

THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL COORDINATOR
RELATED TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY

by

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(Under the direction of DR. SALLY J.ZEPEDA)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of the role and work of four instructional coordinators in four elementary schools in a single county in Georgia. A case study design included three semi-structured interviews and analysis of artifacts. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to develop propositions related to the work and role of the instructional coordinator position. Data were examined by individual case and then across cases. Major findings emerged by examining various leadership roles assumed and the personal leadership styles as reported by participants. Findings related to the instructional coordinators' perspectives of their roles showed them to be serving such roles as stress reliever, a teacher supporter, and a central office messenger. Everyday tasks, additional duties assigned by the principal and central office administration, and paperwork responsibilities were found to shape both the work and role of the instructional coordinator.

Across all cases, findings indicated: (1) The primary leadership role that instructional coordinators fulfilled was that of promoting teacher leadership among teacher. (2) The instructional coordinators experienced role conflict and ambiguity with relationship to their interactions with central office and building level personnel.

(3) Providing support for teachers was considered a primary role although other non-instructional work often prevented them from providing this support. (4) The administrative hierarchy did not support the role of the instructional coordinators due to conflict between the instructional coordinators and assistant principals. (5) Paperwork was an issue for all four participants, and this had a negative impact on the instructional coordinators being able to have time to emerge as instructional leaders.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher Leadership, Instructional Coordinator, Elementary School, Leadership, Role Conflict and Ambiguity.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2002

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the “men” in my life:

Drs. Dale, Schnell, Gatewood, Williams, and Cole,
who gave me the opportunity to finish this work.

Fort Halstead, my husband, who offered me
unwavering support and unconditional love.

My heavenly Father, who allows Zephaniah 3:17
to be a promise I claim each day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful appreciation is expressed to my dissertation committee. To my chair, Dr. Sally J. Zepeda, thank you for supporting my vision. The worth of your tireless patience, timely advice, and constant availability are unsurpassed. Your leadership has made this journey a success. Recognition and gratitude are also expressed to committee members Dr. Ken Tanner, Dr. Tom Holmes, Dr. Julius Scipio, and Dr. Anthony Strange.

Special recognition is sincerely expressed to Dr. Edith Grimsley and Dr. Ray Bruce for their consultation and expertise in the field of instructional leadership.

To the participants in this study, thank you for sharing your perspective of the role of the elementary instructional coordinator. You are leaders to be admired.

To the staff at Tabor Middle School, thank you for allowing me to be your instructional coordinator. It was this incredible experience that helped to form my philosophy of leadership.

To the staff at Tucker Elementary School, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your principal. This project is a result of my desire to promote teacher leadership beyond the confines of the classroom. Your professionalism and knowledge as educators are unmatched by any faculty.

A grateful appreciation is expressed to my fellow doctoral students, Dr. Ron Busbee, Dr. Greg Gentry, Dr. Rob Sumowski, Dr. Gwen Taylor, Dr. Donald Warren, and Dr. Marcus Beaver whose friendship, encouragement, and expertise were valuable in this process.

To my mom and dad—Judy and Bob Stinchcum, sister and brother—Kelly Dean and David Stinchcum, and grandparents Alvin and Sarah Bowles, my in-laws—Randy and Babs Halstead, and other family members, and friends, particularly my “dinner buddies,” your patience and understanding as I completed this project are appreciated. This work is a part of each of you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of instructional coordinators at four elementary schools in one county in Georgia. The researcher sought the perspectives of instructional coordinators who worked in four elementary schools in a single county in Georgia. Prior to assuming the instructional coordinator position, all four instructional coordinators were teachers. The knowledge gained through such a study might assist principals, instructional coordinators, school systems, and others interested in the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school setting.

Statement of the Problem

The recent wave of reform and change in the organizational hierarchy within many schools has necessitated a paradigm shift in who and how schools are led (Blase & Blase, 1999a; Reitzig & Burrello, 1995). This shift has included a look at teachers' careers with a move to place them in the role of instructional leader (Astuto, 1993). For teachers, instructional leadership positions have included department chairs, grade level leaders, and instructional coordinators. Given the opportunity and proper support, teachers can "effectively run school units: departments, programs, grade-levels, schools within-schools, and even whole schools" (Astuto, 1993, p. 25).

Shifts in the structure of schools often signal changes in who leads (Blase & Blase, 1999a; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Short, 1994). Expanded leadership assumed by teachers has the potential to create both learning opportunities and challenges for the school system, for teachers, and for principals.

Most school administrative teams are comprised of principals and assistant principals, regardless of grade levels served—elementary, middle, or high school. There are, however, other professionals who complement the administrative team and include teachers who serve in quasi-administrative positions such as department chairs, grade level leaders, and lead teachers. One such teacher leadership position in schools includes the instructional coordinator who typically is released from teaching responsibilities to help solidify the instructional program through such activities as planning curriculum, coordinating staff development, and providing informal instructional supervision vis-à-vis peer coaching (Grimsley, E., personal communication, January 14, 2002). This study was limited to a single county in Georgia that employed full-time instructional coordinators at the elementary level.

Similar to the department chair and lead teacher position, the instructional coordinator is not a full-fledged administrator with the legal authority to evaluate personnel. To this end, instructional coordinators, like other teacher leaders, are “neither fish nor fowl”—they are neither full-time teachers solely responsible for students nor are they fully vested administrators (Rhinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley, 1998, p. 640). Instructional coordinators, like high school department chairs and other commonly recognized teacher leaders (e.g., lead teachers, grade level coordinators), assume roles as they perform their duties as prescribed within the contexts in which they work.

