EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP COACHES' DEVELOPMENT OF DOMAIN
SPECIFIC EXPERTISE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

JANICE ELLIS-LEWIS. Educational leadership coaches' development of domain specific expertise: A phenomenological study. (Under the direction of DR. LISA G. DRISCOLL AND DR. JAMES E. LYONS).

Districts and schools having high poverty and low achievement experience the highest rates of administrator turnover. A recent paradigm shift promotes "coaching" as a supportive and focused intervention that might move the district and/or school forward. Leadership coaches , possessing specialized expertise in addressing school achievement "turnaround" and apparent leadership "failures", may be enlisted to coach these administrators. This study examined how leadership coaches working with superintendents and principals in k-12 education developed *expertise* over time, specifically through deliberate practice and reflective practice. This study investigated the following questions: (a) how did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise, and (b) how did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise?

A phenomenological study using data from comprehensive interviews, background information shared by the coaches and a coaching career mapping exercise performed by the coaches, was conducted. Five leadership coaches participated in the study. Data were coded, thematized, and triangulated. Three emergent themes were found which contributed to domain specific expertise through deliberate and reflective practices: 1) knowledge base; 2) building relationships; and 3) personal development. While there was no attempt to qualify any participant coach as an expert or not, based on these participants' experience the composite portrait of a coach derived from a synthesis

of all responses indicates some confirmation of the role of deliberate practices (skills,

strategies and tools) and deliberate reflection as developing expertise.

DEDICATION

For

Reginald, Reggie, and Kimberli

Mom, Dad, Vennie, and Kenny

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Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).

This has been quite a journey…

I thank my husband , Reginald for his love , encouragement and support during my journey. You have been my "rock" throughout our marriage. You have always been a great provider for your wife and children. Thank you for the sacrifices you made while I was a full-time doctoral student. I will always be grateful to God for joining us together in Holy Matrimony. I thank our son , Reggie for his love and devotion while you were with us. You always saw the best in me and stayed on my case about obtaining a doctoral degree. Throughout my journey you were in my thoughts and a part of my very being. Mommie loves you and misses you! I thank our beautiful daughter , Kimberli for her love , devotion , encouragement and unwavering support throughout my journey. You were always there when things were going well and when I felt discouraged. You were always the "voice of reason" at each crossroad of life I encountered during my journey. You are in my thoughts and a part of my very being. Mommie loves you! I thank my brother-in-law , Ronald , for his love and encouragement. Your telephone calls from New York almost on a regular basis to " check on your Sis " are appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This phenomenological study explored how leadership coaches working with educational administrators (superintendents and principals) in k-12 education developed *expertise* over time specifically through deliberate practices and reflective practices. Expertise is defined as a repeatable, high level performance by an adult (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). Expertise involves the acquisition and utilization of at least two kinds of knowledge: explicit knowledge of a domain (in this case educational leadership) and implicit or tacit knowledge of the social organization of educational organizations. Expertise typically is characterized by seven traits: (a) development of large, rich schema (organized networks of concepts) containing a great deal of declarative knowledge about a given domain; (b) well-organized highly interconnected units of knowledge; (c) ability to select strategies for particular problems; (d) development of schemas including procedural knowledge; (e) ability to automate sequential steps within problem solving; (f) recognition of complex problems or situations more quickly than novices, and (g) ability to monitor their own problem solving strategies (Sternberg, 1998).

Background of the Problem

Administrator turnover is highest in low-performing, high poverty school districts. These educational leaders may only stay in this position for a few years because

low-performing district and schools are subject to sanctions if the achievement goals are not met. One of the sanctions is the removal of the administrator. This revolving door of educational leaders creates instability within districts and schools that disrupts the education of students. Federal and state accountability legislation pertaining to student achievement along with public scrutiny of school performance are two major issues that creates challenges and pressure for administrators to improve student academic attainment while attempting to improve their own effectiveness as school reformers (Bush, 2009; Houle, 2006; Singh & Al-Fadhi, 2011).

Houle's (2006) particular viewpoint focuses on the administrator's role in transforming the lowest performing schools where the demographics of families and communities constantly change. These school environments along with the economic challenges faced by the families result in stress placed on the students in an environment that should be conducive to learning. According to Houle (2006), the intrusions of social issues outside of school into the regular school day compete for available learning time for students making it difficult for administrators to effectively address the learning needs of this student population while simultaneously leading the transformation efforts to improve the quality of education for all students

It is widely accepted that educational leaders and consequently leadership development are crucial to the development and maintenance of successful schools (Bush, 2009; Leithwood, 2012). Educational institutions are following trends in business that utilize succession planning as a means of recruiting and preparing future leaders (Greer & Virick, 2008; Sosik, Lee, & Bouquillon, 2005; Zepeda, Bengtson, & Oksana, 2012). Succession planning is also occurring in other service related occupations, such as

nursing, that face similar personnel shortages (Griffith, 2012). These private and public initiatives highlight the importance of mentoring and coaching as integral to their success. In addition, a recent paradigm shift in education recognizes that instead of searching for a new superintendent or principal when sufficient improvement does not quickly materialize that providing "coaching" *in situ* as a supportive and focused intervention might move the district and school forward.

As in other service related occupations, districts and schools need effective educational leaders who are committed to continuous organizational improvement and are able to use evidence-based practices to ensure that all students receive a quality education (Griffith, 2012). Similar to the business field, in k-12 education, this kind of leadership support is tailored to the context of the district/school culture and the learning environment in order to meet the organization's goals (Sosik et al., 2005).

Superintendents and principals who are responsible for ensuring academic success for low-performing high-poverty students are no exception. Individuals, called *leadership coaches*, possessing specialized expertise in addressing school achievement "turnaround" and apparent leadership "failures" may be enlisted to coach these administrators. Largely through support from federal and state educational initiatives in the United States, the use of coaching for targeted administrative improvement has been widely implemented in several states.

Different from mentoring in its scope and intensity, the purpose of coaching is to meet the needs of a single individual relative to a particular set of responsibilities by providing contextualized job training under a proscribed time period constraint (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). The coach typically meets with the person being coached on a one-to-

one basis for one to two hours per week for a period of time. It is expected that the coach possesses a thorough understanding of the leadership and managerial roles of the superintendent or principal, and since the goal is to increase student achievement, the coach focuses on honing the skills of the person being coached toward that end.

Fueled by policy initiatives of the Federal Race to the Top (RttT) grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that schools in "turnaround" status have effective and committed educational leaders, most states have used funding from this program to directly prepare superintendents and principals that can lead high-need, low-achieving districts and schools. However, some states (including California, Maryland, New York, and Ohio) have also used funding to provide customized coaching support for existing superintendents and principals (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) .

In 2010, the state of North Carolina was one of the recipients of the RttT grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to fund its Turning Around North Carolina's Lowest Achieving Schools (TALAS) initiative designed to stimulate and strengthen North Carolina's efforts to turn around its lowest achieving school districts and schools (North Carolina Department of Instruction, n.d.). District and school leadership coaching is provided by District Transformation Coaches and School Transformation Coaches employed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). They coach superintendents leading school districts and principals leading elementary, middle and high schools identified as low-performing based on end of year assessment results (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, n.d.).

Customized coaching is important to districts as they "match" a coach with a particular superintendent or principal being coached. It is not necessarily the number of

years that a coach has been practicing, but rather how the coach has reflected upon and incorporated in a deliberate way the experiences of coaching that will move the coach toward greater expertise in a given area. Throughout the United States many individuals are representing themselves as leadership coaches for district superintendents and school principals.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership coaching, sometimes referred to as "turnaround" coaching for individual and organization impact is viewed as a complex reform strategy that relies on skills and knowledge gained through prior administrative practice, formal coursework, and past coaching experiences (James-Ward & Potter, 2011; Mayer, Grenier, Warhol & Donaldson, 2013; Neumerski, 2012). There is little consistency regarding what credentials and professional experiences are requisite for "turnaround" coaching expertise in the education leadership field. The qualifications for some leadership coaching positions include training and certification as a coach; yet, other positions may require a masters' degree and "successful" experience as an administrator as the only criteria. Another issue pertaining to leadership coaching in education is the view of how coaches are used to improve instructional leadership with more emphasis on the coaches' characteristics and not as much on examining coaching behaviors (Neumerski, 2012).

What is known is that the leadership coach "uses a set of basic universal skills, such as building trust, listening, observing, questioning, and providing feedback" to the superintendent and principal to help them improve their performance as educational leaders (James-Ward & Potter, 2011, p.127). The leadership coaching knowledge domain encompasses a broad repertoire of content background and professional

experiences that in total may be unique to each coach. As such the development of coaching expertise is different among coaches. This research explored and described how leadership coaches experienced the phenomenon of expertise development.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to examine how five educational leadership coaches working with educational leaders in k-12 education developed domain specific expertise over time, specifically through deliberate practice and reflective practice. This study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and tools the coaches used and how these techniques have developed over time.

Research Questions

1. How did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise?

2. How did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise?

Significance of the Research

This study was one of the first studies to examine and describe how experienced leadership coaches work to become better at providing targeted support to superintendents and principals. Bush (2009) asserts that governments are investing a tremendous amount of funding in leadership development with the goal of producing better educational leaders and more effective school districts. Understanding this improves the effectiveness of coaching practice which in turn increases educational leaders' capacity to lead positive reform efforts at the district and school level (Bush, 2009).

Consistent and effective leadership also promotes teacher retention, has the potential to increase teacher effectiveness by empowering them to maximize their potential as instructional leader in the classroom, and increases their capacity to provide quality instruction for students (Bush, 2009; Leithwood, 2012; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). The successful approaches used by the coaches on a consistent basis can potentially increase their awareness of their performance and the importance of engaging in activities that will further their professional development. This study may also assist state departments of education and districts in identifying individuals who may be effective leadership coaches based on leadership coaches' expertise through practice and experience specifics in addition to credential specifics.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrated two major concepts to explain coaching practice development over time. The first concept, how expert behaviors are acquired through deliberate practice over a sustained period of time (Ericsson et al., 1993) was combined with a second concept of reflective practice that helps coaches increase their self-awareness and learning in order to enhance their capability and to perform at a higher level of intensity (Schon, 1995).

As it relates to deliberate practice, Ericsson et al. (1993) assert that expert performance in terms of acquired characteristics "is the result of extended deliberate practice that limits the role of innate characteristics" (p. 363). Their assertion focuses on the individuals' commitment to skill acquisition and practicing that skill over an extended period of time in their efforts do become experts in that particular domain (Ericsson et al., 1993).

Schon (1995) refers to reflective practice as the "process of reflection-in-action" (p. 30). During this process individuals reflect on the actions undertaken, the results they have achieved, and in a more precise way they simultaneously ("action-present") reflect on the strategies they used to accomplish the tasks to determine if a different course of action needs to be undertaken (p. 30).

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design. The primary methods for collecting data from the five participants were comprehensive interviews, background information shared by the participants and the participants performed a coaching career mapping exercise. After collecting the data from the three sources, doing the transcription of the 10 interviews, and member checking, I conducted a thematic analysis of the data using the software program NVIVO for further analysis. This was done for single and collective data analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity and consistency the following definitions are used for the following key terms:

Deliberate Practice: Individuals' focused efforts to acquire the knowledge and skills required to improve their performance through large amounts of focused training and suitable tasks sequentially designed and monitored by an instructor, coach, mentor, or tutor (Ericsson, 2006; (Ericsson et al.,1993).

Domain Specific Expertise: Acquired knowledge and skills that are important to the attainment of high level of performance in a particular area (domain) such as sports and music (Ericsson et al., 1993).

Growth (as perceived by the Leadership Coach of educational administration): The conversion of declarative knowledge (objective and literal) and procedural knowledge (how to think and is linked with a performance change in the leadership coach's knowledge, abilities and tasks) which influences the coach's creative thinking when performing a task and thus being able to convert *the new* procedural knowledge into declarative knowledge. This growth is a function of the coach's own perception of his/her success and is not attributed to external factors such as student achievement, and performance evaluations by their supervisor (Anderson, 1993; Creswell, 2013; Hay, 2007; Yilmaz &Yalcin, 2012).

Leadership Coach (in educational administration): A professional expert with related experience who: (a) is typically an outsider brought in to work with the administrator; (b) has high levels of knowledge in specific skill areas; (c) emphasizes skill related learning and growth; (d) observes administrator's performance; and (e) plans a course of action that is data driven to help the administrator achieve high levels of performance (Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003).

Mentoring (in educational administration): An *organizational insider* who is a senior expert who supports novice administrators by showing them the ropes (e.g. what procedures to follow to get school painted, working productively with a union representative) in a number of situations in performing their job duties and responsibilities (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005).

Reflective Practice: Individuals review their practice across three timeframes (past, present, and future) in a cycle which continuously flows from goal setting to action to

reflection to action as they work towards improving their performance (Bloom et al., 2005; Hay 2007; Schon, 1995).

Assumptions

1. The participants have the information pertinent to my study and that they will be accurate and truthful in their responses when they completed the questionnaire, coaching career mapping exercise and answered the questions during the interviews.

2. Certain themes would emerge from the recounted experiences of the participants practicing in interprofessional settings.

3. The participants would have their own unique ideas about what changes they need to make in their coaching based on their experiences and professional development.

4.   I will have to rely on my gut feeling and observations of the participant's emotive responses. I will never really know if they are telling the truth.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to participants based on the following:

1. Participants had a minimum of three years coaching administrators overall and had recently coached in the last three years. Setting this three year experience requirement was important to the study so as to capture a "seasoned" coach that had learned from previous experiences.

2. The coaches were currently coaching or have coached on a fulltime or a part-time basis and had coached within the last three years.

3. The sample size limited the diversity among participants and generalizability.

4. Participants were inside of the 100 mile radius of Charlotte.

Limitations

1. This study examined the experiences of participants in their own words retrospectively. There are different reasons for why different individuals will or will not develop expertise while others will develop expertise with the same level of intelligence, motivation, energy, personality and credentials. This study may not be able to detect these differences.

2. Even though participants selected had similar professional backgrounds their practice settings, professional experiences and cultural context varied.

3. The data were obtained through the participants' subjective self-reported accounts therefore were difficult to generalize beyond my study .

Organization of the Study

Leadership coaches have a vital role in supporting superintendent and principal development. The quality of support coaches provide these administrators influences these educational leaders' capacity to lead, their professional development, teacher effectiveness and retention, and student outcomes and social development. Examining and considering the role, dispositions and credentials of the leadership coach should assist state departments of education and districts in recruiting and selecting coaches that should potentially be an asset to their district. Chapter 2 is a review of the prior research relating to coaching administrators. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study. Chapter 4 outlines the findings. Chapters 5 is a discussion of the findings with implications for improving district and school leadership coaching.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to examine how five educational leadership coaches working with educational leaders in k-12 education developed domain specific expertise over time, specifically through deliberate and reflective practices. This study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and tools the coaches used and how these techniques have developed over time.

Research Questions

1. How did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise?

2. How did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise?

This chapter reviews the literature focused on two specific areas: (a) the development of expertise through deliberate and reflective practice; and (b) the practice of leadership coaching for district and school administrators. For each an in-depth discussion of landmark and supporting literature pertaining to models of leadership coaching and on leadership coaching is provided. Finally an integrative summary is presented that includes how these concepts are focused to support this study's conceptual framework.

Expertise Development in a Domain

The literature of expertise development resides in the psychology field. The

literature outlining the basic problem solving process and the cognitive skill acquisition

process are foundational to the concept of expertise development (Kellogg & Whiteford,

2009; Ericsson et al., 1993). Broadly speaking problem solving and skill acquisition

processes come together in three stages: cognitive, associative, and autonomous (Fitts,

1964). Initially, the cognitive stage occurs in the mind at the level of awareness of the

target skill to be performed. Second, at the level of the associative stage the individual

has practiced the skill such that it can be brought up and applied at appropriate times over

multiple instances. Many administrators reach this level of expertise. Finally, during the

autonomous stage the skill is applied with speed and efficiency, often without much

mental engagement. When all three processes are functioning, response time to apply the

skill becomes fast, and it appears that the skill deployment becomes effortless,

autonomous, and even automatic – essentially procedural.

Skill acquisition has two primary features: cognition and deployment of the skill.

Pirolli and Recker (1994) advance that insofar as the cognition and deployment of the

skill remains at the autonomous level, the individual will not likely advance beyond that

point in expertise development in the skill domain. However the use of reflection to

modify and refine the problem and skill acquisition processes allows the individual to

develop further degrees of expertise in the skill domain.

An important feature of skill acquisition is the relationship between declarative

and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge (which is factual) is a conscious form

of knowledge that is objective, literal, and explicit (Sternberg, 1998; Yilmaz &Yalcin,

2012). On the other hand, procedural knowledge refers to the techniques individuals

learn for performing and completing a task that makes the goal achievable (Yilmaz

&Yalcin, 2012). According to Anderson (1993) the conversion of declarative knowledge

into procedural knowledge is an important step in developing expertise in a content

domain. Expertise relies on procedural knowledge accumulation. Thus, persons with

expertise could act upon incomplete information, because they have built extensive

memories based on their experience. This knowledge base " is thus a key source of

intellectual power " (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009, p. 253) .Those lacking expertise would

not be able to act upon incomplete information, because declarative knowledge no matter

how extensive is not integrated with experiential knowledge (Kellogg & Whiteford,

2009; Sternberg, 1998; Yilmaz &Yalcin, 2012).

