and role ambiguity (supervision, growth, and general satisfaction), while role overload had no statistically significant relationship to any of the job satisfaction subcategories.

Supervision and growth satisfaction are at the heart of the instructional coach's ability to cultivate relationships necessary to maintain the boundary-spanning role that is inherent in the position. When instructional coaches are subjected to role conflict and role ambiguity, satisfaction with their supervisors—most often principals with whom they must collaborate closely—is reduced. Resulting from this reduction in satisfaction is an inability to maintain a relationship with administrators, a key constituency in the boundary-spanning nature of instructional coaching positions. When growth satisfaction suffers, the instructional coaches' relationships with teachers suffer, as the instructional coaches are no longer able to supply the teaching role-set with the innovations necessary to maintain legitimacy. In a situation where instructional coaches are no longer able to further teacher professional growth and development—the hallmark of instructional coaching—relationships with teachers are damaged, relationships that are key for instructional coaches to perform their duties. In both of these scenarios, the boundary-spanning nature of the instructional coaching position is damaged and can prove detrimental for the instructional coaches' abilities to perform their jobs.

Hope emerges for instructional coaches through a pattern of instructional coaching experiences that identify means of supporting supervision and growth

satisfaction. Among highly satisfied instructional coaches, four common experiences existed that reduced the prospects of role conflict and role ambiguity taking hold: (1) knowledge of instructional coaching used by the administrator to develop a workable vision of the instructional coaching program; (2) instructional coach-administrator collaboration that provides specific, actionable processes to instructional coaching roles; (3) administrative publication of these role definitions to teaching role-set and enforcement of the same; and (4) ongoing instructional coach growth and support opportunities. Where these experiences were absent, or only partially existent, instructional coaches experienced frustration, confusion, and conflict arising from inefficient mediation processes arising from damaged relationships with teachers or administrators. But, when these experiences existed for instructional coaches, role mediation processes were simplified through clear and informed direction, quality collaboration, universal enforcement of roles, and ongoing growth opportunities. Instructional coaches were able to maintain positive working relationships with administrators and remain legitimate sources of innovations for teachers, maintaining both sides of the boundary-spanning relationship necessary for instructional coaching job success.

Implications for future research. This research provides as many questions as it purports to address: What would this study look like with a random sample? Do each of the role stressors have equal influence on instructional coach job satisfaction subcategories? Does the purported pattern hold true across other instructional coaching situations?

While a work of research that provides an initial entry point into the job satisfaction experiences of instructional coaches, this study is by no means exhaustive. This study should be replicated using a random sample and additional controls, allowing for the use of more robust statistical analysis techniques that were inappropriate for this sample. Predictive analyses would go farther in identifying role stress contributions to job satisfaction subcategories, providing areas of instructional coaching job satisfaction upon which practitioners can focus their efforts.

In addition, a proposed pattern of highly satisfied instructional coaches was provided through this research, a first using role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload to frame those experiences. However, this framework should be further tested utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the framework's generalizability beyond this sample of instructional coaches.

Finally, and most importantly, future research should connect instructional coaching job satisfaction to job performance. The relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is the subject of fierce debate, and it is partially for this reason this research focuses solely on job satisfaction attributes. This research focused unabashedly on job satisfaction because satisfaction is based on feelings, and feelings drive relationships; as has been stated throughout in this research, relationships are foundational to the success of instructional coaches.

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TABLES

Table 1

Qualitative Interview Sample Information

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Highest Attained Education	School SES ^a	Years of Teaching Experience	Years of Instructional Coaching
Samantha Bexar	Female	Caucasian	Masters, Special Ed	53%	12	1
Cynthia Carlson	Female	Caucasian	Masters, Ed Admin	41%	10	6
Ginger Hoyt	Female	Caucasian	Bachelors	86%	20	2
Nola Melvin	Female	Caucasian	Bachelors, Grad Hours	16%	7	3
Allison Morello	Female	Caucasian	Masters, Speech Pathology	60%	13 ^b	9
Rhonda Mueller	Female	Caucasian	Doctorate, Ed Admin	12%	15	2

^a Socioeconomic status is defined as a percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch

^b Years of experience were as a speech pathologist, not a classroom teacher

Table 2

Instructional Coaches with High Job Satisfaction

Participant Pseudonym	Supervision Satisfaction	Growth Satisfaction	Social Satisfaction	General Satisfaction	Composite Score	Satisfaction Ranking ^a
Samantha Bexar	7.00 High	6.50 High	6.67 High	6.00 High	6.53 High	5
Cynthia Carlson	7.00 High	7.00 High	7.00 High	5.67 Mod High	6.61 High	2
Ginger Hoyt	7.00 High	6.75 High	7.00 High	6.67 High	6.57 High	4