Many middle and secondary schools in Georgia now have supervisors who deal directly with teachers through in-house supervisory delivery systems as opposed to a more traditional central office process. At the elementary school level, in theory, the

instructional lead teacher is an in-school supervisor who offers assistance to teachers and who oversees the curriculum. In practice, the elementary instructional lead teacher is considered supervisory personnel and like the high school department chair position can be either full or part-time. However, at the time of this study, literature about teacher leadership at the elementary level was scarce with very few studies located. Although job descriptions focus on the supervisory function of the elementary instructional lead teacher, discrepancies often exist between the actual and the ideal (Bruce, R. E., personal communication, January 25, 2002). For example, studies have suggested that central office personnel perform managerial and administrative functions more often than supervisory functions (Sullivan, 1981). This may also be true of the elementary lead teacher. Without data that reveal the role of the instructional coordinator, comparisons cannot be made with other studies that focus on the role of that supervisory position.

A scarcity of literature exists regarding the roles, duties, and responsibilities of instructional coordinators. This study sought to understand from the perspectives of four ($N = 4$) instructional coordinators, specifically, what roles emerged through their work.

Background of the Study

In the county in which this study was conducted, the instructional coordinator occupies a position in the middle of the school's hierarchy between the administrators and the teachers. The instructional coordinator supports the work of the administration while also coaching teachers through the development of effective instructional strategies and classroom management. Since this study sought to examine the perspectives of instructional coordinators regarding their role, role theory provided the conceptual framework for this line of inquiry.

Role Theory

There is evidence and documentation regarding the importance of role theory in the twentieth century (Parks, 1926), and role theory has been applied to research in a number of fields such as sociology (Meade, 1962), psychotherapy (Moreno, 1953), anthropology (Linton, 1936), and social psychology (Newcomb, 1950). Huse (1980) defined a role as "the set of activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization" (p. 53). In addition, "role behavior is caused by not only the characteristics of the individual, but also the expectations of others within the total system" (Huse, p. 53). Bridges (1982) cited in Boyan (1988) asserted "expectations, both of self and others, have figured prominently in studies of role, particularly (a) the discrepancy between expectations and behavior and (b) the degree of consensus between administrators and members of their role sets" (p. 82).

Role Ambiguity

Huse (1980) indicated that role ambiguity occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations of the organization, superordinates or others. Role ambiguity can "cause some side effects similar to those for role conflict, low job satisfaction and high tension, and some that seem more specific to the ambiguity experience, low self-confidence and a sense of futility" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 206). The seminal research on role ambiguity began with the assumption that "ambiguity frustrates the human need for clarity or structure in the environment that when missing resulted in strain and performance decrement" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 206). Role ambiguity was highly linked with such factors as employee anxiety, job dissatisfaction,

organizational ineffectiveness, and the tendency for people to quit. Katz and Kahn reported that by reducing role ambiguity, organizational effectiveness and increased personal satisfaction could be achieved. This study sought the perspectives of four ($N = 4$) instructional coordinators to examine the role of the instructional coordinator within the framework of role theory, which included the factors of role ambiguity and role conflict.

Role Conflict

Blase and Blase (1999b) indicated that role conflict had to be examined before faculties could move forward with growth and development. Katz and Kahn (1978) clarified that role conflict was defined as:

The simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult. Such conflicts may be differentiated regarding the degree of mutual inference; in the extreme case compliance with one excludes absolutely compliance with the other. (p. 206)

Therefore, role expectations by the teachers and administration within the framework of the school must be considered and analyzed for growth and development to occur.

Extending the research of Katz and Kahn (1978), Lipham (1988) reported that:

Role conflicts can result from disagreement within a reference group defining the role; from disagreement among several reference groups, each having a right to define the same role; from contradictions in the expectations of two or more roles an individual is occupying at the same time. (p. 174)

The instructional coordinator works with several reference groups within the school setting. Teachers and administrators have similar and contrasting expectations of teacher leaders such as instructional coordinators and lead teachers at the elementary level and department chairs at the secondary level. The instructional coordinator supports the work of the administration while also coaching teachers.

The current study sought to examine the perspectives of four instructional coordinators in four elementary schools. The data from instructional coordinators will be examined in light of the roles they assumed in their schools.

Teacher Leadership

Romanish (1991) believed that a "person who is empowered has a belief in her or his ability to act and this belief is tied to capable action" (p. 4). Central to this belief is the development of cooperative relationships between administration and teachers (Blase & Blase, 2001). A teacher who is empowered is able to demonstrate "internalized locus of control," and when teachers were allowed to lead they would have "authorization to significantly influence and participate in decisions related to the educational undertaking in virtually all its dimensions (Romanish, 1991, p. 4). Dunst (1991) reported that teacher leadership "consists of two issues (a) enabling experiences provided within an organization that foster autonomy, choice, and responsibility; and (b) allowing the individual to demonstrate and learn knowledge and skills" (p. 635).

Considerable research has been conducted on the topic of teacher leadership (Blase & Blase, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2001; Short, 1994; Short & Greer, 2002.)