Ericsson, et al. (1993) suggests that individuals who possess the features of skill

acquisition (cognition and the development of the skill) at the maximum level of

performance in a domain do not develop expertise based on these features alone "but the

level of performance can be increased as a result of deliberate practice to improve their

performance" (p. 366). To attain expertise in a task it is suggested that it takes high

degrees of deliberate practice that is repeated in a thoughtful and methodical manner that

is specific to the job to be performed, and as a result one's performance the task becomes

automatic and is exerted with minimal effort (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

Deliberate Practice in Expertise Development

Deliberate practice is mostly studied in the areas of music, sports and chess where

individuals who are engaged in expertise development have specific goals and who work

towards attaining those goals by practicing the skill in a repetitive manner. Their

persistence allows them to refine their existing knowledge and develop their skills beyond the foundational level of performance (Ericsson et al., 1993; van de Wiel, Van den Bossche, Janssen, & Jossberger, 2011). Kellogg and Whiteford (2009) characterize deliberate practice as process where the learners mindfully engage on practicing the skill that is specifically designed for them by their instructor, coach, mentor, or tutor who then provide the learners with specific and constructive feedback and encourages" them to excel in that task (p. 251). These practice activities are distinguished from other activities such as work and play which includes public performance (e.g. competitions, services for pay), and the individuals are also motivated by external rewards such as social recognition to obtain status and salary that allows them to sustain a living (Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson et al., 1993).

For example, as it related to their concept of work, Ericsson et al. (1993) gave the illustration of an apprenticeship or supervised activity during which the workers are supposed to acquire an acceptable level of reliable performance. Subsequently they are expected to give their best performance in work activities. However, the workers only rely on previously well-entrenched methods of doing the job as opposed to exploring alternative methods with unknown reliability that provides other options and strategies for getting the job done. In this example learning and the acquisition of new and improved methods of doing the job are limited because the workers are afraid of making costly mistakes or failing to meet deadlines should other options and strategies not produce the desired results (Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson et al., 1993). While these researchers acknowledge work activities as opportunities for learning, they characterize these opportunities as being far from optimal (Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson et al., 1993). In

contrast, through consistent and deliberate practice the workers would focus on the important aspects of their job and incrementally improve their performance based on results, feedback or both from their supervisor/designee (Ericsson et al., 1993; Kellogg &Whiteford , 2009; van de Wiel et al., 2011).

Ericsson et al. (1993) also suggest that the concept of play is the activity itself and is inherently enjoyed as evident in children who play spontaneously for long periods of time. They suggest that the basic skills required for virtually all children to demonstrate normal interaction within their culture is acquired with minimum instruction during their daily lives. Conversely, children learn to read, write, and do mathematical computations after having been explicitly taught in schools by teachers who assign activities that allows students to practice the skills necessary to complete the tasks. These activities are designed with the primary purpose of students attaining and improving skills from academic and from other types of everyday activities. During the latter students' learning may be an indirect result or an extension of what they have learned in the classroom (Ericsson et al., 1993).

The concept of play for adults is similar to children. Using sports as an example, adults' inherent enjoyment of play activities puts them in a state of flow where they are completely immersed in the activity. These peak experiences are an effortless state of execution in its basic form and similarly to children during play, adults' inherent enjoyment is evident by their spontaneity while engaged in recreational activities for long periods of time (Ericsson et al., 1993).

Deliberate practice on the other hand, is a highly structured activity that is designed to improve the individual's performance. However, the individual's factual

knowledge (declarative knowledge) about the skill to be performed is insufficient in their attempt to perform the task (procedural knowledge) (Kellogg &Whiteford , 2009). It requires effort, is not inherently enjoyable, and there are no immediate monetary rewards. There are also costs. It is time intensive, requires effective trainers, and appropriate training environments (Ericsson et al., 1993). The core assumption of deliberate practice is that expertise is acquired gradually and effective improvement of performance requires suitable training in specific tasks that is closely monitored by a teacher or a coach (Ericsson, 2006; Kellogg &Whiteford , 2009; Van de Wiel et al., 2011). The individuals are challenged to undertake tasks initially outside of their current realm of reliable performance that can be mastered over a period of time by concentrating on the critical aspects of the task and gradually refining their performance through repetitions and feedback (Ericsson, 2006).

Deliberate practice requires deep concentration on the domain as opposed to the mindless routine performance exhibited in more subdued environments (Ericsson, 2006). Generally, there is no set timeframe for the acquisition of skill expertise in a domain. However, to achieve expert performance requires the individual to use an extended process utilizing large and daily amounts of deliberate practice. The acquisition of complex mechanisms is neither short-lived nor simple and could extend over a period of many years (Ericsson et al., 1993; Kellogg &Whiteford , 2009).

As it relates to expertise development, reflective practice is a strategy individuals can utilize to improve their performance as they focus on achieving, mastering, and becoming highly skilled in their work (van de Wiel et al., 2012). "In the reflection phase, the outcomes are evaluated and reflected upon" for the purpose of constructing

information (declarative knowledge) that can be applied (procedural knowledge) to the

"subsequent performance" (p.83).

Reflective Practice in Expertise Development

Schon (1995) describes reflective practice as "reflection-in-action" and asserts

that practioners have some capability of reflecting on what they know while doing their

work and during this process they can also generate new knowledge that leads to the

restructuring of a strategy when performing the tasks or the development of a new

solution for completing the task (p.30). Schon (1995) also asserts that individuals engage

in reflective practice by being mindful of the tasks they are performing, observing

themselves while performing the tasks, and by being able to describe the strategic steps

they took to come to a solution. This reflection-in-action is done in real time meaning

that the individuals' are simultaneously weighing the pros and cons of their strategy

while doing the work; the " action-present- a stretch of time within which it is still

possible to make a difference to the outcomes of action " (p.30). Hay (2007) whose

emphasis is specifically on reflective practice for coaches concurs to some extent with

Schon's (1995) reflection-in-action.

Hay (2007) also posits that reflective practice can occur during coaching sessions

as the coach takes time to think about the process in the present moment. She also

suggests that reflective practice takes place when the coaches set aside time to think

about how their coaching was done in the past and what might be done in the future. The

coaches 'ability to make this analysis of their performance is contingent upon two aspects

referred to as *super* and *vision* as in supervision. Within this context the use of the term

supervision is different from how it is customarily used to identify one who manages

employees to make sure the work undertaken by them is being done as mandated by the organization (Hay, 2007).

Supervision within the context of reflective practice means that the individuals step back metaphorically from coaching to take a broader view of their practice. The difference is that through *self-reflection* the coaches supervise their *own* actions without the assistance of an external supervisor (Hay, 2007). In education these coaches would be referred to as being reflective practitioners; individuals who take a retrospective view of their own coaching performance, considers how to improve and take the necessary steps (deliberate practice) to master the task.

Hay's (2007) provision for the process of reflective practice includes models, learning styles and theories to assist coaches in using deliberate practices to improve their own performance towards expertise in the domain(s). The reflection process consists of six sequential stages and their subparts: (1) capturing events as they occur; (2) reviewing specific events (perceptual positions); (3) reviewing a series of events to look for patterns; (4) planning ahead to incorporate points generally; (5) planning ahead for specific events, and (6) implementing their learning that coaches can use for capturing information and using it to improve their own performance. (Hay, 2007, pp. 23-32).

As a caveat to deliberate practice and reflective practice as a means of skill acquisition, Ericsson et al. (1993) gave a brief historical background of Sir Francis Galton's investigation of the possibility that excellence in diverse fields and domain have a common set of causes that may be attributed to an individual's relatives who also exhibit exceptional performance in that domain. Described as eminence; exceptional performance in a field is transmitted from parents to their offspring and is virtually an

inevitable consequence of one's natural ability to perform (Ericsson et al., 1993). The researchers acknowledged arguments that attribute genetics factors to domain expertise. However, Ericsson et al. (1993) posit that making genetics a rigidly determining factor in an individual's maximal performance means that performance cannot be influenced by practice and training henceforth remains stable across time.

<div align="center">Leadership Coaching</div>

Leadership Coaching Expertise

The role of developing expertise for effective leadership coaching in education is divided into two fields; that of instructional coaching for teachers and that of leadership coaching for district and school level administrators. The leadership coaching literature focuses on the various types and models of coaching, the effectiveness of coaching in raising student achievement, and the impacts of coaching. A growing, but smaller body of literature focuses on the coaching "techniques." This literature is practitioner-oriented, anecdotal and experientially-based. Very little of the literature is empirical or draws on a theoretical base.

The literature on expertise is conclusive that experts are not born. They practice their skill. They practice in a deliberate manner such they are not simply going through the motions. In other words, the practice must meet certain criteria. The literature is in agreement that the deliberate practice must occur on a regular basis over a period of time, although that period of time varies from 6 to 10 years. Length of general experience only rarely develops expertise and experts do not improve with age. Bloom et al. (2003) suggest that the most effective coaches are professional experts who have leadership coaching as their primary work and are generally outsiders who bring an independent

perspective to the job. The coach may not be older or have more seniority than the

person being coached, but the coach employs the skills, strategies, and tools at a highly

proficient manner. A key element of leadership coaching however, is the coaching

infrastructure in the form of coaching models that leadership coaches utilize to provide

on-the-job training and support to district and school leaders (James-Ward, 2011).

Models of Leadership Coaching

There are three educational coaching models that are predominant in the

educational leadership coaching literature: (1) the Leadership Coaching Model (Wise and

Hammack, 2011); (2) the Five Phase Model of Coaching (Huff, Preston & Goldring,

2013); and (3) the Blended Coaching Strategies Model (BCSM) (Bloom et al.,, 2005).

The first two models which possess elements of the BCSM are discussed first, followed

by an in-depth discussion of the BCSM.

There is a consensus among researchers concerning which elements that comprise

coaching that are *foundational*. Wise & Hammack (2011) assert that the three

foundational coaching elements are: (1) establishing a coaching relationship; (2)

communicating effectively; and (3) facilitating learning and performance. Bloom et al.

(2005) advance that these foundational coaching elements enable educational leaders to

set goals, act on those goals, and to reflect on the skills, strategies and tools learned

through the coaching process. They organize these elements into three categories: (1)

relationship building; (2) listening, observing and questioning; and (3) giving feedback.

However, being able to perform these foundational coaching skills does not demonstrate

expertise by the coach.

The Leadership Coaching Model (Wise & Hammack, 2011) places its emphasis on coaching administrators by using best practices identified to correlate with increases in student achievement. The model focuses on selected leading indicators to provide the individual being coached with the goal-specific strategies. Three categorical coaching competencies (as opposed to phases) highlight this model:

1. Establishing a coaching relationship: the coach's role is to clarify expectations and roles between the coach and the individual and develop an environment of trust in the coach-individual relationship. The coach and the individual mutually establish a coaching plan that is based on the individual's professional needs;

2. Communicating effectively: the coach listens attentively to the individual, paraphrases when necessary and asks open-ended questions of the individual to make sure the coach understands what is being conveyed. The coach then provides feedback to the individual taking into account that even when giving feedback that is not positive, the goal is still to help the individual progress to new levels of understanding at key moments during the coaching process. In essence the coach pushes individual to think and act in new ways;

3. Facilitating learning and performance: the coach assists the individual in setting reasonable goals and monitoring those goals. The coach also facilitates the management of change and the enhancement of the individual's overall implementation of roles and responsibilities.

Five Phase Model of Coaching

Huff, Preston, and Goldring (2013) developed a performance-based, multi-phase coaching model intended to assist individuals in improving their instructional

leadership practices. The purpose of this model is to identify the key pathways that coaches employ with individuals as they seek to make meaningful changes in their leadership practices. The five foundational "phases" of performance-based coaching are:

1. Groundwork - the coach works towards building a positive and supportive relationship with the individual while giving and reviewing feedback. In this phase the coach uses skills such as active listening and asking the individual questions as opposed to prescribing specific actions for the individual. The coaching relationship is collaborative as opposed to being evaluative. The coach's use of listening and questioning skills helps establish a relationship with the individual to address the remaining phases of this five phase model;

2. Assessment and feedback - the coach helps the individual work towards developing a clear picture of him/herself as an educational leader, particularly when coach reviews and shares feedback the individual receives from the staff. In such a case the coach points out the individual's perception versus their staff's perception as it relates to the state of the district or school. Contradictions are then discussed and the coach assists the individual in understanding the work environment and how to respond to concerns and issues.

3. Goal-setting - the coach assists the individual in selecting a meaningful target for change that includes designing and committing to a goal or set of goals that are specific, measurable, agreed upon, and committed to by the individual. These goals must be time-specific, challenging enough to be motivational, realistic enough to be achievable, and the goals should expand the individual's capacity to perform;

4. Action planning - the coach assist the individual to design a specific plan of concrete steps that if followed will lead to the accomplishment of an identified goal;

5. Ongoing assessment and support - the coach monitors the individual's progress over time (based on the completion of particular steps) to address challenges that emerge during the process. The coach also provides encouragement and support to motivate the individual and keep the individual on track.

A key aspect of this phase is monitoring the individual's progress, how it is being maintained, and building on positive changes as a continual cycle of improvement. However, the implementation of these foundational phases of coaching alone may not signify expertise in the coaching domain.

Blended Coaching Strategies Model

The Blended Coaching Strategies Model (BCSM) is a systemic comprehensive approach to providing targeted coaching to administrators as they build their leadership capacity. Blended coaching is asserted to be a fluid and flexible constructivist coaching model that supports the individual's growth and change in both as an administrator and as an individual (Bloom et al., 2005; Lochmiller, 2013). According to Lochmiller (2013), BCSM is the most widely known coaching model used in educational leadership settings. The BCSM approach to coaching is devised around three foundational elements; *skills*, *strategies*, and *tools* as noted in the following:

Blended Coaching Skills

1. Trust - The coach must have the ability to form a trusting relationship with the individual. Building trust between the coach and the administrator is established

over time. Further, the coach must be cognizant that this trusting relationship must be nurtured consistently.

2. Observe - The coach must be able to observe the administrator without preconceptions, while simultaneously supporting organizational goals of the district and the school.

3. Provide Learning Opportunities - The coach's must be able to provide valuable learning opportunities that can lead to improvements in the administrator's leadership capacity and help the individual to self-actualize by fulfilling his or her potential as a leader.

4. Constructive Feedback - The coach must be capable of providing constructive feedback that relates to how the administrator can be more effective in carrying out job-embedded responsibilities. The coach must be fully present and committed to the individual in order for this to take place.

5. Utilize Specific Strategies: The coach has the capability to recognize when to use each of the five blended strategies and to implement the strategies effectively.

Blended Coaching Strategies

According to Bloom et al. (2005) strategies are the plans that underlie the use of coaching skills. There are five coaching strategies: Facilitative Coaching, Instructional Coaching, Collaborative Coaching, Consultative Coaching, and Transformational Coaching. Each of these coaching strategies is discussed in the following section.

Facilitative Coaching

Facilitative coaching builds upon the administrators' existing skills, knowledge, interpretations, and belief system thereby forming the foundation for future actions

(Bloom et al., 2005). This strategy is used when the administrators' have the requisite skills and knowledge in a specific domain. This coaching strategy is aligned with the Bloom et. al (2005) new ways of being dimension of growth where the coach supports the administrators in developing their capacity to build expertise through self-actualization and reflective practices. Such an approach facilitates the administrators' ability to create and examine their own assessments, gather and interpret data and feedback, develop their own interpretations, analyze the data and then select a course of action. The administrators' new ways of being is the result of observation, reflection, analysis, reinterpretation, and experimentation.

Facilitative coaching can only be effective if a trusting relationship has been established between coach and the administrators. This can be a powerful learning experience when the administrators are comfortable with their coach and are willing to be open about their beliefs, assessments, and observations taking place during the coaching process. Nonetheless, before initiating a facilitative session the coach must make a determination whether the issues at hand deem what Bloom et al (2005), refer to as the "promise of fruitful learning." In doing so the coach must consider whether the issues are relevant to the administrators' professional growth. The coach must also weigh these decisions against any constraints posed by time that would interfere with the immediate areas of improvement the administrators must exhibit. In essence the coach must be able to determine if it is an urgent issue that must be addressed immediately or one that can be addressed over time.

The coach's conversations with the administrators should be reflective allowing opportunities for them to take a retrospective view of their behaviors to determine future

course of actions. During this process the coach should maintain a facilitative stance while helping the administrators develop and increase their leadership capacity. The researchers posit that successful facilitative coaching rests on the assumption that the individuals can independently acquire the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to resolve a problem or address a need.

Within the facilitative coaching strategy are five basic techniques that coach uses to help administrators understand the connection between revising the plan of action, improving the organization and their personal emergence as transformed educational leaders. The five basic techniques are *paraphrasing, clarifying questions, paraphrasing with interpretation, mediational questions and summarizing statements* as noted in the following:

1. Paraphrasing – The coach restates the administrators' message and assists them in fine-tuning their thinking and speaking. Paraphrasing also test the coach's understanding of what the administrator is stating and the administrator's clarity of the issue at hand.

2. Clarifying Questions – The process of identifying the administrators' needs and the nature of the issues. The coach leads the administrators through the process of discovery and provides opportunities for the coach to listen to administrator's language and to be able to uncover underlying issues, feelings, and attitudes.

3. Paraphrasing with Interpretation - The coach brings his or her own perspective to the discussion to tests ideas/interpretations with the administrators by bringing a different lens, their background knowledge, and experiences into the conversation

thereby offering new strategies the administrator can use when addressing and
solving problems.

4. Mediational Questions -Produces a shift in the administrators' direction and flow
   of thinking through conversations with the coach. The coach listens for what is
   understood and for what the administrator *isn't* saying in order to resolve the issue
   at hand.

5. Summarizing Statements - The coach summarizes what has been learned and
   discussed while sustaining with the administrators a focused and goal oriented
   progression from exploration of the problem to planning and implementing
   strategies to solve the problem. (Bloom et al., pp. 64-67)

Throughout this process the coach and administrators discuss areas needing clarification
and/or exploration. After determining a few action steps that can lead to better results the
coach can refine these steps by posing additional clarifying and mediation questions.
This strategy may create even more possibilities for action when addressing issues.