^a Composite satisfaction score ranking out of 46 research participants

Table 3

Instructional Coaches with Low Job Satisfaction

Participant Pseudonym	Supervision Satisfaction	Growth Satisfaction	Social Satisfaction	General Satisfaction	Composite Score	Satisfaction Ranking ^a
Nola Melvin	1.67 Low	5.75 Mod High	7.00 High	3.33 Mod Low	3.54 Mod Low	45
Allison Morello	3.33 Mod Low	4.50 Moderate	3.67 Mod Low	4.67 Moderate	3.86 Mod Low	44
Rhonda Mueller	2.00 Low	4.75 Moderate	5.67 Mod High	6.33 High	3.88 Mod Low	43

^a Composite satisfaction score ranking out of 46 research participants

Table 4

Correlations Among Role Stressors, Job Satisfaction Measures, and Control Variables^a

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ROLE STRESSORS											
1. Role conflict ^b	27.31	5.77									
2. Role ambiguity ^b	19.09	7.82	.702***								
3. Role overload ^c	12.03	2.31	.380**	.197							
JOB SAT. MEASURES ^d											
4. Supervision satisfaction	5.32	1.59	-.618***	-.701***	-.238						
5. Social satisfaction	6.34	.72	-.221	-.336*	-.203	.402**					
6. Growth satisfaction	6.12	.77	-.408**	-.385**	-.140	.635***	.685***				
7. General satisfaction	5.78	.95	-.246	-.417***	-.066	.366*	.441***	.495***			
CONTROLS											
8. Socioeconomic status	49.37	27.95	-.108	-.151	.016	.008	.100	.153	.178		
9. Teacher to coach ratio	37.18	28.62	.200	.096	.064	.189	.114	.128	-.071	-.360*	
10. Principal to coach ratio	1.65	1.63	-.119	-.151	-.055	.353*	.386*	.320*	.247	-.114	.614***

^a Spearman rank-order correlations. Listwise $n=46$.

^b Role conflict and role ambiguity measures adapted from "Role Conflict and Ambiguity in Complex Organizations," by J.R. Rizzo, R.J. House, and S.I. Lirtzman, 1970, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, p. 150.

^c Role overload measures adapted from "Relationships of Stress to Individually and Organizationally Valued States: Higher Order Needs as a Moderator," by T.A. Beehr, J.T. Walsh, and T.D. Taber, 1976, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, p. 41.

^d Job satisfaction measures adapted from "The Job Diagnostic Survey: An Instrument for the Diagnosis of Jobs and the Evaluation of Job Redesign Projects," by J.R. Hackman and G.R. Oldham, 1974, Yale University New Haven, CT Department of Administrative Sciences.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .005$

Table 5

Partial Correlations Between Role Stressors and Job Satisfaction Measures Controlling for Socioeconomic Status, Teacher to Coach Ratio, and Principal to Coach Ratio^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Role conflict						
2. Role ambiguity	.677***					
3. Role overload	.359*	.174				
4. Supervision satisfaction	-.649***	-.713***	-.235			
5. Social satisfaction	-.144	-.268	-.188	.304*		
6. Growth satisfaction	-.395**	-.340*	-.133	.592***	.634***	
7. General satisfaction	-.140	-.344*	-.027	.307*	.349*	.436**

^a Spearman rank-order partial correlations. $n=46$.

* $p<.05$

** $p<.01$

*** $p<.005$

Table 6

Partial Correlations Between Role Stressors and Job Satisfaction Measures Controlling for Socioeconomic Status^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Role conflict						
2. Role ambiguity	.698***					
3. Role overload	.384**	.201				
4. Supervision satisfaction	-.621***	-.708***	-.239			
5. Social satisfaction	-.212	-.326*	-.206	.404**		
6. Growth satisfaction	-.399**	-.370*	-.144	.642***	.681***	
7. General satisfaction	-.232	-.401**	-.070	.370*	.432***	.481***

^a Spearman rank-order partial correlations. $n=46$.

* $p<.05$

** $p<.01$

*** $p<.005$

Table 7

Partial Correlations Between Role Stressors and Job Satisfaction Measures Controlling for Teacher to Coach Ratio^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Role conflict						
2. Role ambiguity	.700***					
3. Role overload	.376*	.192				
4. Supervision satisfaction	-.682***	-.736***	-.256			
5. Social satisfaction	-.250	-.350*	-.212	.390**		
6. Growth satisfaction	-.446**	-.402**	-.150	.628***	.681***	
7. General satisfaction	-.238	-.413**	-.062	.387**	.453**	.510***

^a Spearman rank-order partial correlations. $n=46$.