Zepeda (2003) stated that:

The ways in which teachers assume leadership will be a function of the context of the school, the history of teacher leadership in the school, the relationships and communication patterns between teachers and administrators, and a host of other variables that are unique to the school site. (p. 272)

Zepeda (2003) asserted "teachers feel a sense of confidence and are more likely comfortable enough to take risks and to push the envelope by providing leadership *within* their own school site, if conditions for this type of leadership are present." (p. 268, emphasis in the original). Unfortunately, teachers are often "devalued and diverted from

their cause” (Blase & Blase, 2001, p. 152). Transformational leaders must engage with teachers to promote teacher leadership (Blase & Blase, 1999a). As teachers embrace this philosophy of leadership and "become more empowered to expand their sphere of influence on and with each other, supervisors, too, will need to examine their own leadership to determine how they can contribute to the development of teacher leadership" (Zepeda, 2003, p. 269)

To evoke teacher leadership within a school, "teachers need each other, but they also need administrators who are sensitive to the work they do in the classroom (Zepeda, 2003, p. 283). The instructional coordinator provides the link between the administrative staff and the classroom teacher. When the role of the instructional coordinator is clearly defined, in theory, the person in the position is considered being there for teachers.

The Elementary Instructional Coordinator

The position of instructional coordinator within elementary schools is one that has evolved since the late 1960's in Dale County in Georgia (Bruce, R., personal communication, January 25, 2002). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other county in Georgia employs a full-time teacher leader as instructional coordinator as in the county in which this study was conducted. The work of the instructional coordinator parallels that of lead teachers and department chairs—all of whom perform different duties as specified within the varying contexts of the schools and systems in which they work. Regardless of their official title, positions such as instructional coordinator and department chair can be an important part of the success of the school's academic program. For example, research substantiates the many roles that high school department chairs fulfill. These roles include but are not limited to communicator (Koehler, 1993;

Orris, 1988), staff developer (Conway, 1991), and instructional leader (Turner, 1983). As instructional leader, Conway (1991) reported that department chairs held the responsibility of modeling "essential elements" of teaching and coaching teachers (p. 21). Koehler (1993) believed that the department chair needed to manage staff development and to assist in identifying needs, coordinating the evaluation of staff development activities, and securing necessary resources.

Similar roles and duties are sometimes fulfilled by instructional coordinators, instructional lead teachers, and the high school department chairs; however, only one study (Rogers, 1988) could be found that described the tasks of the instructional coordinator at the elementary level. This study sought to determine what actual tasks were performed by the elementary instructional coordinator. Moreover, only one descriptive article was found (Grimsley & Bruce, 1981) cited in (Rogers, 1988) that detailed merely the work and tasks of the elementary lead teacher. The work of the department chair and instructional coordinator are similar in design. The present study sought to understand the perspectives of elementary school instructional coordinators. The researcher sought to bring to light the roles that these instructional support personnel assume in their full-time work with teachers and administrators. Like many emerging support personnel positions, there has been no study that defines and describes the role of the instructional coordinator through the perspectives of those who have assumed these positions.

Research Questions

Using a qualitative case study approach, the researcher sought to uncover the perspectives of four ($N = 4$) elementary school instructional coordinators about their roles within elementary schools in one county in Georgia. The points of comparison were sought by examining the perspectives of instructional coordinators from four elementary schools. To direct this process, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?
2. How do elementary school instructional coordinators perceive their role?
3. How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interactionism served as the theoretical framework for this study. Blumer (1969) used this term to refer to the study of human groups and human contact. Symbolic interactionism was used to guide the research design with regard to the perspectives of instructional coordinators in the elementary school. Meaning, according to Blumer, is based on the social interactions experienced by both the researcher and the objects (persons being studied). Symbolic interactionism makes the point that humans act, not because of outside stimuli, but because of meanings that are held, having been defined through social interactions. The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge of the role of the elementary instructional coordinator. The data gathered informed the researcher about the meanings the instructional coordinators had, and these meanings were based on interactions that were socially constructed.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) in reviewing symbolic interactionism, stated that:

People in a given situation often develop common definitions since they regularly interact and share experiences, problems, and background; but consensus is not

inevitable. While some take ‘shared definitions’ to indicate ‘truth,’ meaning is always subject to negotiation. It can be influenced by people who see things differently. (p. 33)

As a result of the data collection process of this study, the researcher and the participants shared experiences. However, the instructional coordinators each constructed varying meanings of their work and as instructional coordinators, and these meanings were based on their perspectives.

Significance of the Research

Scant historical or contemporary research exists on the topic of the instructional coordinator. Closely related was a descriptive work of the account of the elementary instructional lead teacher (Rogers, 1988). It was the belief of the researcher that by analyzing the perspectives of instructional coordinators working in elementary schools that this study could provide a fuller understanding of the role of the instructional coordinator.

Limitations of the Research

1. The findings and conclusions were based on the perspectives of the participants (N = 4 instructional coordinators) in a single county, and this small number of participants impedes generalizability to larger samples.
2. The study population was controlled by the make-up of the instructional coordinators employed at the selected county and school at the time the research was conducted.
3. All of the instructional coordinators in this study were female.

Assumptions of the Study

Certain assumptions were made by the researcher prior to and throughout the study. These assumptions served as a basis when gathering and analyzing data for this study. Those assumptions were:

1. The instructional coordinators were the best data source for this study.
2. The work of the instructional coordinator is important to the elementary school.

Definitions of Terms

The following term is defined within the context of this study:

Instructional coordinator: The person who assists teachers with classroom planning and instruction, coordinates and provides staff development opportunities, assists in scheduling students, serves as the test coordinator within the school, assists in developing a master schedule, informally observes teachers and provides feedback to them, and participates in curriculum development and implementation.

Overview of Research Procedures

To develop rich descriptions of the perspectives of elementary school instructional coordinators, a qualitative case study approach was chosen. The researcher:

1. Interviewed four instructional coordinators three times during this study;
2. Attended one district level instructional coordinator meeting;
3. Collected and analyzed various artifacts; and,
4. Kept fieldnotes throughout the study.