Instructional Coaching

Using one-on-one teaching strategies via modeling, providing resources and
direct instruction, the coach shares his or her experience and expertise to support
administrators in clarifying appropriate goals and to commit to taking effective action. In
instructional coaching these *teachable* moments focus on providing administrators with
targeted assistance needed to improve and increase their capacity to improve the total
school program. After working with the administrators to assess their needs, the coach
provides training and support focused on administrator effectiveness and improving the
quality of teaching and learning within the learning organization. This method of

coaching only takes place when it is evident that the administrators lack the background knowledge or internal resources (e.g. process skills) that require quick action.

The researchers also note that in blended coaching, instructional coaching can be embedded in facilitative coaching (Bloom et al., 2005). The integration of instructional and facilitative coaching takes place if the coach determines that the administrators have only partially mastered a domain. This highly complex relationship between coach and administrators requires the coach to be able to determine when the administrators need one-on-one instruction and when to build on the administrators' experience and expertise.

Bloom et al. (2005) cautions the coach about using war stories as a coaching strategy. While the coach can offer personal thoughts and experiences as a means of support and encouragement there is no evidence suggesting this approach helps the administrator improve performance (Bloom et al., 2005). Another caveat is that the administrators could perceive the coach's advice and storytelling within that context as a negative reflection on the administrator's competence putting the coach-administrator relationship at risk (Bloom et al., 2005).

Collaborative Coaching

Bloom et al. (2005) describe the primary focus of collaborative coaching as a concrete action that is geared towards the larger goal of developing the administrators' knowledge, skills, and internal capacity that are generalizable to other situations. Prior to initiating the coaching relationship the coach and the administrators identify a need or a problem that can be shared and one that promises to generate a powerful learning experience for the administrators. Collaborative coaching falls between the core

strategies of facilitative and instructional strategies throughout this coaching process. During this process the coach is constantly in both modes of coaching.

The researchers give the example of a principal who has been given the task of conducting a self-study for a Coordinated Compliance Review of state and federal categorical programs. In this scenario the coach embeds the facilitative coaching strategy to assist the administrator in sorting out the role that the self-study could play in the larger scheme of the school's improvement. Conversely, the coach uses the instructional coaching strategy to teach the administrator how to manage and orchestrate large complex projects over an extended period that are data driven and require the participation of stakeholders. This process is collaborative in nature because the administrator brings intimate knowledge of the situation and has the positional authority to execute action. The coach supplements the administrator's lack of knowledge about executing a particular task by offering approaches and/or solutions that address the administrator's issue.

While the coach and the administrator have some experience, skills, and knowledge to complete the tasks, neither of them can operate in isolation because of their complementary relationship. However, because the administrator has positional authority he/she determines the processes and tools that best meets the school's needs. The caveat is that the coach should not coerce the administrator into accepting the coach's solution but should allow the administrator to articulate his/her unique needs and select the best solution for the task. This means that the coach should potentially offer more than one approach and/or solution to the problem (Bloom et al., 2005).

Initially the coach could possibly take the lead in executing the plan but must simultaneously begin moving towards a supportive role while the administrator emerges as the leader. Whereas the relationship between the coach and administrator is collaborative it is the administrator who must fully own the plan, plan of action, and the final product in order to carry it out with fidelity (Bloom et al., 2005).

Consultative Coaching

Consultative coaching is a particular form of instructional coaching that is contingent on the coach's specific expertise customized to the needs of the administrator and the organization (Bloom et al., 2005). Prior to agreeing upon the consultative approach, the coach uses the facilitative approach to assist the administrator in clarifying the area of need. The coach's role is that of technical support focusing on specific areas relating to the organization's programs or processes. This technical support may include gathering data on behalf of the administrator and providing specific recommendations to the administrator as a course of action. Because the coach has the expertise and resources to provide the framework for organizational improvement the administrator and the organization benefit from this coach-as-consultant strategy. In the consultative mode of coaching the coach shares his/her perspective, knowledge, and advice with the administrator but has no ownership nor participates in any actions resulting from the coaching process (Bloom et al., 2005).

Bloom et al. (2005) cautions about the risk of consultative coaching. It is an approach that is to be applied with constraint. The overuse of consultative coaching can foster administrator dependency on the coach as a supportive resource. By patronizing the administrator and/or prescribing a determined course of action that is definitive, the

coach risks undermining the administrator's confidence and professional growth. This includes imposing a particular leadership style and specific practices that can disempower the administrator and thereby be unproductive. Lastly, the researchers admonish the coach to be knowledgeable and respectful of established policies, practices, and the districts philosophy when providing services.

Transformational Coaching

Drawing from the work of Robert Hargrove's *Masterful Coaching: Extraordinary Results by Impacting People and the Way They Think and Work Together* (as cited by Bloom et al., 2005), Bloom et al. (2005) define transformational coaching as a three-prong process that consists of single-loop learning, double-loop learning, and triple-loop learning. Single-loop learning has an instructional focus. Under the instruction of the coach the administrator makes incremental improvements and attempts to use new knowledge, skills and strategies. Double-loop learning occurs when the administrator begins to reshape his/her patterns of thinking, internalize new possibilities, and put into practice new challenges independently. At the triple-loop level the administrator has assimilated the new learning and takes on a new way of being in relation to the challenge at hand. Facilitative coaching strategies are used to produce double and triple-loop learning. In essence, transformational coaching is where the administrator progresses beyond improved performance (single-loop learning) to developing new ways of thinking (double-loop learning) to making the ultimate transformation; changing their way of being (triple-loop learning).

Bloom et al. (2005) posit that the coach needs to be prepared to support the administrator's struggles with difficult personal issues as well as the acquisition of new

knowledge and skills. This not a therapeutic interaction or relationship between the coach

and the administrator, but one where the coach can empathize with the administrator's

attempt to balance personal and professional responsibilities and can offer words of

encouragement. As it relates to the acquisition of new knowledge, Bloom et al. (2005)

states that the administrator should not only possess the cognitive dimensions of

interpersonal and communicative skills, cultural proficiency, and emotional intelligence,

but he or she must be able to address these dimensions at the organizational level from

only adopting new rules and procedures to developing new systems and cultures within

the organization. An effective coach believes that the administrator is capable of making

fundamental internal changes with the utilization of reflective practices. Bloom et al.

(2005) describe the process of transformation as follows:

- We gain new knowledge, skills, or ways of acting, in incremental steps.

- As we experience success with these new ways of doing things, we begin to

  change our way of thinking; we imagine a new context for these incremental

  changes; and we begin to reframe our sense of possibilities.

- As our new knowledge, skills, and ways of acting become transparent to us-

  integral to who we are-and as we see the world differently, our learning is

  fully integrated. We are transformed (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 85).

Bloom et al. (2005) posit that the coach facilitates processes that support the emergence

of an administrator who acquires the internal capacity (self-reflective practitioner) and is

willing to take responsibility for his/her own professional growth. The researchers

suggest that the coach supports the administrator through the progression of

transformation by: (1) listening to the administrator's stories and testing them for

solutions; (2) using data to shift the administrator's perspective; (3) developing and testing interpretations and strategies that could help the administrator analyze and use the data; (4) helping the administrator construct new interpretations that open up possibilities for effective action; (5) using hypothetical situations and role playing to help the administrator practice new ways of being and; (6) creating opportunities for the administrator to practice new ways of being within the context of the organization (Bloom et al., 2005 pp. 90-92). Each of the strategies (facilitative, instructional, collaborative, consultative and transformational) in the BCSM is applicable to support administrator development

Blended Coaching Tools

In the BCSM tools are the practical resources that the coach can use to shape the coaching relationship and to provide targeted feedback to the administrators. The researchers suggest using tools such survey instruments, self-assessments and goal statements that are developed for internal or external evaluators. These tools assist the coach in addressing the administrators' strengths and specific job-related needs in order to decide what course of action the coach needs to take to motivate the administrators to take ownership of their growth, performance and development (Bloom et al., 2005).

Bloom et al. (2005) identify four assessment tools the coach can use during the coaching process that will assist the administrator in improving his/her performance. The researchers gave the example of the Standards-Based Assessment used to assess the administrator's strengths and needs in relation to the standards. The researchers present this self-assessment of skills in relation to the *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)* that describes the dispositions (what each school leaders should

know and be able to do) of the administrator as the organizational leader. This standards-based assessment can be used as a formative tool to create a professional development plan for the administrator. The *Dispositions Self-Assessment* is a tool through which the administrator can use reflective practices to assess his/her personal beliefs in relation to the leadership behavioral domains chronicled in the ISLLC Standards. The assessment serves as an indicator of the degree to which the administrator personally believes, values, and commits the ISLLC dispositions and domains.

The researchers also posit that surveys are immensely valuable to the coach and administrator in gathering perceptual data (Bloom et al., 2005). They highly recommended that all leaders use a 360° Survey instrument annually, and leadership coaches use this instrument as a primary source for determining the focus of the coaching process. The researchers specifically recommended the *360° Leadership Survey* whose effectiveness ratings are along the *Beginning* and *Accomplished* continuum of development as it relates to the administrator's proficiency pertaining to the ISLLC Standards. Additionally, as an annual professional development plan tied to the ISLLC Standards is the *Individual Development Plan (IDP)*. As a comprehensible coaching-based professional development program this plan guides coaching and professional development activities, and is tied to the district's evaluation system. Lastly, the researchers recommended using the *Collaborative Log* as an organizer and record for each coaching session that is completed collaboratively by the coach and administrator. Both parties keep copies for their records. The results of these assessment tools are used to determine the appropriate blended coaching strategy the coach should implement.

Bloom et al. (2005) also emphasize the importance of coaches adhering to ethical standards for coaching practice. An additional resource included in Bloom et al. (2005) work is the *Ethics for Coaches* a document that delineates the values coaches must exhibit, their obligation to the administration and other organizational stakeholders (students, staff, parents). The coaching ethical practices must specifically outline the coaches' commitment to supporting administrator development that is aligned with accepted professional standards (e.g. building trust, respecting and guarding confidentiality) except as otherwise authorized by the administrator or required by law. Additional ethical standards include avoiding conflict of interest, coordinating with and supporting the school district's goals and to cease the coaching relationship when the administrator is no longer benefitting from the coaching relationship.

Caveats of Blended Coaching

While most coaches find the Blended Coaching Strategies to be a comfortable and rational way of foreseeing the coaching process, Bloom et al. (2005), warn that mastering this approach calls for discipline and practice. Coaches must learn to move effectively and effortlessly between the facilitative and instructional strategies. The researchers' note that many educators have been trained in cognitive coaching which requires the coach to be non-judgmental while encouraging the administrator to become a reflective practitioner who takes an active role in increasing his/her leadership capacity.

Cognitive coaching makes a clear distinction between the coaching role and that of the consultant and collaborator which suggests that each role (consultant and collaborator) not only has its place, but each approach is distinct, with the cognitive coaching role as default. In the researchers' experience with leadership coaches trained in

cognitive coaching, the coach usually has very strong facilitative coaching skills but may struggle with cognitive coaching because the coaches recognize the need to also use instructional strategies in the coaching process. Bloom et al. (2005) posit that in high-stakes environments of administration the coach needs to fluidly draw upon a broad repertoire of strategies during the course of coaching the administrator. The Blended Coaching Strategies model articulates a constructivist (e.g. project based learning approach to coaching) where the administrator constructs new ideas/concepts based on their current and past knowledge.

Bloom et al (2005) suggests that effective leadership coaches use a variety of coaching strategies and move fluidly between them. Within and between the broad categories of facilitative and instructional coaching the remaining coaching strategies can also be implemented depending on the need of the administrator and the organization's contextual environment.

Research on the Practice of Leadership Coaching

Bloom et al. (2005) define leadership coaching as a deliberate action whereby the coach uses facilitative and instructional strategies to assist the administrators' in clarifying and/or achieving their desired goals. It is also described as a learning relationship between individuals that is based on carefully matching the coach and the client with the goal of building a successful working relationship between the coach and the coachee. During the coaching process the coach vacillates between two primary coaching roles; facilitative and instructional (Bloom et al., 2005).

While the coach is in a facilitative role he or she guides the administrators' learning process by providing feedback and by asking reflective questions. Conversely

when the coach is in an instructional role he or she "provides expert information, advice, and resources to support the administrators' attainment of organizational goals" (Bloom et al., 2005, p.8). Described as "change agents" who are "highly skilled professionals" (Duncan & Stock, p. 297) coaches possess the expertise to support the administrators' personal and professional development as district and school leaders. To establish a working relationship with the administrators the coach should provide continuous support that is productive, non-threatening and confidential.

Qualification of Leadership Coaches

To implement the Bloom's Coaching Strategies Model, at a minimum school leadership coaches should possess "five years of successful educational leadership experience, evidence of successful informal mentoring relationships and evidence of appropriate dispositions, knowledge, and skills" (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 111). Bloom et al. (2005) advocate for a coach from outside of the school district who brings an outside perspective and is not vested in the affairs of the district. Also, the coach is not necessarily senior in age or depth of related professional experience to the administrator being coached but is considered an expert in the field.

Additionally, Bloom et al., (2005) suggests that the selection process should include recommendations from professionals who have first-hand knowledge about the candidate's ability to serve in a coaching role. This can come in the form of letters of recommendation and references from former employers. A formal interview process is also recommended that includes role-playing of coaching scenarios that will serve as a gauge of the candidate's coaching capability. Further qualifications of a coach may be contingent upon the candidate completing a training program, participating in ongoing

professional development, and being an active participant in a professional learning

community of coaches who meet on a regular basis to reflect on and discuss current

issues pertaining to coaching (Bloom et al., 2005) .

Making a clear distinction between exceptional school leaders and expert

leadership coaches, Bloom et al (2005) assert that because former principals or

superintendents have a stellar performance record while serving in that capacity does not

automatically mean that they have the interpersonal skills, professional and procedural

knowledge required of a leadership coach to be effective in providing site-based services

to their coachees. Other researchers corroborate in full or in part the suggested coaching

competencies outlined in BCSM.

In a study conducted by James-Ward and Potter (2011) of 16 urban principals and

their coaching experience all of the coaches (eight) had a minimum of five years of

experience as principals. The eight former principals were hired as coaches from outside

the district. Many of the coaches also held positions at the district level (e.g. assistant

superintendents and directors). Of the eight coaches six had served as leadership coaches

for at least three years. One of the new coaches had prior experience supervising

principals for 11 years and had formal training in principal coaching. This coach received

formal training from the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz

on the Blending Coaching Model (Bloom et al., 2005; James-Ward & Potter 2011).

The coaches in this study were matched to the principals' needs based on the

coaches' strengths, personalities and similarities to their coachee's school demographics.

The coaches also formed their own professional learning community (PLC) where they

met monthly to discuss relevant coaching literature and to share strategies and practices

with their colleagues. To further enhance their knowledge base the coaches also met

monthly with district leaders to stay abreast of district initiatives and the professional

needs their coachees.

The findings of this study from the coaches' perspective suggested that their

overall relationship with their coachees was "collegial and trusting" (James-Ward &

Potter, 2011, p.131). The coaches reported that they used their expertise in coaching to

inspire their coachees to persevere and they perceived that they were instrumental in

helping their coachees develop the leadership skills needed to address difficult teachers

while remaining focused on what was in their control that pertained to their role as

educational leaders. The coaches also indicated that by identifying their coachees'

strengths and helping they grow from those strengths that the coaches had a positive

influence on the principals' leadership as reflective practitioners, on their ability to make

decisions, on human resources issues, and on student achievement.

<div align="center">Synthesis and Summary of Related Literature</div>

This literature review explored how leadership coaches use deliberate practice

(Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson et al., 1993) to develop expertise in a task or skill as they work

towards moving from the cognitive, associative, and autonomous (Fitts, 1964) stages of

development to using their procedural knowledge accumulation (Anderson, 1993) to

apply their knowledge and skills to new levels of performance, with the goal of becoming

an expert in that field.

Using reflective practices (Hay, 2007; Schon, 1995) the coaches can develop

expertise through the suggested stages of reflection in the literature that allows them to

take a retrospective view of their coaching practices, make the necessary adjustments to

their techniques, then proceed with implementing the revised strategies and interventions for their coachees' professional development. The literature also asserts that coaches can reflect on their performance in the moment while actually doing the work (Schon, 1995) to get immediate feedback and to make those adjustments accordingly. This continuous cycle of reflection can be applied for the duration of their careers as they continuously work towards developing expertise in their field.

Finally, the literature on leadership coaching in education for district and school level administrators focuses on various coaching models implemented and those that are recommended (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff et al., 2013; Lochmiller, 2013; Wise & Potter, 2011). Each of the models implemented in the studies had elements of the Blended Coaching Strategies Model (Bloom et al., 2005) as a part of the coaching framework. These models consist of a composite set of skills, strategies, and tools coaches may employ to become better at coaching with deliberate practice and reflective practice.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to examine how five educational leadership coaches working with educational leaders in k-12 education developed domain specific expertise over time, specifically through deliberate practice and reflective practice. This study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and tools the coaches used and how these techniques have developed over time.

Research Questions

1. How did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise?

2. How did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise?

Research Design

This study was descriptive and qualitative in design. Qualitative research is an overarching term encompassing a wide range of approaches and methods within different research disciplines directly aimed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the participants' world through their social and material environments, experiences, perspectives, and histories (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Specifically, a phenomenological approach was used for this study to capture the essence of how the leadership coaches experience, process and perceive their learning and expertise development. Features typically included in phenomenological studies are the emphasis on a single concept or idea (for this study leadership coaching) and an exploration of the phenomenon with a

heterogeneous group of individuals (coaches) who have experienced and explored the

phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). These phenomena were captured through comprehensive

interviews, background information shared by the participants and a coaching career

mapping exercise performed by the coaches. In essence, this research examined "what

all participants had in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p.