* $p<.05$

** $p<.01$

*** $p<.005$

Table 8

Partial Correlations Between Role Stressors and Job Satisfaction Measures Controlling for Principal to Coach Ratio^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Role conflict						
2. Role ambiguity	.697***					
3. Role overload	.377*	.191				
4. Supervision satisfaction	-.620***	-.700***	-.235			
5. Social satisfaction	-.191	-.304*	-.197	.309*		
6. Growth satisfaction	-.393**	-.360*	-.130	.589***	.643***	
7. General satisfaction	-.225	-.396**	-.054	.307*	.386**	.453***

^a Spearman rank-order partial correlations. *n*=46.

**p*<.05

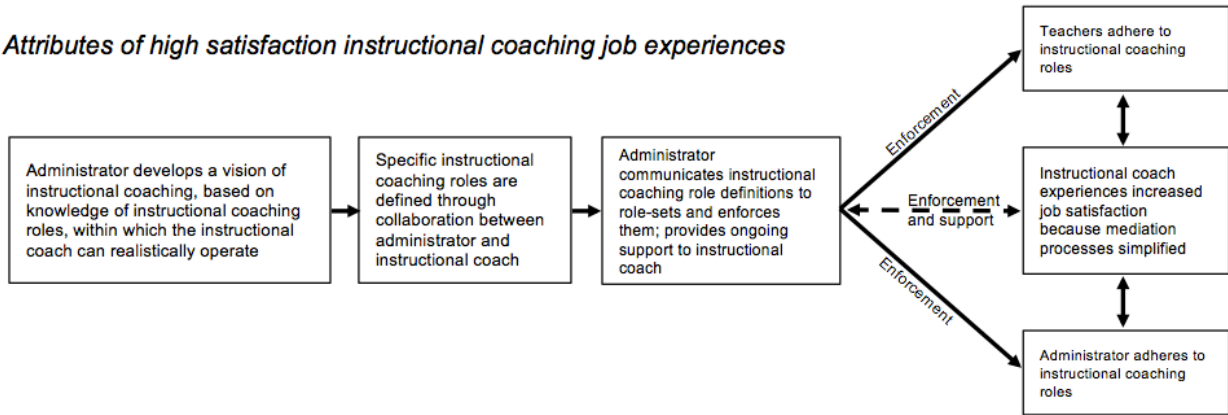
***p*<.01

****p*<.005

FIGURE

Figure 1

Attributes of high satisfaction instructional coaching job experiences



Appendix A

Questionnaire

Survey Questions Asked of Instructional Coaches

Construct and Author	Question
Pay satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	The amount of pay and fringe benefits I receive.
	The degree to which I am fairly paid for what I contribute to this organization.
Security satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	The amount of job security I have.
	How secure things look for me in the future in this organization.
Social satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	The people I talk to and work with on my job.
	The chance to get to know other people while on the job.
	The chance to help other people while at work.
Supervision satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	The degree of respect and fair treatment I receive from my boss.
	The amount of support and guidance I receive from my supervisor.
	The overall quality of the supervision I receive in my work.
Growth satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	The amount of personal growth and development I get in doing my job.
	The amount of independent thought and action I can exercise in my job.
	The amount of challenge in my job.
General satisfaction ^a Hackman and Oldham (1974)	Generally speaking I am very satisfied with this job.
	I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.
	I frequently think of quitting this job.
Role conflict ^b Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970)	I have to do things that should be done differently.
	I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.
	I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an

assignment.

I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.

I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.

I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.

Role ambiguity^c
Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970)

I feel certain about how much authority I have.

Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.

I know that I have divided my time properly.

I know what my responsibilities are.

I know exactly what is expected of me.

Explanation is clear of what has to be done.

I work on unnecessary things.

Role overload^d
Behr, Walsh, and Taber (1976)

I am given enough time to do what is expected of me on my job.

It often seems like I have too much work for one person to do.

The performance standards on my job are too high.

Participant information
Researcher constructed items

If you are willing to participate in follow up research, please provide your name.

If you are willing to participate in follow up research, please leave an email address at which you can be contacted.

In what city and state is your school district located?

What advice would you give policy makers, administrators, and researchers that would help them make your job easier?

Note. Only questions analyzed to respond to the research question are included in this table.