Each interview was audio-recorded and then later transcribed. Themes that emerged from data were coded. Fieldnotes were used as a record of the participant interviews and the district level instructional coordinator meeting. The participants were afforded the opportunity to examine the transcripts and to extend ideas and to provide clarification to the researcher's interpretation of findings.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 included the background and rationale for this study, including the statement of its purpose. Chapter 2 provided a review of related literature including a discussion of leadership and role theory related to the work of the instructional coordinator. Chapter 3 presented the design of the study including data collection methods and the methods of analyzing data. Chapter 4 reported the data and its analyses. Chapter 5 provided a discussion of the results, including implications for school leaders and the personnel who assume the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school level. Implications for further research were also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school level. The knowledge and understanding gained through such a study might assist principals, instructional coordinators, school systems, and others interested in the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school setting. With examining the literature on schools, it was evident that “educational reform in the past two decades has continually presented new challenges for the educational leader” (Prickett, Richardson, & Short, 1993, p. 43).

A recent change in schools has been to create new leadership roles for teachers, and one such role is the position of instructional coordinator. Although teacher leadership roles—both formal and informal—have been examined at the middle school and secondary levels, no research regarding teacher leadership at the elementary level could be found, with the exception of a single dissertation by Rogers (1988) under the direction of Glickman at the University of Georgia. The paucity of research in elementary level administration, coupled with the dearth of research on elementary teacher leadership positions (lead teacher, instructional coordinators), provides the rationale for examining the perspectives of formal teacher leaders who work as instructional coordinators.

This study sought to understand from the perspectives of elementary school instructional coordinators their roles in the schools in which they worked. The literature that framed this study included role theory and teacher leadership. The overall questions that guided the study were:

1. What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?
2. How do elementary school instructional coordinators perceive their role?
3. How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?

Role Theory

The construct of role theory offered several insights while framing this study. Role theory provided a model to understand individual's behaviors within the social system of the elementary schools in which the instructional coordinators worked. Role theory provided "a conceptual structure for tracing natural social processes" (Hart, 1994, p. 485).

According to Huse (1980), a role is "the set activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization" (p. 53). Role behavior is caused not only by the characteristics of the individual, but also by the expectations of others within the school system. A role is the sum total of expectations placed on the individual.

Role theory provided three critical insights for the researcher as identified by Hart (1994). First, people exhibit characteristic patterns. As people interact with one another, they establish characteristic patterns with one another. It is these patterns of interaction that fulfill set roles. Second, established social patterns are resilient. Social patterns and the pressure that results from these patterns reinforce existing roles, particularly during

change or transition. Finally, role theory provides critical insight into a school's social system. The social system of a school is part of its members' shared world. It is within this shared world that the researcher sought to gain insight.

Analysis of the role of the instructional coordinator position might assist in understanding the purpose of this position and the work that these professionals do in the schools. The expectations and obligations of work accomplished by the instructional coordinator might make clearer the roles assumed by the instructional coordinator.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Role ambiguity, according to Huse (1980), occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations, and it is the discrepancy between expectations and behavior results in role ambiguity. Role ambiguity causes employee anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and the tendency to quit. Katz and Kahn (1978) asserted that ambiguity "frustrates the human need for clarity or structure in the environment, accordingly regarded it as a stressor, and sought evidence of resulting strain and performance decrement" (p. 206). Huse (1980) found that reduction of role ambiguity enhanced organizational effectiveness and personal job satisfaction.

Huse (1980) defined role conflict as that which occurs when "the manager knows what is expected of him but is not able to comply with all of the expectations" (p. 53).

Katz and Kahn (1978) referred to role conflict as:

The simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult. Such conflicts may be differentiated regarding the degree of mutual interference; in the extreme case compliance with one excludes absolutely compliance with the other. (p. 204)

Similar to role ambiguity, role conflict causes low job satisfaction, high tension, low self-confidence, and a sense of futility (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Reducing role conflict is necessary for individual effectiveness and efficiency. Role conflict often results from “disagreement within a reference group defining the role; from disagreement among several reference groups, and from contradiction in the expectations of two or more roles an individual is occupying at the same time” (Lipham, 1988, p. 178). Dilemmas also arise from circumstances where role incumbents in one educational setting are also role incumbents in other education settings, which may have opposing expectations (Getzels, Campbell, & Lipham, 1968).

Getzels, Campbell, and Lipham (1968) believed:

The relationship between the pattern of expectations attached to a given role and the pattern of need-dispositions characteristic of a particular incumbent of that role is of crucial importance to the administrator. One of his major functions is to integrate role and personality in the fulfillment of organizational goals, and in all organizations some discrepancy between role expectations and personality dispositions is bound to exist. (p. 218)

It was the role of the elementary instructional coordinator that was examined in this study. The researcher sought to understand the role that instructional coordinators assumed at the elementary schools from the perspective of the instructional coordinator.

Role Theory Related to Teacher Leadership

Role ambiguity and role conflict are factors that arise among teachers as well as administrators. If not properly addressed, these factors can “be divisive rather than unifying” (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 61). Maton and Salem (1995) and Spreitzer (1995) suggested that role clarity was a key factor in fostering teacher leadership. The role of the teacher is a very demanding one. Over two million teachers will be hired in the next decade (Hardy, 1999). Teachers often feel that they run a juggling act that never ends

(Maruyama & Deno, 1992). The process of addressing role ambiguity and role conflict is a “growth inducing process” (p. 61). When correctly managed, role ambiguity and conflict can unify the faculty and help the school move toward defining work and meeting expectations.