76) such as coaching.

<center>Participant Identification and Recruitment</center>

The participants for my study were purposely selected using the following criteria:

- The sample was purposefully composed of participants who possessed at least
  three years of experience of leadership coaching superintendents or principals.

- The sample is currently or was employed in public school districts to ensure
  greater commonality of experience amongst participants.

- The sample must have coached superintendents or principals within the last
  three years on a full-time or a part-time basis.

- There were no pre-determined preferences expressed in the sample to achieve
  representation in gender, age, or racial-ethnic identification for the sample.

- Due to the time and cost of travel to conduct multiple interviews, only
  participants located within 100 miles of Charlotte, North Carolina were
  considered.

Participant Selection

Three strategies were employed to recruit a pool of individuals for participation.

First, I identified the leadership coaches from various websites such as North Carolina

Department of Instruction, and public school districts that employ leadership coaches. Second, through word-of-mouth with colleagues and coaches in the field who expressed an interest in participating in my study and/or recommended potential coaches for my study. Third, I reviewed my professional connections of coaches on LinkedIn, a professional directory of individuals and companies. There were 17 potential participants identified.

To recruit participants, I emailed via my UNC Charlotte email account a recruitment letter (APPENDIX A) to prospective participants soliciting their participation in my study. Individuals who expressed interest in participating were forwarded via postal mail the following documents: (1) one signed copy of the recruitment letter (APPENDIX B); (2) two copies of the signed UNC Charlotte Institutional Review Board Consent letter on letterhead (APPENDIX C); (3) a short questionnaire asking about their experience coaching superintendents/principals, most recent period(s) of coaching, geographic location, and contact information (APPENDIX D), and (4) a stamped self-addressed return envelope. Potential applicants were asked to return via the stamped envelope one consent letter with their signature and the completed questionnaire.

The five coaches that participated in my study were purposely selected based on the inclusion criteria from those persons who returned the questionnaire and the signed consent forms with their signature from the recruitment packet. Of the 17 potential participants identified, only eight returned the required documents. Based on the questionnaires returned, five met the inclusion criteria. I then contacted the five who met the inclusion criteria and arranged their interviews which commenced within one week. The interviews were conducted in a variety of settings such as the library, office,

university, and home based on the participants' preference. Two of the participants lived approximately 90 miles away and based on their offer met me at the half- way mark from their location to Charlotte.

<div align="center">North Carolina's School Leadership Coaching Initiative</div>

In the state of North Carolina, school leadership coaching is provided by a School Transformation Coach to principals leading elementary, middle and high schools identified as low-performing based on end of year assessment results (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, n.d) The schools targeted make up the bottom 5% of schools in North Carolina and have a performance composite below 60% based on the 2009-10 test data (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, n.d.). District Transformation Coaches provide coaching to superintendents whose school districts have been identified as low-performing. North Carolina secured funding for its Turning Around North Carolina's Lowest Achieving Schools (TALAS) initiative through the Race to the Top (RttT) grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to stimulate and strengthen its efforts to improve sustained academic achievement of the lowest performing schools through turnaround and transformation methods of school and district improvement. The criteria to become a School Transformation Coach or District Transformation Coach are based on credentials and experience (e.g. graduate degree, former and retired school and district administrators). It is unclear at this time if additional training is provided or if coaches are expected to rely solely on the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired during their tenure as principals and district administrators.

Assurance of Confidentiality

In order to get the respondents to provide personal data, researchers must develop rapport and a sense of trust with these individuals. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003) maintaining confidentiality with participants requires assurances that the stories that respondents tell will not be associated with their names or other identifying information. For the conduct of this study I had access to the names of the respondents and kept their names and information confidential. I personally transcribed all interviews. Pseudonyms used were agreed upon by the participants in place of their real names and were used in all written evidence. Permission to use direct quotes was requested in the Informed Consent Forms. There was minimal risk to the participants that their identities could be identifiable due to the content of their stories. This possibility was outlined in the Informed Consent Forms.

Participants

The participants consisted of two males (both African American) and three females (two African American and one Caucasian). The participants lived and worked within the 100 mile radius of Charlotte. Each of the five participants has a bachelor's degree in education. Four have a master's degree in school administration and one has a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Three of the participants have a doctoral degree in educational leadership. The total years of leadership coaching experience of the four participants ranged from three to thirteen years. The remaining participant did not indicate the total years of leadership coaching on the questionnaire or on any other data source.

Prior to becoming leadership coaches the participants were employed as teachers, curriculum specialists, assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents, deputy

superintendents, interim superintendent, and district superintendent. The district

superintendents and building principals coached by the participants represented urban and

rural communities serving high concentrations of low-income and low-performing

students.

Selected Participant Coaching Background

In keeping with assurance of confidentiality commitment the researcher made to

the coaches and in adherence to The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC)

Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, the identity of the coaches were

protected. These profiles were based on the questionnaire completed by the participants.

Participant 1 is currently working for a private organization that specializes in

coaching principals. He has worked in multiple states. He has coached superintendents

and principals in rural high poverty areas of North Carolina. He has been a teacher, an

assistant principal, a principal at both the middle school and high school level in rural and

in city public school districts. He has served as the district superintendent in a rural

district for a number of years.

Participant 2 is currently coaching central office staff and elementary principals.

She has taught elementary school and has been a building principal at the elementary,

middle and high school levels. She has held positions as an assistant superintendent and

a deputy superintendent in multiple states.

Participant 3 has served as a coach for principals in numerous school districts in

North Carolina. She currently works for a private consulting company coaching district

and school leaders. She has taught physical education for middle and high school

students. She has also served as a principal of an elementary school in an urban city in

North Carolina.

Participant 4 is currently employed as a curriculum specialist who coaches

building principals, particularly high school principals in rural North Carolina. She has

taught elementary, middle and high school and holds certification by the National Board

for Professional Teaching Standards.

Participant 5 is currently coaching and has coached superintendent and principals

across the state of North Carolina and at the national level. Having taught at both the

middle and high school levels and, he has served as an assistant principal, principal,

deputy superintendent, interim superintendent and regional area superintendent, all in an

urban school district in North Carolina.

Data Collection Procedures

This study utilized three methods of collecting data: (1) the coaches' professional

lived experiences in their own words through a two semi-structured interview process

(approximately two hours over the course of the interviews); (2) background information

shared by the coaches, and; (3) a coaching career mapping exercise performed by the

coaches.

Interviews

Phenomenological-based interviewing was used in order to understand the

essence of the participants' experiences, the deliberate practices, and the reflective

practices used by the coaches that influenced their development toward expert

performance (Creswell, 2013). The key to successful phenomenological interviewing is

to have respondents to reconstruct their experiences by asking "how" (as opposed to

"why" questions) (Seidman, 2013). This study relied on a modified form of Seidman's (2013) chronological three phase phenomenological interviewing method that combined life-history interviewing and focused in-depth interviewing.

According to Seidman (2013) a researcher "will have reasons to explore alternatives" (p. 25) to the interview structure. However, the structure of the interviews must be maintained in such a way that permits the participants to "reconstruct and reflect upon their experiences within the context of their lives" (Seidman, 2013, p.25). Seidman (2013) noted that alternatives to the three-interview structure and duration may be used successfully as long as the interviews are conducted in chronological order and the respondents' life histories, details of their experiences, and reflections of the meaning of their experiences are contained within the amended interview structure.

Since the participants in my study traveled across North Carolina to their assigned districts and school, and due to the time constraints affecting the participants 'availability, for their convenience I chose to use the modified version of Seidman's (2013) interviewing method. This modified version still consisted of his recommended two in-depth separate semi-structured interviews , namely; *Focused Life History*, *The Details of Experience*, and *Reflection on the Meaning* (Seidman, 2013). Since the third interview originally suggested by Seidman (2013) was closely related to the second interview in my study, I decided to modify the interview process for that reason as well. Because I adhered to Seidman's (2013) recommendation about modifying the interview process it was assumed that this modification would not have a deleterious effect on the data collection.

A crucial component to interview design is constructing effective research questions for the interview process that will allow the researcher to delve deeply into the experiences and knowledge of the participants in order to gain maximum data from the interviews (Turner, 2010). During the interviews I asked follow-up questions and probing questions of the participants that provided clarification and/or more information I needed to better understand what the participants were trying to convey.

During the first interview (*Focused Life History*) I asked the participants to share as much as possible about their earlier life until the time they became a coach. During the combined second and third interview (*Details of the Experience, Reflection on the Meaning*) they were asked to share the details of their present lived experience and how these experiences influence how they actually do the job. Lastly, they were asked to reflect on coaching and apply meaning of this role on their personal life.

Typically, interviews are conducted in a relaxed, quiet setting where the respondent can speak freely and confidentially without concerns. The interviews were conducted separately and at a time and location convenient and comfortable for the coaches (e.g. public library and university conference rooms) (Seidman, 2013). Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by me and provided to the participants within one week for member checking.

The phenomenological questions asked of the participants focused on their life history, the work of a coach, purpose, relationships, and intellectual and emotional connections. The questions included but were not limited to: 1) Think about your formative years as a child or adolescent and describe how you learned a <u>new and difficult skill</u> or task for the first time . Describe this process. 2) Tell me about your background in

education and how you became a leadership coach. Subsequent questions included but were not limited to: 1) What does it mean to have *expertise* as a leadership coach? 2) How did you know that you had developed a level of expertise in this skill? 3) Can you describe your growth experience when your coaching task turned out in a positive manner? 4) Can you describe your growth experience when your coaching task turned out in a negative manner? My interview protocol was derived from the literature on deliberate and reflective practices, developing expertise and from the literature on leadership coaching These questions were not piloted for validity. However, the availability of probing helped me to refocus the participants to understand and answer the question. Based on the participants' experience the questions may have been interpreted differently (as indicated in the study assumptions). These questions are listed in Appendix E and Appendix F.

To support the interview process Patton (2002) suggests that note taking during the interview process serves many important purposes. First, note taking is a non-verbal cue to the respondent that what he or she is saying is or is not valuable. Second, note taking is a signal to the participants that they have something valuable to say which aids in building rapport. Finally, note taking keeps the interviewer focused on the question at hand and lays the groundwork for follow-up questions and probing which is very important to gathering in-depth data. Hay (2007) posits that taking notes also gives the interviewer a better basis than relying on memory. I conducted observations and interview notes of the participants' affect, language, and nuances during each interview. I took special note of any conversational skills or strategies that the participants

employed that may have been indicative of their coaching role and how they reflect on their performance in this regard.

Coaching Career Mapping

In the period of time between the first and second interviews the participants completed a "map" of their professional life related to leadership coaching. The purpose of this open-ended activity was to provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their practice of leadership coaching, their coaching trajectory and their experiences in developing expertise in this domain (See APPENDIX G). The first page of the activity was an example of a completed coaching career mapping activity to give the participants an idea how they could detail their experience as a coach and their perceived development of expertise as a coach. The second page was a template in the form timeline with no identifiable information for them to label and complete based on the information they chose to share. This activity was done in my absence at a convenient time and location for each participant. The participants turned in their completed maps which I used to ask questions during the second interview.

<div align="center">Data Security</div>

Principles about data storage and handling suited to qualitative research were systematically followed to maintain the integrity of the research process. All participants were provided with a code name. This list of participants' name and code name are kept on a password protected external drive stored in a separate location from the rest of the transcripts and research documents for this study. All interview transcripts (paper copies or electronic copies) and analytic files generated from these transcripts are identified by the code name only (not the participant's name).

Data Analysis

Creswell's (2013) phenomenological method of data analysis was employed for this study. I read and re-read all of the data collected from the three sources (the two interviews, the career mapping exercise, and the background information shared by the coaches) to get an overall sense of the information and ideas shared by the coaches. I personally transcribed each of the ten interviews. After transcription and member checking, I prepared the documents for analysis using the qualitative software program *NVIVO*. I used *NVIVO* to help develop codes to represent ideas as to how the coaches experienced leadership coaching, deliberate practices and reflective practices used during the coaching process, and their individual and collective growth continuum in a domain.

NVIVO was also used for single and collective respondent data analysis (coding, thematic development, and data management) of interviews, career mapping documents and background information shared by the coaches. Codes derived from the three data sources were aggregated into themes which represented the underlying structure of leadership coaches' development of domain expertise. Creswell (2013) posits that all experiences, in this case leadership coaching, have a structural essence. That is coaching is the same whether the coach is from a school district, private business or is an independent consultant. My analysis provides a written composite description that presents the essence of the collective coaching experience of coaches in this study. Prior to writing the results my advisor and I compared the coding and resultant thematic analysis for confirmability.

Data Quality Procedures

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is the concept employed as opposed to the positivists' concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative research (Creswell, 2013; Shenton, 2004). While trustworthiness corresponds to traditional quantitative concepts of research quality, naturalistic researchers use specific terminology to distinguish the difference between the two criteria (Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness is composed of four characteristics as noted. In parenthesis are the corresponding positivists' descriptions: (a) credibility (internal validity); (b) transferability (external validity/generalizability); (c) dependability (reliability) and; (d) confirmability (objectivity) (Shenton, 2004). Examples of approaches are as follows:

Credibility

To address credibility the researcher takes into account all of the complexities presented in the study and can address them by; (1) spending more time at the study site; (2) doing persistent observations and peer debriefing; (3) examining previous research to frame findings; (4) practice triangulation using multiple methods, data collection strategies and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what's being studied and to cross-check information and; (5) establish and audit trail where a colleague, etc. can act as an external auditor to examine the process of data collection and analysis and interpretation (Shenton, 2004).

I took into account all of the complexities in this study and addressed them by; (1) examining previous research to frame findings; (2) practicing triangulation using interviews, behavioral observation and interview notes, background information shared by the coaches and the career mapping exercise completed by the coaches and; (3)

through member checks by providing the transcripts to the participants for review to ensure that the information they shared was what they intended to convey.

Transferability

When addressing transferability the researcher is aware that the findings of the study are specific to the setting, is context-bound and is not generalizable to larger groups of people (Creswell, 2013; Shenton, 2004). I collected detailed descriptive data and developed detailed descriptions of the context in as much detail as possible so others can determine the similarities and the prospects for their study.

Dependability

Dependability is addressed by the use of overlapping methods to address the stability of the data collected and to establish an audit trail (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). To address this criterion I provided an in-depth description of the methodology used for this study to other researchers can employ the same process should they decide to replicate this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is when the neutrality and objectivity of the data collected is establish via triangulation and practiced reflexivity (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). I addressed these criteria through the use of triangulation, by providing an in-depth description of the methodology used for this study and through the use of a reflexive journal. I recognized that my presence alone had an effect on what was said and how it was said. This practice was done to help me to take my own biases into account during the entire research process. (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002).

<div align="center">Reflection on the Methodology Process</div>

Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers interview 5-25 participants who have the same phenomenon in common and the data collection should not only "consists of in-depth and multiple interviews" (p.81) but the researcher should include various forms of data accounts for the vicarious experiences of the participants.

While I met the minimum of study participants recommended by Creswell (2013), I believe the issue of trustworthiness could have been strengthen if I would have interviewed more participants (perhaps 8-10), had more flexibility with time to really explore leadership coaching, to collect more data such as the coaching plans developed by the participants for their coachee and, to be able to interview the coachees to get their perspective on leadership coaching and the support they receive from their coaches.

Summary of Methodology

A phenomenological approach was be used for this study to capture the essence of how the leadership coaches experienced, processed and perceived their learning and expertise development. Five leadership coaches who currently serve in this capacity and/or have coached administrators (superintendents and principals) were the participants for this study. I explored how the coaches reached the level of performance whereby satisfactory performance in multiple domains of practice became stable and autonomous. Through these comprehensive interviews, coupled with the background information shared by the coaches, and the coaching career mapping activity completed by the coaches, I was able to capture how these coaches developed their expertise and the skills, strategies, and tools they employed to provide targeted professional development to increase their coachees' capacity as educational leaders.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This purpose of this study was to examine how five educational leadership coaches working with educational leaders in k-12 education developed domain specific expertise over time, specifically through deliberate and reflective practices by the coaches. This study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and tools the coaches used and how these techniques have developed over time. This chapter details the findings of the analysis.

Research Questions

1. How did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise?

2. How did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise?

Participants' Profiles

In keeping with assurance of confidentiality commitment I made to the participants and in adherence to The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, the identity of the participants were protected. These findings were gleaned and analyzed from the participants' life history interview and to a lesser extent on the recruitment questionnaire. These profiles also employ pseudonyms.

Participant 1 – "Freddie"

"Freddie" is approximately in his mid-60s. He grew up in a close community of relatives, friends, and community members. Building relationships, education and hard work was the core of his formative years. He spoke of his father and grandfather as his primary role models. He described his father was a "real hard worker who didn't have a formal education passed the 10th grade" but his "father worked very hard and was very skilled at a number of things." Freddie shared that he would follow his father around or his father "dragged him around" with him and showed Freddie how to do things such as fixing buildings. Freddie would sit on the floor of his grandfather's house doing math problems and reading. There was no paper around so "they would write math problems on a veneering board so the children could learn to read and do math." Freddie described his modality for learning as "visual and repetition of whatever they were doing."

At the age of six or seven Freddie was given chores to do and at times he was selected from amongst his peers to be in charge of his peers while working on the farm. He mentioned that he learned to fix things, learned how to work and how he enjoyed these experiences growing up. He said that he felt a sense of accomplishment particularly when the farmers would let him drive tens to thousands of dollars' worth of equipment such as "big old tractors." Freddie worked on the farm until he was around 16 years old then he wanted to get a factory job. Freddie shared that he was so determined to get that job that he stopped by the business everyday until the owner told him that because Freddie's was so determined to work he would find something for Freddie to do. Freddie continued to build relationships, further his education and to work with a purpose throughout his childhood and well into adulthood.