^a For each statement, participants selected Likert scores ranging from 1 = Extremely dissatisfied to 7 = Extremely satisfied.

^b For each statement, participants selected Likert scores ranging from 1 = Disagree strongly to 7 = Agree strongly.

^c For each statement, participants selected Likert scores ranging from 1 = Very false to 7 = Very true.

^d For each statement, participants selected Likert scores ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree.

Appendix B

Participant Quotations from Questionnaire

Suggestions to Improve Instructional Coaching as Provided by Instructional Coaches

Instructional Coach	Suggestion to Improve Instructional Coaching ^a
A.B.	Learn more about instructional coaching and what it takes and then allow the process to work
A.M.	Understand that coaching is a process...and that coaches need to be coached.
C.A.	Allow for two coaches on a campus - one to support primary grades (K-2) and one to support intermediate grades (3-5).
C.D.	Coaching is a very worthwhile investment. Teachers are at a multitude of levels of 'readiness'. Too much focus on one particular set of criteria e.g. Everyone is going to use 'accountable talk' (i.e. one size fits all model) is not the most effective and can create pushback by teachers. It is more productive to see each teacher as an individual learner and provide coaching from their current level of skills.
C.H.	Just do a little research and ask questions as to what we do
C.I.	Define the job before it is created. Have a vision for the role. Provide the resources that are needed for successful completion and then STAY the course long enough to know if the job is successful.
C.W.	I'm not sure what would make my job easier, this is the first year that we have had these roles in our board so we are pioneers in the field here! Perhaps after this year I will know more!
D.G.	Coaches need on-going coaching and learning opportunities too. Leadership skills, changing curricular/assessment practices and multiple coaching perspectives are very useful in this role.
D.J.	Collaborate, read the coaching books, learn the partnership approach, become instructional leaders not managers
D.T.	When implementing instructional coaching, make the objective clear to all staff and ensure a collaborative culture exists
J.B.	Give us more time for professional development
J.K.	My most significant issue while in my first four years of instructional coaching has been a disconnect between what my immediate evaluative supervisor (my principal) values and requires of me and what my coaching director values and envisions for the instructional coaching role. At one point, I was actually reprimanded formally in an evaluation for aligning myself

too closely to my coaching job description. It was falsely perceived by my principal that I was being non-compliant to her expectations that were not supportive or understanding of instructional coaching in general. My principal does not appear to perceive instructional coaching as a viable way to impact student learning and support teachers as opposed to providing direct student intervention services. Since this time, my priority has been to contribute to coaching initiatives at the building and district level as they come along, but my primary focus is on my direct student intervention instruction that my supervising principal clearly values and supports the most.

- J.N. The role of an instructional coach is important to the growth and continued achievement of schools. Teachers need to hear from administrators that the instructional coach position is one that is valued and supported and should be encouraged to collaborate with the coach. A defined job description is important, but the flexibility to adjust to needs and adapt to the ever-changing environment of education is crucial. Instructional coaches need ongoing support in their positions-with training (in instructional coaching processes and strategies as well as content area specific training), collaboration with other instructional coaches (from inside and outside their own school district), and opportunities to use their skills and abilities to make a difference in their school communities.
- K.B. A detailed job description or flow chart showing job duties.
- K.H. We need at least one IP in each school. I have tried to work at two schools and the partnership approach is almost impossible.
- L.D. Lower coach to teacher ratio
- L.F. Continuous funding. Every year, coaches wonder if they will be retained.
- L.M. Listen to us. We are still teachers at heart but can also see the big picture of a district. We are still on the front lines talking with real teachers.
- M.B. Narrow down the list of responsibilities in the job description so that we are not spread so thin and give us more autonomy or make it an administrative position.
- M.J. Clear job description
- M.L. My job requires me to wear many hats. Thus, sometimes I feel as if I am spread so thin. My school participates [sic] in the TAP program and I am a master teacher. Thus, I teach one class of high school students, plan/run a weekly professional development, field test and create an instructional strategy for the career teachers to implement, evaluate roughly 20 teachers and coach 6 teachers. I love working with the teachers and sitting down to speak about real classroom practice.

However, I am not qualified to create a strategy. In this regard, I need more guidance.