In a typical elementary school setting, teachers are often not solicited to participate in the leadership of the school, and teachers carry out their work largely in isolation (Short & Greer, 2002). Even when teachers were given common planning time or worked in the same department, they rarely observed other teachers in their classrooms. Teacher leadership emerged, according to Short and Greer (2002) when teachers were given professional support and encouragement as well as time to observe one another.

Sickler (1988) conducted research based on a ten-year study of the ABC Unified School District in suburban Los Angeles. The teachers had direct control over the more than \$1 million in curriculum and staff development funds. Teachers played an active role in the determining their assignments and in helping to set students’ schedules as well developing disciplinary policies. The teacher leadership studied in Los Angeles measured unprecedented interaction across grade levels and among subject areas. Sickler found that this interaction across grade levels and among subject areas increased student achievement as well as teacher participation in the planning and implementing of curriculum and instruction. Studies such as Sickler's are scant. A study conducted by Howey (1988) addressed the lack of leadership studies that invested time in analyzing teacher leadership as a formal role.

Despite the research supporting teacher leadership, it is not always welcome or part of the school's leadership efforts (Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Romanish, 1991). At a time when teachers demonstrate a willingness to embark on new leadership paths, "principals appear to present a considerable obstacle" (Romanish, 1991, p. 67). While states, districts, schools, and teachers' unions all contribute to professional development, they fail to provide the continuous support that teachers need and "without a culture of support, teachers find it hard to try things out, get feedback, make adjustments, and really integrate new ideas into their teaching" (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 64).

Empowered teachers emerge as leaders when they are working in an environment that supports the development of leadership. An environment that supports teacher leadership is fostered by the leadership of the principal (Zepeda, 2001). Principals who support and positively affect professional work of teachers do so by:

1. Providing time, space, and money to implement ideas.
2. Reassuring people that ideas and plans, even when challenged, are valued.
3. Letting go throughout the growth process (not directing others, staying out of the way, and allowing mistakes.)
4. Being informed.
5. Providing an open, friendly, supportive environment. (Blase & Blase, 2001, p. 63)

Principals who empower teachers do so by establishing a climate "built on the premise that teachers can make critical decisions, and decisions can have impact on learning—for the organization, for students, and for teachers" (Zepeda, 2001, p. 267).

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is a complex construct (Short, 1998). Short stated that "a school that values the empowerment of teachers and students will be better at finding and developing resources than a school that does not support or hold an empowerment

ideology” (p. 70). Short asserted that “teachers believe that they are more empowered when the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop professionally, to learn continuously, and to expand one’s own skills through the work life of the school” (p. 70).

Since 1986, the literature on teacher leadership has flourished (Zeichner, 1991). Proposals calling for schools to restructure to become collaborative working environments for teachers continue to surface. Restructured schools house teacher leaders who are continuously “reinventing themselves” (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 19). Pellicer and Anderson (1995) indicated that for teachers to assume leadership roles rather than accountability roles, a shift occurs. Gitlin and Price (1992) believed that for teachers to become leaders, they must be given a voice in the decisions that are made. Despite the rhetoric regarding changing roles for teachers as leaders, studies about the construct of role theory and teacher leadership could be found. This finding is at odds with the proliferation of “popular” literature on teacher leadership.

During the past ten years, interest in teacher leadership and its positive influence on schools has been acknowledged (Smylie, 1995; Whitacker, 1995). In the same way that teachers must give up control to enhance student learning, administrators must diffuse power so that schools can develop as an organization that supports teacher leadership (Lieberman & Miller, 1999), and effective leaders replace the top-down style of administration with collaboration (Zepeda, 1999). Certain leadership qualities promote the professional growth of teachers. Sergiovanni believes that effective principals:

- Encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice;
- Acknowledge that teachers develop at different rates, and that at any given

- time some teachers are more ready to learn new things than others;
- Acknowledge that teachers have different talents and interests;
- Give high priority to conversation ... among teachers;
- Provide collaboration learning among teachers;
- Emphasize caring relationships and felt interdependencies;
- Call upon teachers to respond morally to their work; and
- View teachers as supervisors of learning communities. (1996, p. 142)

Effective leadership encourages teachers to "gain responsibility for instruction, assessment, rules and procedures, and major decision making," and these practices support teachers in becoming co-leaders in their schools (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 22).

To be an effective teacher leader, teachers must assume responsibility for their "judgements, their actions, and the consequences of both" (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995, p. 213). A shared sense of commitment and values must be evident between teachers and administrators for the role of teacher as leader to be assumed (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Teachers who are leaders "lead within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of teacher leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 6).

Lieberman and Miller (1999) proposed "new conceptions" that could help to support teachers in their efforts to transform themselves into leaders (p. 92). These conceptions, according to Lieberman and Miller, would lead in establishing conditions that support teaching, make professional development an integral part of the school, and maintain balance for teachers as they assume leadership roles in schools. The new conceptions needed to support teachers include:

- Creating a Seamless Web of Values, Practices, and Organizational Supports
- Making Professional Development Integral to School Life
- Supporting Teacher Learning Outside of School

- Leading and Learning as a Collective Responsibility
- Maintaining Balance
- Establishing Conditions that Support the New Social Realities of Teaching
- Learning About and Understanding the Change Process
- Protecting and Nurturing Hope, Passions, and Commitment. (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, pp. 84-91)

Teacher leadership “promotes a community of leaders within a school” stated Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). In addition, teachers who accept the challenge of creating or recreating schools do so with an extraordinary amount of *hope* (that all students can achieve success in school), *passion* (in their regard for continuously learning how to get it right), and *commitment* (to transforming teaching as they transform themselves and their schools)" (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 82, emphasis in the original). Glickman (1981) believed that teachers who accept the challenge to become leaders "are intimately involved with the operation of the instructional program and stand up and make their thoughts known" (p. 2).