Freddie's background in education consisted of ten years as a science teacher, one year as an assistant principal, ten years collectively as middle school and high school principal and approximately twelve plus years as the superintendent of a few school districts. His classroom, principal and central office leadership spans approximately thirty-nine years serving rural and urban communities.

Freddie is currently working for a private organization that specializes in coaching principals. He has worked in multiple states. He has also coached superintendents and principals in rural high poverty areas of North Carolina. Freddie is in demand; often sought out by state education agencies, superintendents, principals and private consulting firms to provide leadership coaching support to superintendents and principals who are dealing with issues pertaining to district and school initiatives and student outcomes. He has been a leadership coach for three years.

Participant 2--"Karen"

"Karen" is approximately in her early 40s. She grew up in North Carolina. She described herself as the "baby of four children." Her father is a retired educator and her mother a retired nurse. She stated that her parents were her first role models who emphasized the importance of education and doing her best in everything she undertakes in life. Her parents always encouraged her to try something new which she attributes to her willingness to take risk as an adult as she strives to be the best in her personal and professional life. Karen also shared that she was very fortunate to have strong role models in addition to her parents who have mentored her from her childhood into adulthood. These were her siblings, grandparents, teachers, community and church members who taught her how to navigate through life. She described some of these role

models as strong women some of whom were her elementary teachers who taught her a lot about herself ("more than what was in the textbook") and encouraged Karen to be herself. These teachers also inspired Karen to go into education. Karen describes her childhood as "probably the best childhood that anyone could have." She portrayed herself as one who is supportive of people who are striving to improve their quality of life on a personal and professional level. She values honesty and healthy relationships as she surrounds herself with positive people. She attributed her growth on a personal and professional level to the constructive feedback and modeling of behaviors exhibited by her parents, friends, community and church relationships, colleagues, and supervisors.

Karen has taught elementary school and has been a building principal at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She has also held positions as an assistant superintendent and a deputy superintendent in multiple states. She is currently coaching central office staff and elementary principals in rural and urban school districts. She has approximately 23 years of service in education. She has been a leadership coach for seven years.

Participant 3--"Sandra"

"Sandra" is approximately in her early 60s. She grew up in a rural community in North Carolina. She was the oldest child in her family. She was close to her parents as a couple but spoke of a special relationship she had with her father. She spoke with pride about her father purchasing a brand new bicycle for her to ride and what a sacrifice it was for him to invest in such an extravagant gift. She spoke of her father's patience and the feedback he gave her while teaching her how to ride her bicycle and the confidence he had in her ability to not only learn, but to master this skill of riding the bike. Sandra

shared that she learned to ride her new bicycle in one day. She also shared that her father was her primary tutor. Even though he dropped out of high school (to join the Army) he would always go around reciting things he learned in school. Sandra's father taught her the multiplication tables. She said her father took pride in working with her because she was the worst student in her family. In her formative years of schooling Sandra disliked school but she persevered, graduated from high school and went on to become a college graduate.

Sandra also shared that she was a product of the desegregation movement at her high school. She along with her African American peers where the first to integrate their high school. She spoke very candidly about the maltreatment she received and how she was determined to not only do well in school but she also felt an obligation to represent her race throughout her life in a very positive manner as a person and through her academic and professional achievements. Sandra described herself as an "introverted person" but her "passion comes alive" when she's doing something she really believes in.

Sandra has worked as a Physical Education, middle, junior high, and high school teacher. She has also worked as a Teacher Mentor and became certified by her state in this role. Sandra has conducted mentor trainings at the district and state levels. She has worked as a coach of principals in numerous school districts in North Carolina. She currently works for a private consulting company coaching district and school leaders. This coach is often sought out by state education agencies and private consulting firms. Sandra has worked in education for approximately 30 years. She has been a leadership coach for thirteen years.

Participant 4

"Trish" is approximately in her mid-40s. She shared that her father was in the military and implied that she and her family relocated to another area periodically based on her father's assigned post. As an adult she lived in Florida for several years.

Trish shared that her parents recognized her ability as an artist very early and would invest in special art classes to develop her skills even more and to expose Trish to the arts of many cultures. She stated that she welcomed the challenge of learning about other cultures and their specific techniques and was very determined to make her art look just like the art of the country she was studying. Her love of art has continued through adulthood. Trish also shared that her journey to become a teacher was different. She was a lateral entry teacher and she stated that teaching "was a challenge going in there and not really having a background in education." She stated that because of the challenges she faced as a lateral entry teacher she does whatever she can to support educators who are struggling on the job. Trish also stated that she feels a sense of accomplishment when she provides support to educators who are learning new and innovative programs and strategies that promote high student achievement.

Trish has worked as a classroom teacher at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. She is currently employed as a curriculum specialist who coaches building principals, particularly high school principals in rural North Carolina. She holds certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is a doctoral candidate at a university in North Carolina. Trish did not indicate how long she was worked in education. She has been a leadership coach for five years.

Participant 5

      "Chuck" is approximately in his mid-60s. He did not indicate where he was originally from but did imply that he has lived in North Carolina for many, many years. He grew up in a close community of family, community members, and teachers. Chuck shared that he had to overcome many obstacles in life and while in school. It was his support system of family (particularly his mother) who made it known to Chuck that he had the potential to do great things in life. Not only did this encouragement come in words but also in deed. Chuck shared that he was mentored by some of the best educators with whom one could come in contact. Chuck stated that this kind of encouragement motivated him to be the best that he could possibly be as a child and well into his adulthood.

      One of Chuck's biggest challenges when he entered college was a limited vocabulary. He said that his vocabulary "was miniscule." So he studied the dictionary which became his favorite book; one that he would carry around with him as he did his other textbooks. This kind of self-motivated discipline in learning new things and building upon his knowledge became second nature to Chuck. Chuck still looks for opportunities to learn and to grow as a person and as a professional.

      Chuck has taught at the middle and high school levels. He has served as an assistant principal, principal, deputy superintendent, interim superintendent and regional area superintendent, all in an urban school district in North Carolina. Chuck is currently coaching and has coached superintendent and principals across the state of North Carolina and at the national level. This coach is in demand often sought out by state education agencies, superintendents, principals and private consulting firms. Chuck has

worked in education for approximately 30 years. He has been a leadership coach for approximately thirteen years.

Reflections on Data Collection Process

Participants provided most of the information used in this study through the interviews. Overall, the interviews were in-depth and contained a large amount of detail. This detail concerned factual material, opinions and impressions of their experiences, and insight into how they organize their own thinking. For example, some respondents answered the questions and probing in a systematic matter by introducing a verbal advance organizer, followed by an explanation of each point. Others spoke in a stream of consciousness manner – jumping from association to association. The degree of personal reflection varied widely. Some participants focused on the job, their multiple coaching assignments (e.g. superintendent/principals) and duration of coaching (year(s) on assignment) while others focused on multiple coaching assignments, duration of coaching and their how they developed expertise.

Participants were not provided with a copy of the questions prior to the interviews yet they responded with precision when they addressed their answers to questions. The participants in the study were accommodating and responsive to the interview questions. One respondent appeared to try to "connect" with me by presenting more humorous anecdotes. Another seemed to be comfortable sharing her thoughts on how race impacted leadership culture because I, too, was as an African American female. At times I felt like I was being coached on *how to coach* superintendents and principals. Their initial posture at the beginning of the first interview was formal with the participants sitting erect in their seats making direct eye contact with me. As the interview progressed they

"warmed up" as they told their stories. They no longer sat erect. They appeared to be more relaxed (e.g. their legs crossed with a beverage in hand, leaned back in the seats with heads against the wall, knee slapping). They would often laugh (sometimes with tears rolling down their faces) while reflecting on some of their childhood, college, and young adult memories. Some examples shared were learning how to ride a bicycle, mow the grass, swim, and learning a foreign language.

While reflecting on their childhood and adult experiences some participants would break eye contact and often look afar as they described the strategic steps they took to learn a skill and their perceived development of expertise in that skill during their formative years. When they really got warmed up there were hand gestures, voice intonations (rising and falling) and at times they would move closer to the me when they really wanted to make a point. Other times some participants' eyes watered when they talked about family members, mentors and colleagues who helped them on their journey to become who they are today. During the second interview, which focused on how participants developed expertise as an educational leadership coach, the interview environment was more focused and serious.

Their affect, language, nuances, conversational skills and strategies were indicative of the coaching role and how they coach superintendents and principals. Participants' behavior did not indicate to me that their moments of failures were something to hide. Some made groaning sounds with a slight chuckle when describing how they "bombed" a coaching intervention. These types of behaviors may be indicative of the participants' ability to establish a trusting relationship with me. I felt as if I was on their journey while maintaining my position as the instrument of data collection.

Thematic Analysis

Domain specific expertise is paramount to the effectiveness of Leadership

Coaches. The participants used both deliberate and reflective practices to develop their

expertise. Three themes were found which contributed to domain specific expertise

through deliberate and reflective practices that address the research questions:1)

Knowledge base; 2) Building relationships; and 3) Personal development. The themes

were the broad practices that coaches engaged in to perform their coaching

responsibilities.

Theme 1: Knowledge Base

Developing and maintaining a well-stocked reservoir of knowledge was the

foundation for deliberate practice and the stimulant for reflective practice. There were

several dimensions of knowledge base constructed from the data. First the participants

developed both declarative and procedural knowledge. Second, participants learned by

doing. Third, participants saw knowledge holistically.

Declarative Knowledge

The coaching knowledge base is the declarative and procedural knowledge

reservoir that a coach possesses. Declarative knowledge is objective and literal. It is the

information individuals attain in order to understand and describe the meaning of a

concept. This information can be applied to various suitable situations (Anderson, 1993;

Yilmaz &Yalcin, 2012). This kind of knowledge includes knowledge of coaching

practices and theories, coaches' ability to recognize complexity, and coaches' ability to

customize coaching. One participant stated, "You have to know what is supposed to

occur in the [coaching] relationship." The participant's knowledge of research based

practices, the ability to design a coaching plan specific to the needs of the coachee and the planning and implementation of the coaching process are aspects this participant felt should occur in a coaching relationship.

As it related to required training a female participant stated that during a summer for five days a week she was mandated to attend training to become a coach. This training was "not necessarily working with curriculum and instruction but working with adults". This participant was the team leader of a group of coaches assigned to work with principals. This participant's example is an indication of the type of training one receives in order to become a coach. This example also indicates that the training places special emphasis on coaching adults and implies a specialized approach to working with this targeted group of professionals. A male participant explained that his coaching experience included coaching when he was a "high school teacher, after high school and as a school leadership coach in a school district for 12 plus years." This participant reported that he had also designed the coaching program for a large school district and led that program for several years. His comments illustrates that he had the knowledge base and experiences to not only coach diverse groups of people but also design a coaching program on a larger scale.

The participants used various skills to develop a content-rich, complex, declarative knowledge base in educational leadership coaching. Some participants highlighted the distinction between knowing educational leadership content and coaching content. Even though having both genres of content is important, having a rich base of coaching content was viewed as more important as reported by this participant,

> I think expertise as a leadership coach is…broad because you know content –
> meaning knowing what it means to be a principal, know what effective principals

> look like, how do they operate, how they make good decisions, but the coaching aspect is something totally different. I can coach, but I may not be able to coach principals…So, it depends on what you're coaching…I really think you need to know [educational leadership] content first…I am not saying be an expert in content, I'm saying be an expert in coaching.

Based on this participant's experience as a principal, she knew the principal's role and the distinction of coaching in different situations based on who was being coached. She explained that there is a difference between coaching principals, teachers in classrooms, or even coaching children engaged in sports activities. According to this participant, people in these categories require different approaches to coaching that are unique to each group. With regard for knowing the educational leadership content another participant related that "...recognizing the ability level of the person you are coaching; having some recognition of what and how they can develop the skills of an individual" was important. All of the participants reported that a better approach to coaching is to start from the skills a person has, rather than the skills the individual does not have, which the participants took under consideration when planning and implementing coaching activities for their coachees' professional development. However, one of the participants emphasized the importance of experience or practice over the course-based method to develop the coaching knowledge base,

> [I was] trained thoroughly in the area of coaching – Leadership Coaching, executive coaching, so you can go in with this level of skill. But the key to this is preparation. You cannot be prepared to coach [by taking]…classes…there is a whole different level of training to be a leadership coach.

To make his point this coach described the difference between university training for persons pursuing a degree in the principalship and the training one receives to become a leadership coach. He emphasized the fact that one's training as an aspiring principal does not mean that the individual will be an effective coach. He went on to explain that the

principal's relationship with his or her staff is evaluative. Conversely, in a coaching

relationship the coach serves as a means of support which necessitates the coach using a

formative approach to working with the coachee that is non-evaluative situation and

unlike the principal who can mandate his or her staff's performance. This participants

went on to say that in a coaching situation, the coach does not have that authority and

must find ways to inspire the coachee to accept the support the coach provides to increase

the coachee's leadership capacity.

Another aspect of declarative knowledge is the coach's ability to recognize the

complexity of coaching situations and to be able to customize their coaching to the

specific needs of the coachee. There are two types of complexity; albeit , they are closely

related. First, there is a complexity in establishing and maintaining productive

relationships. One participant, for whom a goal and task-focused intervention style was

successful in prior situations, related the problem of not first establishing a rapport with

her coachees (the superintendent and the school board) as a major impediment to

achieving a controversial goal. This participant who desired to be taken seriously as

competent elected to focus aggressively on the outcome of the task to be completed, and

realized too late that she needed to be accepted as an insider first,

> …I learned while I was trying to push through my coaching, push the need for
> them to follow policy – I really should have taken the time to get to know them as
> people. Because I was an outsider coming in, they weren't going to trust me
> anyway. So, instead of me building that relationship of trust (pause), I was
> focused on the work. So, I learned that you really have to take the time to build
> relationships …but no, I jumped in… No, you're not following the policy, you
> gotta change. You gotta do blah, blah, blah…

This participant's description of the complications and challenges she faced as a coach

emphasizes the importance of taking some time to get to know the person(s) being

coached in order for the coach to establish credibility and pursue a positive working relationship with the coachee(s). The participant's realization of the complexity of coaching highlights not only the importance of having a coaching knowledge base as a foundation for coaching but also the importance of knowing what strategies to use to engage coachees in their own learning.

Understanding the complexity of the problem is often gained through experiences that only a few may have the opportunities for. For example, a coach who had been a superintendent was able to discuss salient, but little known, issues with getting school district board members to support changes requiring the dismissal of longtime personnel (which the board did not wish to do). It is likely that the coach, a male, became aware of how to recognize and address these complex issues, based on his prior experiences as a superintendent. However, almost all respondents provided an anecdote where they learned complex content by simply observing others – the ability to learn vicariously.

Second, there is a complexity that is related to the coaching act itself. Coaches need to understand the capabilities of their coachees and how to communicate with them to achieve complex goals. A coach must possess not only the ability to "listen" to their coachee, but has to "hear" what the coachee is saying, especially if the hearing involves a context that the coach has limited or no experiences in. Regarding the complexity of managing a three year relationship with a female superintendent coachee, one action-oriented male participant related,

> Like, for instance towards the end of my coaching time with that superintendent, a lot of times I would write out a mock agenda for her consideration, because I knew she was a person who liked to think about things for a period of time…I might write out 5 or 6 things that need to be communicated to the board before we ever put that item on the agenda…But I would go through this…[it was] more about learning about *her* …and how to communicate with her and giving her the

> time and stuff she needed…a lot of times there was stuff she didn't want to take on, but if you laid the whole thing out for her…she was much more apt to do it.

This participant's understanding of the complexity of this problem was gained through his central office experiences as a superintendent. Thus he was able to not only relate to his coachee's experience as a superintendent but was also able to draw from his repertoire of coaching practices to provide exemplars in the form of mock agendas for his coachee to review and consider for her professional use. Another participant who had also been a superintendent was able to discuss salient, but little known, issues with getting school district board members to support changes requiring the dismissal of longtime personnel (which the board did not wish to do). It is likely that this participant, also a male, became aware of how to recognize and address these complex issues, when he also served as superintendent prior to becoming a coach.

Complexity in relationships can occur when the coach is unaware that differences in race, gender and age may suggest differences in experiences, opportunities to gain a strong knowledge base, and the perception of oneself by others. An African American participant noted an awareness of racial and gender differences that she felt she needed to prepare for in anticipation of the diverse settings she would work in as a teacher and administrator,

> I found things in North Carolina. All kinds of internships, partnerships with businesses if you were a school leader. I went to conference as a teacher. North Carolina had some of the best conferences "African Americans in Administration," "Women in Administration." I have a powerful background in just learning in general I never just stopped. Because I was trained that you must always be prepared.

This quote illustrates this participant's awareness of the importance of being knowledgeable about the uniqueness of race and gender within the complexity of societal

expectations that can influence the kind of support the coach needs to provide for the coachee.

Participants provided an anecdote where they learned complex content by learning vicariously simply by observing former educational leaders at the district and school levels. An example of learning complex content with the assistance of former educational leaders was shared by a male and female participant when describing what they learned and how they developed more expertise as a result of their "failed" coaching intervention,

> I mean I think that what I learned from the failure is I don't hear clear enough to know what I need to know, don't communicate in the right language so that people can clearly hear and so that we hear and confirm that we're all on the same page. I mean it's sort of like even when you're giving directions and you're saying things that are perfectly clear to you but if I count one stop light different from you then I'm on a different road than you and it's not that what you say is unclear. This was my interpretation and if my interpretation doesn't jive with that there's still disharmony.