- M.M. What makes our job easier is "buy-in" from classroom teachers. Although we are trying to follow Jim Knight's partnership principles, we are still viewed as judging teachers. We are in the initial stages of our journey (yr 2) and it is still a struggle to be accepted as equals by our colleagues.
- N.P. Reporting to only one person; strong curricular leaders as principals; streamline repetitive paperwork that no one reads; professional development application; authority to complete the work I am being asked to do.
- S.B. Appreciate creativity and initiative! Make sure you celebrate it and ask what is going on and how you can support it. When, as a teacher leader, the coach needs an answer, please answer right away - they cant do their job without it!!!
- S.D. Work together towards the same goals in unity, allowing the professionals in the classrooms to guide the direction needed. They are the most knowledgeable and experienced. Those outside the trenches need to assist where and when needed, not dictate the commands.
- T.M. Lots of communication and make the time every week to sit down and review things/plans, share new ideas/learning and share concerns/celebrations
- T.Z. Learn more about instructional coaching and the impacts on student achievement. Money should be set aside for instructional coaches, especially at Title 1 buildings.

Note. ^a Instructional coach suggestions were not edited unless the submitted response prevented clarity of thought due to capitalization or other typographical errors; in such cases, only typographical edits were made.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

- A. Level of education
- B. Socioeconomic status of your school (FRL)
- C. Gender
- D. Ethnicity
- E. Size of your school
- F. Years as a teacher
- G. Years as an instructional coach
- H. Real name
- I. Pseudonym by which you wish to be known

Job Satisfaction Questions

- A. Describe your job as an instructional coach. Upon what is this description based? Personal experience/job description/research/supervisory edict?
- B. Describe the clarity of your principals' expectations of your job.
- C. How are you compensated? Admin/teacher/classified/certified/etc.?
- D. How satisfied are you working in your current position? What things influence your satisfaction?
- E. Where do you see yourself professionally in five years? Do you anticipate remaining an instructional coach? Describe why you feel as you do.
- F. Describe a specific time (or multiple times) where a teacher and an administrator had differing expectations of you. What happened? How did you handle the situation? How did it make you feel about your job?
- G. Describe how disagreement is handled between you and your principal. How satisfied are you with how your supervisor handles things? Would you change anything?
- H. What training have you received in handling conflict? How have you used such training to handle situations that have arisen?
- I. When conflict occurs, how does it make you feel about your personal professional growth?
- J. In what ways are you encouraged to grow professionally? On what aspects of your performance do you focus for professional growth?
- K. What professional development is available to you in your instructional coaching role? How would you describe its quality? How has it helped you be a successful instructional coach?
- L. Describe a time where a lack of clarity in your job created conflict or controversy between you and your work "friends."
- M. Describe the evaluation method used by the principal to evaluate you. What are your thoughts on that evaluation method?
- N. What do you see as obstacles to your effectiveness as an instructional coach?
- O. What else would you like to tell me about your instructional coaching experiences?

Appendix D

Human Subjects Committee Consent Statements

Participant Information Statement in Questionnaire

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, School of Education, at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

We are conducting this study to better understand instructional coaching job roles. This will entail your completion of a survey and, if you indicate willingness, potential participation in a follow-up interview. The survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The content of the survey should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of instructional coaching job roles. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. Survey data collected will be securely stored on SurveyMonkey's servers and on a password-protected drive owned by the researcher until such time that no follow-up research is necessary, at which time, it will be destroyed.

Interview data, if collected, will be audio or video recorded depending upon interview method and transcribed by the researcher. Participants have the option of stopping the interview at any time, though recording of interviews is required to participate in the study procedures. In the event that interview data is used in the research, pseudonyms will be associated with provided statements. The researcher will keep recordings and transcriptions of interviews on a secure, password-protected drive and for a period of ten years from the date of interview, after which the data will be destroyed. Any printed copies of transcriptions will be kept in a secure file cabinet that only the researcher will have access to. After a period of ten years from the date of interview, the data will be destroyed.

While the researcher goes to great lengths to ensure confidentiality, it is possible with Internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of the survey and follow-up participation in any interviews indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email irb@ku.edu.

Oral Consent Statement in Qualitative Interviews

As a student in the University of Kansas's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, I am conducting a research project about instructional coach job conditions. I would like to interview you to obtain your views on specific instructional coach job conditions that you experience. Your participation is expected to take about 60 minutes. You have no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of the instructional coaching role within a school. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may hear your response.

This interview will be recorded. Recording is required to participate. You may stop taping at any time. The recordings will be transcribed by me. Only I, the investigator, and/or the faculty supervisor will have access to recordings and transcriptions, which will be stored in a secure password-protected hard drive (with printed copies stored in a secure filing cabinet) and will be destroyed in 10 years.

Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Suzanne Rice, at the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Office at (785) 864-7429 or email irb@ku.edu.