According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), teacher leaders (1) offer leadership to students and to colleagues, (2) function as someone who contributes to operational tasks within the school (3) participate in decision-making processes both within the school and outside of the school setting. A teacher leader is an individual who is “inquisitive, reflective, enthusiastic, and autonomous” (Cannella & Reiff, 1994, p. 28). The teacher leader is continuously learning, questioning, and investigating. Teacher leaders place themselves in new situations, explore unknown circumstances, and take risks. The teacher leader recognizes “multiple perspectives and takes into account the effects of decisions on all concerned” (Cannella & Reiff, 1994, p. 28).

According to Stone (1995) a teacher who was a respected professional with the ability and knowledge to engage in the school's educational process was viewed as an effective school leader. Zigarelli (1996) stated, "better relations and tighter coupling between administration and the classroom culminates in more productive teachers" (p. 104). Zeichner (1991) asserted, teacher leaders cannot, by themselves, "provide simple solutions to our problems" (p. 364). Collective leadership focuses on building relationships between and among all members of the school community. Hart (1994) believed that new positions could enhance teacher status. With such roles and elevated status—teacher as leader—research on the role of teacher leaders is sorely needed, and Walling (1994) asserted that to introduce instructional leadership was to introduce "status differences based on knowledge, skills, and initiative into a profession that has made no provision for them" (p. 277). Darling-Hammond (1997) argued that teachers do not often assume the role of teacher as leader because "they do not know how" (p. 153).

Understanding instructional leadership is not easy (Krajewski, 1984). As schools become larger and more complex, principals are simply not able to maintain the entire responsibility for instructional leadership (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Kirby and Colbert (1994) conducted a study in which teachers in thirty high schools were surveyed using the Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS) to assess principal authenticity in promoting teacher leadership. An important finding of the study was that enabling teachers through professional staff development might be the principal's most compelling behavior in demonstrating commitment to teacher leadership. Case studies of principals by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) suggested that principals "who are more effective leaders have high needs to include others in problem solving" (p. 41). It is noted that all

of the studies reported here, thus far, have excluded teacher leaders at the elementary level.

The Instructional Coordinator

The positions that have been created to narrow the gap between teachers and the principal include instructional coordinators, high school department chairs, and lead teachers, for example. Positions such as the team leader, grade level leader, and department chair have become well established (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Although a great deal of research has been conducted examining the role of the high school department chair (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995), little has been written about the instructional lead teacher, whether it is at the elementary, middle school, or high school level.

Hart (1994) developed a comparative case study to assess activities within a school affected by a change in teaching and leadership roles. Hart's study examined teacher leadership at two junior high schools. Data were gathered through fieldnotes and structured and unstructured interviews with teachers, the administration, and the newly appointed lead teachers in each of the two buildings. Data revealed conflict between the new teacher leaders' roles and the established norms of leadership (e.g., principal and assistant principal). The conflict between teacher leaders with other teachers supported the belief that "principals should never underestimate the need for their diligent, supportive, visible, and frequent reinforcement of the real power of teacher leaders" (p. 495).

No study was found on the instructional coordinator. The lead teacher position most closely resembles the instructional coordinator position. One study by Rogers (1988) was found that examined the instructional lead teacher. Rogers (1988) conducted a study designed to research the tasks of elementary instructional lead teachers. Participants were from selected school systems in Georgia. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect data on the frequency of supervisory and administrative tasks conducted by elementary instructional lead teachers and the estimated percentage of time spent in performance of those tasks. Samples from eight specific questions that were addressed include questions such as:

1. What is the frequency of supervisory tasks performed by elementary instructional lead teachers in selected school systems in Georgia?
2. What is the estimated percentage of time spent on supervisory tasks by elementary instructional lead teachers in selected school systems in Georgia? (Rogers, 1988, p.101)

To answer these questions and others, a list of tasks were gathered from the job descriptions for the elementary instructional lead teacher position in the three school systems included in this study. A panel of experts were assembled to examine job descriptions of instructional lead teachers and then to assist with the development of the instrument. The survey was administered to 120 instructional lead teachers in three Georgia school systems.

Data collection and analysis was related to supervisory tasks, which included curriculum, staff development, and direct assistance to teachers. The data revealed that elementary instructional lead teachers spent 78.56% of their time performing administrative tasks. Of that time, curriculum tasks accounted for 28.38%, staff development tasks for 15.46%, and direct assistance for 34.72%. The tasks most often

performed by instructional lead teachers included interpreting curriculum to faculty, coordinating a central materials' center, informing teachers of and encouraging participation in staff development activities, assisting teachers in diagnosing and planning instruction for remedial students and exceptional students, and working with classroom teachers for the improvement of the instructional program within the elementary school.

A second area of task performance that was analyzed was administrative work. Administrative tasks accounted for 22.44% of an elementary instructional lead teacher's time. Of the tasks performed, the most often dealt with screening students, assisting in student placement, and interpreting test results to faculty. Routine frequently performed administrative tasks included clerical and managerial tasks such as maintaining files and monitoring permanent records.