> [I] try to figure out what I could have done differently. How I could have approached the situation differently? How you first go in and present yourself as far as communication and just introducing yourself. Those little things can make a big difference in the overall result… and looking at the timeline in terms of moving too fast or too slow for the individual being coached.

Both of these participants shared that when they reflected on coaching situations that failed they realized that there were areas of their coaching practices where they lacked expertise. They posited that recognizing their failures allows them to worked on their deficiencies while being aware that becoming an expert in those areas of practice, "doesn't just happen overnight". They have to continuously work to get better at those skills.

The participants reported that because they coached more than one coachee at a time, at various levels of leadership (superintendents, elementary, middle and high school

principals) in urban and rural school districts/schools that they differentiated their

coaching based on who they were coaching and the situation the coach was in. They

shared that they are responsible for bringing their expertise to the coach-coachee

relationship in such a way that the coachee is able to capture the vision for their

development so they can see the goal and the steps that needs to be taken to reach that

goal.

The customization of a strategy to address a coachee's problem is evident of the

recognition of the context and culture that the coach and coachee are immersed in, the

capability of the coachee, and specific capabilities of the coach. A female participant

reported, "It [coaching] would vary depending on the school I was going to… I provided

information based on their [the administrator's] role and what they needed to know but

not overwhelm them so they could start getting to know the meaning of the process

itself". All the coaches stated that they differentiated their coaching according to the

needs of the coachee. One stated,

> …expert coaches…differentiate based on who they are coaching…or the person
> they are coaching based on the situation they're in…I have not had any two
> principals that are alike. So, I would have to adjust. So, I think an expert
> leadership coach knows how to adjust, be flexible and differentiate to the needs of
> the person or the situation they are in – what the expected outcome is.

Another participant stated,

> With regard for knowing the educational leadership content coaches related that
> "...recognizing the ability level of the person you are coaching; having some
> recognition of what and how they can develop the skills of an individual" was
> important. Coaches also noted that it may be a better approach to start from the
> skills a person has, rather than the skills the individual does not have.

Each of the participants reported that they used different approaches to customized

coaching. For example, if their coachee did not need direct instruction on how to

perform a task or solve a problem the participants shared that in this case they would help their coachee achieve clarity on what needed to be done, help them to set goals and objectives and provide support and encouragement throughout the process so the coachees can achieve their goals. Conversely, if the coachees were learning a new skill then the participants stated that they would use a more direct approach by providing hands-on direct instruction. The participants related that they would actually teach the coachee how to do a particular task and observe the coachee doing the task. Task modeling was also mentioned by the participants as a skill that supports customization.

The participants described some of the ways they customized coaching to address the specific needs of their coachee. One participant gave the example of how she facilitated her coachees' practice of conducting classroom walk-throughs. These coachees' knew how to conduct walk-throughs, had experienced some success, but needed additional support on how to improve or enhance the process. This participant facilitated the coachees' learning by providing feedback to the coachees to foster a deeper understanding of how to conduct walk-throughs and demonstrated how they could improve or enhance their performance. Some coaching assignments focused on the provision of technical support such as preparing for school accreditation, assessments and climate inventories where the participants reported using a combination of facilitation and instructional support for professional development purposes.

Direct instructional strategies were also employed by the participants as evidenced through the use of demographic and test data to determine the kind of teaching approach the participants should use as they tutored their coachees on how to use this data. Participants modeled tasks and behaviors, provided direct instruction to coachees,

and continually clarified goals for them as well. One participant stated that after each coaching session, he reflected on what happened. He stated, "I conduct an analysis to see if I achieved the goal that was set… But to do that, you have to have a goal going in." Another participant clarified that goals do not change. Only the process to reach the goals may change. This is an example of how the participants knew to differentiate and customize their support base on the coachees' needs. A participant who worked with a superintendent for three years related how he pushed for her to consider how responses to immediate issues affected long range goals. This shared approach to coaching where the participant and the coachee worked together on the accomplishment of long term system-changing goals indicates that at times coaching is a collaborative process where both parties work together to design and plan of action. This type of short- term coaching appeared to occur more often with principals who were coached and the teachers on their staff.

Some coaching assignments focused on the provision of technical support (such as preparing for school accreditation, assessments and climate inventories) to coachees that were consultative. There were discussions about assessment, planning, and implementation. The coaches also shared sample agendas, assessment and evaluation tools all of which proved successful in prior coaching situations. All of the participants reported that their knowledge about educational leadership, their prior experiences as educational leaders and their knowledge about coaching strategies enabled them to determine which strategies they needed to apply based on the contextual factors underlying the coaching experience (See Table 1, Coaching and the Strategies Used to Develop Domain Specific Expertise).

The participants reported that they also provided feedback to their coachees along the way. At times their coachees were receptive to the support they were receiving. There were also coachees who did not want the support and were resistant to being coached.

Resistance to coaching even in the face of customized approaches to coaching was a topic brought up by four participants. Resistance was characterized in multiple ways. The participants shared that in some cases there was some resistance on the part of the coachees to receiving this kind of targeted assistance. The coachees were either leading a low-performing school district or schools as it related to student achievement. Some of the schools were in school improvement because of low test scores. There were also coachees who received coaching because they had poor relationships with their school and community stakeholders. The participants reported that as time went on they took an assessment of these relationships, reevaluated their approach to connecting with the coachee and revamped their approach.

In one scenario, the coachee simply did not respond to several types of interventions, ostensibly due to fear of losing control of the situation. The participant related this episode, in which resistance may outweigh customization,

> Although he appeared very receptive initially…once it came down to working on goals, programs and implementation…it was apparent that it was never going to happen. He had no intentions of following through with anything…he wasn't willing to give up any control over the school – at all.

In relating this situation the participant wondered about the motivations of the coachee in placing his own motivations over that of student achievement. She realized that she needed to make adjustments to her coaching that would still benefit the students in the face of this opposition.

In a second example, a woman principal who had outlasted the original adherents to her autocratic leadership style and personality, found herself in a current setting with a younger, less compliant faculty making the school culture unbearable; "she was too old school for her the people in her building." This principal was resistant to coaching interventions. The participant related how a coaching intervention's customized solution can be the movement of the resistant coachee out of the situation,

> The challenge with her is that I am not going to pick that battle [the autocratic leadership style]. I have to say it in a different way…so our conversations were…You're not ready for this. How do you want to end your career?...you're going down…She retired after I left that summer and thanked me. She didn't realize how tired she was…Now she's on the school board.

In each of these cases the coaches related the customized strategies they tried and – how they failed. All of the participants attributed their ability to differentiate the support they provided to their coachees to trial and error and comparing and contrasting the diverse settings they have worked in, the responses received from their other coachees in those and previous environments and the results of the implementation of the professional development plan. Most participants mentioned that customization of coaching was possible when the coach had a sustained relationship (2 -3 years) with a coachee.

Procedural knowledge

An important feature of skill acquisition is the relationship between procedural and declarative knowledge. Procedural knowledge was inclusive of declarative knowledge and procedural automaticity. Procedural knowledge coupled with procedural automaticity means that the participants' were able to perform tasks spontaneously because they had an accumulated knowledge base and a repertoire of experiences that allowed them to utilize their coaching practices in diverse situations. They had

developed routines, procedures and systems to support the deployment of their coaching

skills.

According to Anderson (1993) the conversion of declarative knowledge into

procedural knowledge is an important step in developing expertise in a content domain.

One participant related how he had implemented routines and systems as a beginning

teacher, and later, as an administrator in a systematic way. These systems allowed him to

organize the work of others, prioritize his own work, and get multiple tasks completed.

Another participant described an example of the coaching procedures he uses,

> You coach in applications. You don't finish. You see if you have dates set up.
> From the 1st day to the 12th day there ought to be some plan set forth that these are
> the things are the things that I'm going to have when I get to day #12. With
> principal 1 hour of conferencing 1 hour of observation so I'm spending some
> quality time with the principal. If I'm going to do a classroom visit I want to see
> the principal doing the skill. I write reports back to the principal as a way of
> reflection the same day I made the observation so it's fresh in my mind and in his
> too.

This participant reported that he was a note taker who took notes during the coaching

sessions to make sure that he had the information needed to plan the coaching activities

and perform those tasks incrementally for a specified period of time in order to meet the

goals established for those visit. These systems allowed both participants to organize and

prioritize their work and the work of their coachees to get multiple tasks completed.

As it related to procedural automaticity of coaching actions the participants

attributed their commitment to learning, development of expertise and mastering of skills

to being focused, having someone model what needed to be done, getting specific and

constructive feedback, and performing that skill over and over again. They emphasized

repetition and a lot of intense work and study – "I'll practice, practice, practice, until I get

it right." This quote illustrates the participant's deliberate attempt to use their

knowledge, technical skill and to demonstrate their competence in a way that is seamless and automatic.

Another participant related that she practiced her coaching procedures for automaticity in front of a mirror,

> I find myself practicing verbally in front of a mirror to see (a) how I look when I'm speaking; (b) to hear how I sound, and (c) to see if it's what I wanted to say, because sometimes I can think of something and realize it's not what I want to say. I just practice…[until] I am either confident I have it…but also knowing that I have to continue it…I have to go on my gut…that's part of my self-reflecting…

This participant illustrated the systematic process she used to become proficient in communicating with her coachees in a way that seemed natural, confident and flawless to establish credibility with the coachees.

Procedural knowledge also related to the storehouse of techniques the participants possessed to initiate and sustain the coaching relationship. These included their ability to be directive or non-directive depending on the situation, although all of the participants maintained it was important to be "clear" about coachee expectations and how to accomplish them. Several participants related that having a "way of delivering [suggestions] so it's nonthreatening, just another opportunity…" was crucial to working with a coachee in a non-evaluative, non-judgmental manner.

The participants maintained that in order to become proficient in a skill, they worked on that skill until they had the solid foundational skills, that the skill had become "second nature" - to move to and work towards the next level of proficiency. Finally, the participants' posited that deliberate practice of skills in a sequential manner coupled with the practical experience of *exercising* those skills, actually doing the work, in a deliberate

and sequential manner through the execution of their coaching responsibilities, enabled

them to continuously develop expertise.

Learned by Doing

The second aspect of knowledge base discussed by participants was *learning by*

doing which is a form of procedural knowledge. Declarative and procedural knowledge

are different sides of the same coin. While these two concepts are distinct in their

meanings they are also interrelated. Declarative knowledge of coaching (literal) formed

the basis for procedural knowledge for coaching where the participants used their

knowledge about educational leadership and leadership coaching and applied that

knowledge to performing their coaching tasks systematically and with fidelity.

The participants' primary source of deliberate practice was *actually doing the*

work. They perceived learning by doing as a key practice in developing expertise. A

participant related how she learns vital information pertaining to laws that directly impact

what happens in schools,

> I would say learning the law and the changes in the different laws that's an
> ongoing process to keep up legislative information on the school board website,
> the state school board because it changes so often. Some of things that have
> changed can have an impact on the school level.

This participant expressed the importance of being up-to-date with mandates to make

sure that her coachees are in compliance and because the mandates change regularly that

she needs to make sure that she does not waste her coachees' valuable time on issues that

are no longer relevant. This participant implied that she is learning as she goes. Another

participant described how he learns by doing the work as "growth as a coach > forming >

norming > developing > strong personal relationship and trust. Lots of reflection

w/coachee & team…" as he develops expertise as a coach. He described his on-the-job

training as one of trial and error and trial and success.

Participants explained that when they have experienced a situation or learned

about a similar situation it gave them perspective and discernment about how to set goals,

design a course of action, and to execute the course of action should they encounter

similar needs of their coachees in other situations. As a participant explained,

> After initial experience in coaching. I decided to be less directive. I personally reflected more often and even shared my thought (reflective) process and I see coaches using it in their respective work and willing to engage me in their thinking. I patterned my coaching techniques from previous coaches I had as a 1st year principal, previous principal experience and formal coach training.

Another participant described how she learns while working with her coachee,

> Cause when I work with principals I'm learning a lot too especially if I go to their staff development with them and that's what I do sometimes. I go with them. I want to hear what you're being told and how are you going to take that and come back to the school. You tell me *your plan*.

Both of these examples illustrate how the participants developed expertise through a

reflective process, learning vicariously through the actions of other coaches and by

attending staff development training with their coachees. This doing at times resulted in

making errors. Participants expressed that there were times when they may not have

allotted enough time for their coachees to develop due to time constraints pertaining to

their schedules limiting the amount of time they could spend with them. As a part of

their retooling process the participants reassessed their approach and made some

adjustments such as "revisiting their coaching strategies and work schedules to meet the

needs of their coachees".

Interestingly the career mapping activity by the participants suggested the

importance of errors for knowledge development. The errors forced participants to retool

frequently; to reorganize their approach as they reflected upon "failures" in coaching

assignments and meeting goals in order to perform more proficiently. All participants

emphasized the benefit of deliberate reflection on the incidents that led to lack of

progress as shared by a participant,

> Probably more in being patient and learning how to work with difficult people. 1. How do you communicate? 2. Pick and choose another goal so you don't feel you have to stop. Let's pick another battle. Let's pick another area to work on ...

These personal reflective thoughts were done independent of the coachee either while the

participants were working with the coachees or at the end of the day when the

participants had time to themselves to think about what transpired while working with

their coachee. Whether the participants were reflecting-in-action or whether they took a

retrospective view of their coaching, reflective practice of their work helped them to view

their work based on the use of specific skills, strategies, or tool used in the coaching

situation and it also enabled them to view coaching holistically.

Knowledge Holistically

The third aspect of knowledge base discussed by participants was seeing

knowledge holistically. Being able to see "the big picture" noted by several participants.

In other words, having an extensive repertoire of content knowledge was not sufficient,

unless one could relate aspects of this knowledge to other aspects to form connections.

One participant related that seeing the whole landscape was part of a creative learning

process,

> a willingness to see it uh as part of the whole it wasn't just a uh (long pause) it wasn't just a task…it was a task that had to be done as part of a whole…I think I sort of saw the picture…I understood sort of the picture…what we're doing here…impacts what we do at other places…and if we were just doing the job without consideration of how it connects to the next part, it makes the work so much harder…it plays into this, into this, into this…I think I always sort of looked

at the pictures…I put pictures together…that's the way I learn, too. I put pictures together.

This quote illustrates this participant's awareness of not only the contextual factors that influence the kind of coaching he provides for his coachees as educational leaders within their environment, but is also an indication that the participant is aware of the external factors (i.e. district, community stakeholders) that can influence the course of action taken by the participant's efforts to engage the coachees in professional development. Another participant described holistic knowledge quite vividly,

> So you learn to see a broader picture. And not everything is at that school site. My expertise increased in learning how central office *can work* with low-performing schools. Because often they don't have the people in central office who can help these schools. The smaller the district the harder it is because people wear so many hats. Unfortunately if you can't run a school as a principal they send you downtown.

Finally, a female participant describes how she personalized her holistic approach to coaching because she always reflects "on what works for certain people" and "that people's personalities and their own backgrounds can really influence their reception of coaching or their opposition to it." This participant's holistic knowledge base is an indication that she is aware of the myriad of situations a coach may encounter as a coach and during the course of the coaching process.

Theme 2: Building Relationships

Coaches Positionality

Building relationships was also influenced by one's positionality. Participants shared that an important aspect of building relationships was being seen as an expert. The participants perceived developing relationships with their coachees as vital to establishing their credibility as expert coaches. In their formative stage as a new coach

they shared that their approach to developing relationships with their coachees had more

to do with their previous success as educational leaders until they established their

credibility within the coaching situation. Participants discussed the value of having a

coaching credential as evidence that they possessed the knowledge base to do coaching,

> I had my did my Masters in Curriculum and Instruction and I took the exam to add that licensure on to my teaching certificate so that would have given me pretty much the qualifications they were looking for. I also had National Boards Certification… with that then I was able to coach them as far as instruction and curriculum topics.

Lastly, a participant described how she was instrumental in transforming her coachee's

view of coaching and how this support had a positive outcome on this principal's staff.

This was a coach-coachee interaction in which the coachee began to reshape her patterns

of thinking, internalize new possibilities and practice and to independently take on new

challenges as a consequence of double loop learning as explained by a participant,

> It took a while for us to get to know each other and once she started supporting the things I wanted to do and actually holding the teachers accountable for doing those things at the school as far as assessment and having an assessment plan and being very purposeful about it and looking at the data then it was almost immediate that we saw the results because testing was twice a year. I think as soon as they saw the positive results from what they had done and saw it so quickly that that really did help buy-in for the process.

This participant mentioned that this kind of immediate success diminished some of the

reservations the principal and staff had about their ability to improve student outcomes

when they plan and implement reform strategies that is aligned with instructional goals

and objectives.

A participant suggested that in the competitive field of educational leadership

coaching, one has to stand out among the others. She suggested that schools in trouble

have African American administrators and children, who she perceived would be more

comfortable selecting her over a person of another race because she too is African American. This type of conceptualization showed recognition of complexity in coaching situations due to culture and highlights one of many contextual factors a coach must be aware of when in a position of influence. Expert versus novice coaches have learned that not all interventions will take hold with a coachee, especially if the intervention is not sensitive to contextual nuances. Experts understand there is a complexity in establishing and maintaining productive relationship(s).

Interpersonal Skills

Another aspect of relationship building the participants used were their interpersonal skills to build relationships with their coachees. Interpersonal skills involve negotiating the complexity of the coach-coachee relationship through application of past experiences of different personalities, preferred learning strategies, and work experiences of the coachees as well as their resistance to changes the coach may proffer. A male coach discussed that knowing how to initiate "soft skills" such as trust, understanding, and empathy are indispensable to progression and goal accomplishment in the coaching relationship. This coach's example explains how he understood the importance of applying a personal touch to the coach-coachee relationship in his effort to gain his coachee's trust throughout their relationship.