Open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. However, the findings from the open-ended responses of the participants were not a part of the formal data analysis because not enough participants responded to incorporate this data in the analysis. Rogers (1988) stated:

Most of these responses related to the daily operation of the school. Such responses were included in a small number of the total sample of questionnaires. To what degree all elementary instructional lead teachers perform such duties cannot be ascertained from the data collected. (p. 108)

Rogers' (1988) study examined broadly the supervisory duties of elementary school lead teachers not the role they assumed in their schools. In the conclusion of the study, Rogers stated "this survey is at best a minimum reflection of the elementary lead teacher and the impact of that position at the school level" (p. 111), and she concluded, "further research needs to be conducted to determine the actual practice of the elementary instructional lead teacher" (p. 111). Grimsley and Bruce (1981) cited in Rogers (1988)

stated, "The lead teacher program most closely resembles the 'best bets' for improving instructional support services." Rogers (1988) states that this study would "prove a case for closer monitoring of the roles" of the instructional lead teacher (p. 113). The current study examines the role of the instructional coordinator and examines role theory, ambiguity, and conflict.

Rhinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley (1998) suggested, that the role of teacher leaders is "neither fish nor foul" and thus becomes even more relevant to education and therein, successful teacher leadership through such emerging positions as the instructional coordinator (p. 640).

The elementary instructional lead teacher program began in the early 1970s to augment the reading program and to provide support and assistance to teachers (Grimsley & Bruce, 1981, cited in Rogers, 1988). The program also encompassed math instruction as well. This instructional lead teacher position in the state of Georgia grew to include responsibility for the "total school curriculum and instructional program" (Rogers, 1988, p. 113). An elementary lead teacher was assigned to each elementary school to "give full time to matters associated directly with improving instruction" (Grimsley & Bruce, 1981) cited in Rogers (1988).

The focus of this study was on the role of the instructional coordinator and the leadership of the position. Past studies on teacher leadership and the changing role of the principal were beneficial to examine in light of this study. Rhinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley (1998) researched the new and different roles for teachers as they related to the role of the principal. Prior research had been conducted using a naturalist methodology

to investigate the relationship between the principal and the faculty as they attempted to change their roles (Blase & Kirby, 1992).

Rinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley's (1998) study investigated the covariance between teachers' view of their principal as it related to their sense of empowerment. The teachers in this study were chosen from elementary schools. Teachers were asked to respond to two questionnaires: the School Participant Empowerment Scale and the Principal Rating Form Quick Score. These questionnaires showed high correlations between trustworthiness and expertness. Results of this study suggested it might be important for principals who want to promote teacher leadership to consider the perceptions teachers have for the similarity between leaders and followers.

Despite the lack of research on the instructional coordinator, Hargreaves (1997) stated, "developing collaborative, working relationships between supervisors and teachers should be a central task (p. 2). Afterall, the "expectations and challenges for American public schools to educate all children have been raised to a new level" (Glickman, 1990, p. 69). Re form in the area of educational leadership has encountered a "crippling gap between the person-centered approach and many educators' current practice (Combs, Miser, & Whitacker, 1999, p. 1). Closing this gap is critical for administrators and teacher-leaders (Combs, Miser, & Whitacker, 1999), and this study sought to add in some way to the knowledge about new and emerging leadership roles for teachers at the elementary level.

Chapter Summary

While framing this study, the construct of role theory offered several insights. A role is the sum total of expectations placed on the individual. Role theory provides

critical insight into a school's social system. Analysis of the instructional coordinator role might assist in understanding the purpose of this position.

Role ambiguity and role conflict cause low job satisfaction, high tension, low self-confidence, and a sense of futility (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Role ambiguity, according to Huse (1980), occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations, and it is the discrepancy between the expectations and behavior results in role ambiguity. Reducing both role conflict and role ambiguity is necessary for individual effectiveness and efficiency. Role ambiguity and role conflict are factors that are common among teachers as well as administrators.

When issues such as role ambiguity and role conflict are addressed, empowered teachers emerge as leaders. During the past ten years, interest in teacher leadership and its positive influence on schools has been acknowledged (Smylie, 1995; Whitacker, 1995). Lieberman and Miller (1999) proposed "new conceptions" that could help to support teachers in their efforts to transform themselves into leaders.

Understanding instructional leadership as it relates to the instructional coordinator position is difficult. The instructional coordinator position most closely resembles the lead teacher position. One study by Rogers (1988) was found that examined the instructional lead teacher. However, Rogers' (1988) study examined broadly the supervisory duties of elementary lead teachers. The study did not examine the role that lead teachers assumed in their schools.

Closing the gap between teacher-leaders and administrators is critical for a school. The instructional coordinator position was developed to augment the reading program and to provide support to teachers. The focus of this study was on the role of the

instructional coordinator and the leadership of the position. This study sought to add to the knowledge about new and emerging leadership roles for teachers at the elementary level.

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school level. This knowledge and understanding gained through such a study might assist principals, instructional coordinators, school systems, and other interested in the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school setting. The paucity of research in elementary level administration, coupled with the dearth of research on elementary teacher leadership positions (lead teacher, instructional coordinators), provides the rationale for examining the perspectives of formal teacher leaders who work as instructional coordinators.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of four (N=4) instructional coordinators at the elementary school level. To date, prior research could not be found in reference to the work of the elementary instructional coordinator. The researcher sought the perspectives of the instructional coordinators who work in four elementary schools in a single county in Georgia. To gain an understanding of the role of the instructional coordinator, a qualitative case study was conducted.

During a five-month period, three interviews, attendance at one district-wide instructional coordinator meeting, and artifact collection were conducted with four (N = 4) elementary school instructional coordinators. The first interview was conducted in February of 2002 to obtain a broad concept of the role of the instructional coordinator and to profile the participants (e.g., experience and background). The next interview was designed to pursue participants' perspectives specifically addressing the role of the instructional coordinator. The final interview was originally designed to compare and contrast the role of the instructional coordinator with other positions such as grade chairs, middle and secondary instructional coordinators, and teachers. However, this interview followed a different direction based on the participants' second interview responses. The third interview was redrafted to address previous topics that needed clarification or elaboration.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?
2. How do elementary school instructional coordinators perceive their role?
3. How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?