The participants reported that they learned how to develop relationships with their coachees by reflecting on their various leadership experiences where they differentiated the interpersonal skills they used (i.e. listening, making connections with those whom they supervised) as coaches in their school districts. They spent a lot of time with their coachees getting to know their personality, likes and dislikes, learning about the

coachees' work environment and the participants reported that they empathized with their

coachees because the participants themselves were former superintendents, principals and

curriculum specialists. The participants shared the importance of letting their coachees

know that they understood what the leadership responsibilities entailed because they have

experienced similar situations and had "been there, done that." The participants

cautioned pushing their own agenda as opposed to having some flexibility in coaching.

Participants maintained that being "hard-nosed" with the coachee only creates additional

problems, therefore it was critically important that coaches build relationships first as

explained by a participant,

> I realized I needed to build relationships first. I think that it's really, it's really,
> really, really clearer to me and that it's happened to me on more than one
> occasion meaning it happened to me in my career and also in my coaching
> experience… not to my degree in my career cause I fixed it. I was a taskmaster
> then. I had to revamp little by little – something's not working, not jiving.

Regarding the complexity of managing a three year relationship with a female

superintendent coachee, one action-oriented male coach related,

> …[it was] more about learning about *her* …and how to communicate with her and
> giving her the time and stuff she needed…a lot of times there was stuff she didn't
> want to take on, but if you laid the whole thing out for her…she was much more
> apt to do it.

In both instances the participants reflected on their relationship with their coachees and

reassessed their rigid strategy that hindered their coachees' engagement in their own

professional growth.

As it relates to reflecting on their work the participants shared that they often

reflect at the end of each day about what happened during the coaching sessions (self-

reflection) and/or while they observed the coachee practicing the skill they were learning.

Examples of questions the coaches asked themselves were: (1) What worked and what

did not?; (2) Why did it work? Why did it not work?; and (3) How can we do this better?

A female participant reported,

> …All the time because every time I get a job I have to adjust to the culture of that district and that school… this is a partnership and you can't continue to do things the old way and think the results are going to be different.

Others reported,

> I like to write things out and I'll just write down whatever I worked on, put my +Deltas pros and cons or whatever you want to call it and I identify my pros and cons based on the impact they had on other people.

> My reflections are based on my perceptions of goal attainment. So if I go in with a goal wherever that goal is, my reflection is based on goal attainment… did you do what you said you were going to do? Did you achieve what you said you were going to achieve? And if so, yes, Why? If not, why?

The participants' comment explain how they recognized the importance of assessing their coaching practices and making the necessary adjustments specific to the needs of their coachees to help them progress to new levels of understanding and implementation of instructional and managerial best practices.

Periodically the coaches would reflect on their coaching by sharing their coaching strategies and experiences with colleagues whom they trusted in the field. Some of the coaches shared that at times they would consult with their supervisor as a last resort. These participants stated that they were careful about what they shared with their supervisors because their relationship with their supervisor was "evaluative."

The participants also shared that they spent quality time thinking about their relationships with their coachees. They stated that they kept in mind that their coachees were people who have their own personal issues outside of work. Relational trust was an area of great importance to the participants. They wanted their coachees to feel comfortable in the coach-coachee relationship and maintain that kind of relationship.

There were some successes in this area and some not so successful. The coaches shared that some of their successful relationships continued after they were no longer coaching these educational leaders. In those cases the relationship moved from coach-coachee to colleague-colleague.

The participants shared that a healthy relationship is reciprocal. There is give *and* take on the part of both parties engaged in the relationship. As they considered the implications for their future relationships the participants shared that in order to have a good working relationship with people, (particularly the one they are helping to learn a skill or task) that there must be a "good match" between both parties in order for the relationship to work.

Theme 3: Personal Development

Parental and Community Influences

Participants expressed how their parents and extended family ,community members, and educators in their early lives influenced their achievement. These were persons the participants felt believed in them and encouraged them to perform at a high level. Each participant mentioned high expectations of them expressed by other adults which encouraged the participants to have high expectations for themselves as well. A female participant described her sphere of influence as follows

> My parents were clearly my first role models, but my elementary teachers
> interestingly enough were very strong women who taught me a lot about myself
> and encouraged me to be myself and be true to who I am and actually inspired in
> me to go into education to be very candid because I had some very strong
> elementary teachers .

Another male participant commented,

> She simply told me one day "You are smart." I believed that she said. She was
> my teacher. And I believed I was smart and from that day forward I began to

> change my approach and thinking too, learning my belief system changed… But from that day forward I started working and then started to excel. By the time I was out of middle school entering high school I was the *first* in my class. And I stayed that way through high school. So I think that was her- the stimuli; was that teacher saying to me "You're smart."

These comments from both participants illustrate the kind of influence their parents and educators had on their lives that may have inspired them to use similar coaching practices with their coachees.

Professional Influences

Participants maintained that their relationships with people early on were driven by a common goal; learning. They expressed how good it felt to know that someone believed in them and was willing to take the time to help them grow. They felt that they were just going about their daily lives as usual with no intentional plan to target any particular person who needed help as a male participant explained,

> I look back and know that I had the opportunity to do things and that people allowed me to do things…I don't think that I was that aware. I think for me it's always been about working hard doing a good job and then it leads to something else.

The participants discussed the value of having a coaching credential as evidence that they possess the knowledge base to do coaching, but some of the participants were "tapped" and invited to join the state Department of Public Instruction without specific coaching training. One participant suggested that in the competitive field of educational leadership coaching, one has to stand out among the others as an indication of their expertise as a coach,

> I was on the receiving end rather than the hiring end. I think that they wanted me because I had had the experience of being a superintendent, I had the experience of being principal in a turnaround school and had had the experiences I think that they were looking for. So I think that they thought that I could help the

superintendent to focus on the things she needed to focus on to help her district to improve. I also had the upper level of experience working with school boards and community leaders and I think they wanted all of that…

Another participant explained,

[I] had to have been a sitting principal and had to have had some leadership coaching experience prior to taking on this role. Actually I was asked to apply for the position I am in now. I got a call – someone asked me to consider applying.

The participants' explanation of being recruited to coach suggested that in one case the participant's reputation and track record as an educational leader superseded the need for formal coaching experience. In the other example the participant shared that her reputation and record as an educational leader *and* her leadership coaching experience was the reason she was invited to apply for a coaching position.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed summary of how five educational leadership coaches developed expertise in leadership coaching using deliberate and reflective practices. The findings from the three broad themes; 1) Knowledge base; 2) Building relationships ; and 3) Personal development and the resultant subthemes emerged primarily from the semi-structured interviews. The findings that emerged indicate that the participants through their prolonged efforts develop expertise in educational leadership and leadership coaching through education, training, and by doing the work.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using a phenomenological approach, the purpose of this study was to examine how five educational leadership coaches working with educational leaders (superintendents and principals) in k-12 education developed domain specific expertise over time specifically through deliberate practice and reflective practice. This study sought to identify the skills, strategies, and tools the coaches used and how these techniques were developed over time. These phenomena were captured using data from semi-structured interviews with five leadership coaches, background information shared by the coaches and a coaching career mapping exercise performed by the coaches. This study investigated the following questions: (a) how did coaches engage deliberate practice to develop domain specific expertise, and (b) how did coaches engage reflective practice to develop domain specific expertise? This chapter consists of a discussion of findings, implications for practice, recommendations for future research and conclusions.

Discussion of Findings

Developing a knowledge base, building relationships, and personal development were the key themes constructed from the data in this study. These themes both affirm and extend what we know about coaching expertise development (Ericsson et al., 1993; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009). This section will highlight the convergences and divergences of these findings with the extant literature.

Knowledge Base

The coaching knowledge base is a blend of the coaches' factual knowledge of educational leadership and leadership coaching they use to cultivate their coachees' professional development as district and school leaders (Anderson, 1993; Yilmaz & Yalcin, 2012). Over time through deliberate practices and reflective practices (Ericsson et al., 1993; Schon 1995) these coaches have established practices, processes and structures to support deployment of their coaching skills. Because the coaches have accumulated a reservoir of experiences, practices, and techniques they are able to customize their coaching plans and strategies to address their coachees' individual needs as they work in diverse environments (Bloom et al.,, 2005; Huff et al., 2013;Wise & Hammack, 2011) .

The participants' accounts of their experiences as it related to their development of their knowledge base concurred with the literature. The participants posited that having educational leadership and coaching credentials, being successful former district and school leaders with successful track records of leadership and student outcomes, and their experiences working in diverse situations were evidences that they were highly qualified to provide leadership coaching (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff, et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011). To enhance their knowledge base the participants agreed that it was important for them to engage in professional development and continuous learning and saw these as critical components to their job performance. These practices were also related to the literature that suggests that in order to be successful coaches should complete trainings and participate in ongoing professional development (Bloom et.al., 2005; James-Ward, 2011). However, the literature also suggests that coaches should

have a minimum of five years of successful educational leadership experiences (Bloom et al., 2005; James-Ward & Potter, 2011). One of the participants did not meet this criteria and two of the participants did not have leadership coaching training but relied on their experiences as former educational leaders.

In support of the literature the participants also described how they were able to see "the big picture" of the coaching situation as they considered not only the coachees' internal instructional and managerial responsibilities but also external factors that pertained to how the coachees dealt with parental and community stakeholders that impacted how the coachees did their jobs (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff, et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011). After taking an assessment of the overall coaching situation the participants reported that they customized their method of coaching based on the coachees' current level of performance and built upon those skills.

The strategies the participants primarily applied were in support of Bloom et al. (2005) facilitative and instructional coaching strategies. Facilitative strategies employed by all the participants included paraphrasing the coaching goal or activity, asking clarifying questions of the coachee, paraphrasing by including an interpretation, and summarizing statements. Instructional coaching strategies were employed by the coaches through data disaggregation and analysis of instructional and demographic information. Coaches modeled tasks and behaviors for their coachees, provided direct instruction to them, and continually clarified goals for their coachees by providing constructive feedback and by observing the coachees' time on task. Some coaches also used transformational, collaborative and consultative coaching techniques (Bloom et al., 2005). These coaching strategies were used sparingly based on the participants'

assessment of the coaching situation. This approach is also supported by the literature (Bloom et al., 2005) that outlines instructional and facilitative coaching as the primary techniques coaches use in their leadership practices. The key components of leadership coaching and skill development were to set goals, monitor the coachees' progress and provide ongoing feedback (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff, et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011). The participants utilized these components in their practices.

The participants' acknowledgement of their coachees as individuals is aligned with the literature that suggests that the coaches should observe their coachees without making any preconceived notions about their ability to perform their duties, assess the overall coaching situation and customized coaching accordingly (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011). Participants perceived that their repertoire of knowledge and their ability to assess coaching situations as key factors in helping them to develop and apply coaching techniques to build their coachees' leadership capacity and assist their coachees in accomplishing their professional development goals (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff, et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011).

Tools are the practical instruments that the coaches can use to shape the coaching relationship and to provide targeted feedback to the coachee (Bloom et al., 2005; Huff et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011). Tools such as assessments and climate inventories were apparently used but were not emphasized. The coaches minimally spoke about independent sources of information that was used to evaluate and guide the coaching process. Tools were likely used sparingly and largely for initial coachee assessment purposes. The coaches' use of these supplementary resources to provide targeted

feedback to their coachees also supports the literature on coaching techniques (Bloom, et al.,, 2005; Huff et al., 2013; Wise & Hammack, 2011).

Building Relationships

Participants shared the importance of being seen as experts by their coachees as critical to developing a working relationship. They stated that in the beginning of their relationship their credentials and their reputation as former educational leaders with a track record of success put them in a position of influence and was key to establishing this credibility. The participants approach to establishing their credibility is in line with the literature that outlines the coaches' credentials and reputation of success as key factors in building relationships with their coachees (Bloom et al., 2005).

Along with having credentials and a reputation as successful educational leaders and over time, successful coaches in their field, the participants viewed establishing a personal relationship with their coachees as important. Forming a trusting relationship with their coachees was fundamental to building rapport between the coachees and the participants. The participants acknowledged using their interpersonal skills to encourage their coachees to persevere and at times the participants' empathized with them by sharing some of their experiences as former district and school leaders. By bringing their perspective to the relationship the participants were able to share a variety of solutions to problems, facilitate discussions about district and school initiatives, work with the different personalities and attitudes of the coachees exhibited during the relationship, and be a confidant as they guided them through difficult situations. The participants' professional and interpersonal skills used during the coaching relationship is also supported by the literature that emphasizes the importance of the coaches having the

ability to blend the technical aspect of coaching along with a humanistic approach that is built on trust and mutual respect (Bloom et al., 2005; James-Ward & Potter , 2011).

Personal Development

The participants reported that during their formative years they were greatly influenced by their parents, extended family, community members and educators. They perceived these individuals as their role models who nurtured, encouraged and inspired them to make a difference in life and to be high achievers in life, school, and professionals. While these were key factors in the participants' personal development, these factors were not included in the literature for this study.

Professional Influences

Participants described their status as expert coaches as being influential in being recruited for coaching positions based on their prior experiences as educational leaders and coaches in their districts and schools. All but one of the participants was brought in from outside the districts to coach. The remaining participant was an employee of the district who was recruited by this participant's former principal (who was promoted to a central office position) to become a leadership coach. The participants' account of their recruitment is supported by the literature as it pertains to their credentials, experiences, reputation and success for recruiting and securing coaching services (Bloom et al., 2005).

Deliberative Practice and Reflective Practice

The literature suggests that the use of deliberate practice in expertise development is the result of an individual's prolonged efforts to improve his or her performance while negotiating motivational and external constraints (Ericsson et al., 1993; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009). It also suggests that the acquisition of expert performance is the result

of goal setting and practice and it takes a minimum of 10 years for the individual to become an expert. Further, the acquisition of expert performance is not innate, meaning that the individual is not born with a gift or skill (Ericsson et al., 1993) that is it takes work with the assistance of a teacher, coach or tutor to support the individual to progress to a high level of performance to become an expert (Ericsson et al., 1993). The participants did not say or indicate how long it took them to develop expertise nor did they attribute their expertise to being gifted. They also did not attribute their development to receiving direct assistance from a teacher, coach or tutor. At times the coaches sought and received ideas and feedback from colleagues and viewed this exchange as valuable to their professional growth as coaches.

In support of Ericsson et al. (1993) theory the participants reported that they deliberately practiced the skill, or strategy with a specific goal in mind. They described how they practiced over and over again until they got it right. Once they became proficient in that skill or strategy and their problem solving and skill acquisition processes became automatic (Fitts, 1964) the coaches were able to use their research-based, content, and procedural knowledge base of educational leadership, leadership coaching and their experiences as former superintendents, principals and curriculum specialist to design and implement a customized professional development plan for their coachees (Anderson, 1993; Bloom et al., 2005; Huff et al., 2013;Wise & Hammack, 2011).

The literature also highlighted the importance of the coach reflecting on his or her practice (Hay, 2007; Schon, 1995) with emphasis placed on the coaches' self-reflection; taking a retrospective view of his or her performance as a coach from various

perspectives (.i.e. the coach's perspective and that of the coachee) (Hay, 2007). The participants described instances when they reflected on their coaching while they were performing a task. Their "reflection-in-action" (Schon, 1995) took place as they "learned by doing" their work with their coachees (Schon, 1995). Also, participants exhibited reflective practices at the end of their work day to assess their coaching approaches to determine if they needed to make adjustment to the customized professional development plan specifically designed for their coachee's professional and personal development.

Overall, through deliberate practice and reflective practice to develop their knowledge base the coaches relied on the explication of their skills, strategies, and tools to carry-out the coaching endeavor. These coaches have resisted this stability and automaticity by developing increasingly more complex practices through reflection and disciplined refinement of their practice, and thus, continued to develop expertise (Ericsson et al., 1993; Schon, 1995).

<div align="center">Implications for Practice</div>

Three implications for practice emerged from this study.

1. To develop expertise in educational leadership coaching and to deliver high quality services the coaches must engage in continuous learning and practice.

2. To support coaches in their work state departments of education and school districts should have well designed leadership coaching programs that offer training and support for new and experienced coaches.

3. To recruit and retain superintendents and principals particularly in low performing districts and schools state agencies need to provide customized coaching for administrators who are transitioning into challenging situations to help them

become acclimated to their new environment. State agencies should provide

intensive coaching that is non-threatening for administrators who are leading

schools designated by the state education agencies as being in a school

improvement status and give them adequate time to make the necessary

improvements.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined how five educational leadership coaches described

developing expertise and the coaching practices they used to perform their job

responsibilities. This study did not observe how the coachees developed expertise during

this coaching relationship. Future research can explore how the superintendent and

principal coachees develop expertise during the coaching process and if they continue

these practices when they no longer have the support of the leadership coach.

Conclusions

The findings from my study added to the limited empirical literature by affirming

that the coaches used deliberate practice and reflective practice to develop expertise in

educational leadership coaching (Ericsson et al., 1993; Schon, 1995). This approach

functioned as a constructive method of attaining the skills, strategies and tools the

coaches needed to support their coachees and prepare them for the rigor of leading their

districts and schools. Specifically, the coaches' knowledge base, relationship building

and their personal development were an illustration of the practices undertaken by the

coaches to become experts in providing comprehensive skills-related learning for

themselves thereby also for their coachees (Duncan & Stock, 2010 Ericsson et al.,1993;

Schon,1995).

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Table 1: Coaching Strategies Used to Develop Specific Expertise by Participant

Strategies with Selected Techniques	Participant 1 Male African American	Participant 2 Female African American	Participant 3 Female African American	Participant 4 Female Caucasian	Participant 5 Male African American
Utilization of Specific Strategies in BCSM	facilitative instructional collaborative transformational	facilitative instructional	facilitative instructional consultative	facilitative instructional consultative	facilitative instructional transformational
Facilitative Coaching					
Paraphrasing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
clarifying questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
paraphrasing w/ interpretation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
…mediational questions	-	-	✓	-	-
…summarizing statements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Instructional Coaching					
…modeling	✓	-	-	✓	-
…direct instruction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
…clarifying goals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborative Coaching					
…long range projects	✓	-	-	-	-
Consultative Coaching					
…technical support	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transformational Coaching					
…Double-Loop Learning	✓	-	-	-	✓

Note: Strategies and selected techniques are indicated in the Blended Coaching Strategies Model (BCSM) by Bloom et al., 2005.

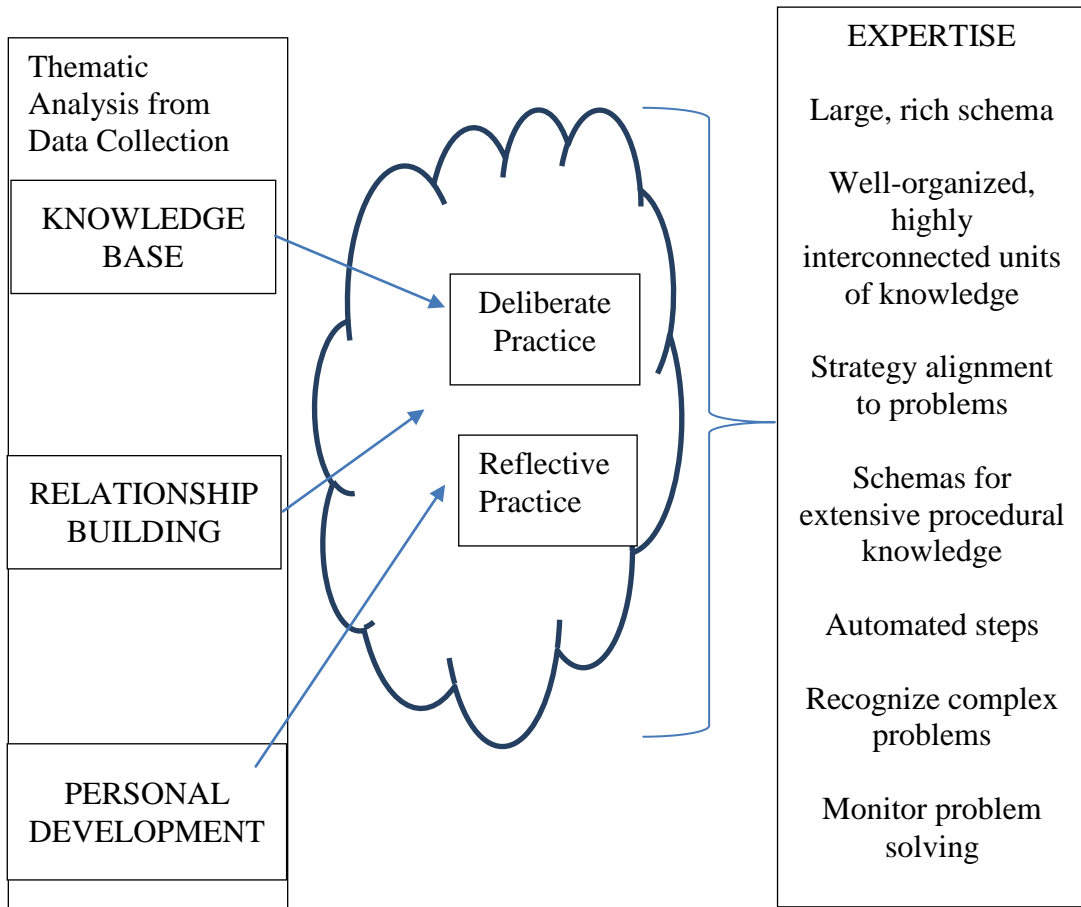| Thematic Analysis from Data Collection		EXPERTISE
KNOWLEDGE BASE	Deliberate Practice	Large, rich schema Well-organized, highly interconnected units of knowledge Strategy alignment to problems Schemas for extensive procedural knowledge Automated steps Recognize complex problems Monitor problem solving
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	Reflective Practice	
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT		

Figure1. Coaching antecedents of expertise

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Recruitment Script (Email)

Dear _____

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. My study will be conducted for academic purposes only and not to provide any formal feedback to state departments of education, districts, or university officials. It is anticipated that my study will also add to the body of research that addresses how leadership coaches experience the phenomenon of growth in coaching expertise.

In accordance with federal regulations and the UNC Charlotte Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects, I invite you to participate in my research of *Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise: A Phenomenological Study*.

Should you commit to participating in this study please notify me at jlewisj@uncc.edu. Upon receipt of your notification I will send to you via postal mail a recruitment packet for you to complete and return in the prepaid postal envelope I will provide for your convenience. If you have any questions you may contact me at the email address provided or at 828-261-6151.

Thanking you in advance,

Janice Ellis-Lewis

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER

UNC CHARLOTTE
College of Education

Department of Educational Leadership
9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

{DATE}

Dear (School Leadership Coach's Name),

As a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte), I am conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. This study will be done for academic purposes only and not to provide any formal feedback to state departments of education, districts, or university officials. It is anticipated that my study will also add to the body of research that addresses how leadership coaches experience the phenomenon of growth in coaching expertise. In accordance with federal regulations and the UNC Charlotte Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects, I invite you to participate in my research of *Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise: A Phenomenological Study*.

The purpose of my study is to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of educational leadership coaches working with superintendents and principals in k-12 education and how they develop *leadership coaching expertise* through reflective and deliberate practices by the coach. Expertise is defined as a repeatable high level of performance by an adult over time). Reflective practice is the process of helping an individual to step back metaphorically from his or her work to take a broader view of their practice across three timeframes – past, present and future. The process of deliberate practice requires individuals to focus their efforts on suitable tasks sequentially designed to advance their skills to the next level of performance.

Data will be collected via a short questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes to respond to and returned via postal mail, two separate face-to-face interviews (approximately 90 minute format each), a professional career mapping exercise, and through observations I will complete during the research process. It is anticipated that all responses will be treated as confidential and your responses will not be linked to your identity or organization. Please be advised that you will be asked to provide contact information, however it will not be linked to your responses. The risk to your physical,

emotion, social, professional or financial well-being is considered to be less than minimal.

There are no direct benefits to you as a result of your participation. However, I believe that the findings will provide a better understanding of how school leadership coaches' own descriptions of their experiences may describe the phenomenon of expertise development.

If you have questions concerning the study, contact me, Janice Ellis-Lewis at (828) 261-6151 or by email at jlewisj@uncc.edu or Dr. Lisa G. Driscoll (Responsible Faculty) at lisa.driscoll@uncc.edu. I respectfully request that you email me to provide me your consent and willingness to serve as a respondent for this study. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,
Janice Ellis-Lewis, Ed.D.
Doctoral Candidate
UNC Charlotte

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

UNC CHARLOTTE

Department of Educational Leadership
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Informed Consent for
Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise: A Phenomenological Study

Project Title and Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled ***Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise: A Phenomenological Study***. This is a study to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of educational leadership coaches (or turnaround specialists) working with superintendents and principals in k-12 education and how these individuals personally develop *leadership coaching expertise* through reflective and deliberate practices. Expertise is defined as a repeatable high level of performance by an adult over time. Reflective practice is the process of helping an individual to step back metaphorically from his or her work to take a broader view of their practice across three timeframes – past, present and future. The process of deliberate practice requires individuals to focus their efforts on suitable task sequentially designed to advance their skills to the next level of performance. This study will be one of the first studies to examine and describe how leadership coaches experience the phenomenon of growth in coaching expertise.

A phenomenological approach will be used for this study to capture the essence of how the leadership coaches experience, process and perceive their learning and expertise development.
Data will be collected via a short questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes to respond to and returned via postal mail, two separate face-to-face interviews (approximately 90 minutes each) that will be audio taped, a professional career mapping exercise, and through observations the investigator will complete during the research process.

Investigator(s):

This study is being conducted by Janice Ellis-Lewis, Ed.D. Candidate; UNC Charlotte Department of Educational Leadership, and the study will be supervised by Dr. Lisa G. Driscoll, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership.

Eligibility of Participants:

- Purposefully selected respondents who possess at least three years of experience of leadership coaching superintendents or principals who are currently or were employed in public school districts.
- The coach may be currently coaching or have coached on a fulltime or a part-time basis, but must have coached within the last three years.
- There will be no pre-determined preference expressed in the sample to achieve representation in gender, age, racial-ethnic identification for the sample.
- Due to the constraint on the researcher's time and cost of travel to conduct multiple interviews, only potential participants located within 100 miles of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte will be considered.

Length of Participation:

Your participation in this project will take four months. You will be interviewed and observed within three months. The investigator will visit you twice and interview you each time for no more than 90 minutes. If you decide to participate, you will be one of at least three participants in this study.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are no known risks to participation in this study. However, there may be risks which are currently unforeseeable. There are no direct benefits to you as a result of your participation. There are no costs for you to participate in this study. However, the investigator believes that the findings will provide a better understanding of how school leadership coaches' own descriptions of their experiences may describe the phenomenon of expertise development.

Volunteer Statement:

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. If you decide to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate or if you stop once you have started.

Confidentiality:

Any information about your participation, including your identity, will be kept confidential to the extent possible. This researcher requests the respondent's permission to use direct quotes from the interviews if deemed necessary for this study.

The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality: (1) All respondents will be provided with a code name. This list of respondents' names and code names will be kept on a password protected external drive stored in a separate location from the audio-recordings, transcripts and research documents for this study. (2) Voice recordings of interviews will be transferred to a computer and saved to password protected external

drive. They will be kept locked in a file cabinet in a locked office and at the home of the researcher. Only this researcher and the advisor will have access to all files, written documents and recordings. There will be not sharing of these documents with other individuals or entities. (3) Emailing of data sources will not occur. (4) All original data will be destroyed within one year following completion of the study.

In some cases exact quotations of statements made by you in your interviews may be included in the written dissertation document, conference presentations, and articles for publication in journals. Every effort will be made such that the quotations will not be attributed to you in an identifiable manner.

Fair Treatment and Respect:

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the University's Research Compliance Office (704.687.1871) if you have any questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Janice Ellis-Lewis at (828) 261-6151, jlewisj@uncc.edu or Dr. Lisa G. Driscoll at (704) 687-8621, Lisa.Driscoll@uncc.edu.

This form was approved for use on *Month Day, Year* for a period of one (1) year.

Participant Consent:

(For subjects 18 years of age or older, the following language must be included in the area above the signature lines)
I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study, and those questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am at least 18 years of age, and I agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the Principal Investigator.

_____   _____
Participant Name (PRINT)   DATE

_____   _____
Participant Signature   DATE

_____   _____
Investigator Signature   DATE

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONAIRRE

Project Title:
Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise: A
Phenomenological Study

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information regarding how we may contact you and your experiences in leadership coaching relevant to this study. Your answers to this questionnaire are voluntary, will be kept confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed. If your responses. There are no risks or benefits to you for participating. Thank you for your participation!

Name _____

Address: _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Have you performed leadership coaching or performed paid work as a "turnaround specialist"?
_____No
_____Yes   Please fill out table below. How many years total have you been a coach? _____
Please list your experience as a leadership or turnaround specialist.

	Place or Situation Coached. Principal or Superintendent	How many days per month for how long?	Within the last 3 years??? Yes, No
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I.

Educational Leadership Coaches' Development of Domain Specific Expertise:
A Phenomenological Study

For this interview I am interested in learning about your early life experiences that inspired you to become a leadership coach. Your responses will be anonymous and will be kept in the strictest confidence. Please feel free to be open and honest. However, if there is something you do not wish to disclose please know that I respect your privacy and you are under no obligation to do so.

I will audio tape your responses to my questions so I can have an accurate account of your responses during transcription. Should you make any notable comments that are unique; these comments will be quoted or paraphrased. You will be given the opportunity to read these statements in the final draft for approval or to suggest alternative responses that will not affect the fidelity of the study.

1. Think about your formative years as a child or adolescent describe and specifically how you learned a <u>new and difficult skill</u> or task for the first time. Describe this process.

    a. How did you know that you had developed a level of expertise in this skill? (Probe for more detail.)

    b. As you learned the skill, to what extent were you aware of the progress you were making? What were your reflections on this?

2. Now think about a time that you practiced a new skill or task in a <u>disciplined manner over time</u>? Describe the circumstances and how you progressed in this skill. (Probe for more detail.)

3. Now describe a time when you were older; perhaps in college, when you taught yourself a specific skill through <u>reflecting on your practice</u> of that skill? (Probe for more detail.)

4. Is there anything else that I did not ask regarding how you develop expertise? (Probe for more detail.)

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL II.

For this interview I am interested in learning about your present experiences as a school leadership coach and your reflection of the intellectual and emotional connection between your work as a coach and your personal life.

1. Tell me about your background in education and how you became a leadership coach.

2. What does it mean to have *expertise* as a leadership coach? (Probe for more detail.)

3. Do you reflect on your coaching practices? (Probe for more detail.)

4. Can you describe your growth experience when your coaching task turned out in a positive manner?

    a. Describe a time when you developed more expertise as a result of your coaching intervention. (Probe for more detail.)

    b. Describe how you would reflect on your coaching.

5. Can you describe your growth experience when your coaching task turned out in a negative manner? (Probe for more detail.)

    a. Describe a time when you developed more expertise as a result of your "failed" coaching intervention. (Probe for more detail.)

    b. Describe how you would reflect on your coaching in a "failed" intervention.

6. Is there anything else that I did not ask pertaining to coaching expertise? (Probe for more detail.)

APPENDIX G: COACHING CAREER MAPPING

Coaching Career Mapping Example
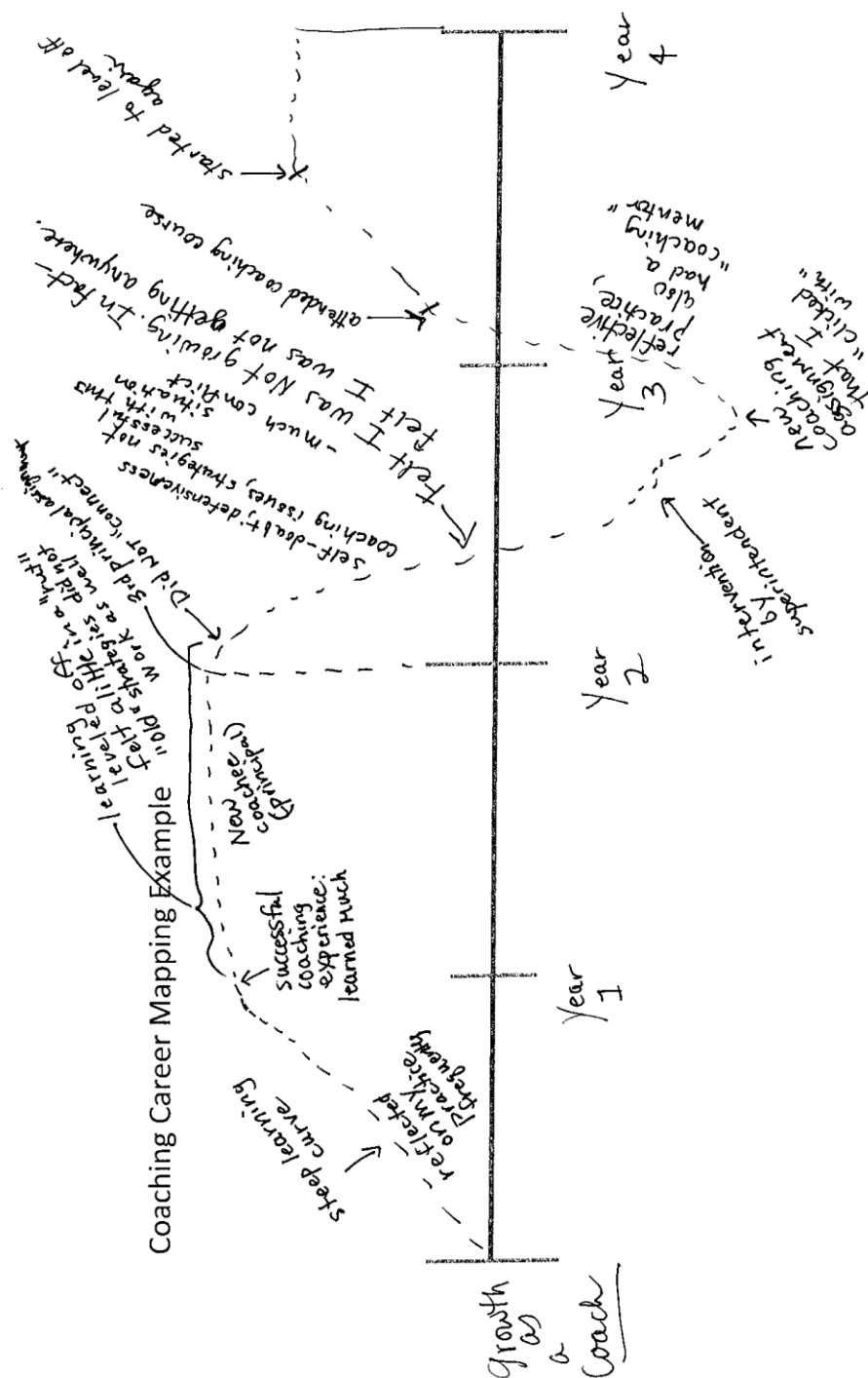
I have been a coach for 4 years. At first my coaching experience was a steep learning curve, then it leveled off. When my second Principal Coachee was not like my first Principal, I did not feel I was growing as a coach — I felt flat. (Had my strategies seemed to fall flat.)

Coaching Career Mapping