Chapter three included descriptions of (1) the design, (2) the data sources, (3) the data collection procedures, (d) the data analysis methods, and (3) the limitations of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative methodology was more appropriate than a quantitative approach for this study due to the focus on examining the participants' individual perspectives of leadership as an elementary instructional coordinator. Because this study sought to capture the perspectives of elementary instructional coordinators, quantitative methods would have limited the participants to selection of predetermined responses. This would not have enabled the participants to express their individual perspectives. In addition, the data collected was rich in description of events and personal conversations, thereby giving credence for using a qualitative methodology.

The qualitative approach to data collection "seeks to capture what people have to say in their own words" (Patton, 1990, p. 22). A qualitative case study is a form of interpretive research (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative methods were stressed within the naturalistic paradigm, not because the paradigm is anti-quantitative, but because qualitative methods stress to the human-as-instrument construct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research allowed the researcher to use methods that were extensions of normal human activities such as: looking, listening, speaking, and reading. In

addition, using the human-as-instrument construct allowed for interviewing, observing, mining documents, and taking into account nonverbal cues (Merriam, 1998). For this study, a qualitative case study was conducted to gain an understanding of the perspectives of four ($N = 4$) elementary school instructional coordinators from one county in Georgia. Yin (1994) identified three reasons for choosing a qualitative research strategy:

- (a) the type of research question posed;
- (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events; and,
- (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. (p. 4)

Because this study sought to capture the perspectives of instructional coordinators, the use of quantitative methods would have limited the participants to selection of the responses and beliefs supplied by measurable predetermined categories. An open-ended approach, including some structured questions, was necessary to identify the perspectives of the participants, four instructional coordinators. Qualitative research places an emphasis on the natural setting, verbal narratives, and flexible designs. The phenomenon under investigation was examined in a natural setting with no preconceptions held by the researcher.

The qualitative research in this study focused on finding understanding and meaning through the spoken word of four ($N = 4$) instructional coordinators at the elementary level rather than quantifying through numbers predetermined areas. There was no manipulation of behaviors and settings or of control of the setting due to the qualitative nature of this study. There were two reasons for this emphasis: the belief that behavior is best understood as it occurs without external constraints and control, and the belief that the situational context is very important in understanding behavior (McMillan,

2000). Everything that occurred during the three interviews was taken into consideration; nothing was trivial or unimportant. The flexibility in the procedures allowed the researcher to pursue avenues of inquiry such as adding questions that arose during the research process, in particular, the three interviews conducted with each of the four elementary instructional coordinators. All aspects were scrutinized. For example, methods or processes through which actions occurred were taken under consideration. When using qualitative research techniques the investigator did not assemble a puzzle to form preconceived pictures. Instead, a picture was able to develop as the parts were collected and examined (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research was that reality is “holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, or measured” (Merriam, 1988, p. 167). The collection of descriptions of the role of the instructional coordinator was more complete through the qualitative approach because that the researcher was able to “gather first-hand information about processes in a ‘naturally occurring’ context” (Silverman, 2001, p. 11). The qualitative research design did not seek to control or manipulate the behaviors, but rather, to “describe the nature of a belief, attitude, event, or behavior” (Merriam, 1988, p. 68) of the participants who in this study were four (N=4) elementary instructional coordinators from one school county in Georgia.

Although rigorous, qualitative methods offered more flexibility in the data collection and in the analyses needed for exploratory research as were desirable in this study. Through a qualitative case study approach, the role of the instructional coordinators who participated in this study was examined.

Case studies are “concerned with understanding and describing processes” (Merriam, 1988, p. 31). The case study’s aim was “not to find the ‘correct’ or ‘true’ interpretation of the facts, but rather, to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling, interpretation” (Bromley, 1986, p. 38). Miller and Kantrov (1998) stated, “cases are tools that are increasingly used in education to explore challenging issues and to reflect on diverse experiences” (p. 1). Powerful cases are more than narratives of events; they are cases of something, and they:

Represent some larger set of ideas and therefore are worthy of reflection and deliberation. A well-crafted case ‘of something’ is like an evocative photograph that captures a subject, invites multiple interpretations, and is rich enough to sustain repeated encounters. Good cases have that same kind of complexity, drawing the reader into the topic and evoking comparisons to other experiences. (Miller & Kantrov, 1998, p. 1)

The research questions of this study were designed to explore the *what*, *how*, and *why* of the instructional coordinator’s role from the perspectives of the instructional coordinator (Merriam, 1998). The case study is the preferred research method when *what*, *how*, and *why* questions are used (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Yin (1994) stated “such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence” (p. 6). In addition, “the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events” in the setting in which they occur (Yin, p. 8).

A case study may include a combination of several types of designs. Case studies vary based on the number of subjects included, the theory used, and the end result. Case studies may be written with different purposes in mind, at different analytical levels, and with different demanding action from the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this particular study, a multiple-subject case study approach was used to gain the perspectives of four elementary instructional coordinators. The interviewer used:

- 1) In-depth interviewing over a structured period of time: Each participant was interviewed for a time period not less than one hour on each of the three separate occasions by the researcher. The interviews began in 2002, February and concluded in 2002, June;
- 2) Artifact collection: Each participant gathered written documents, such as teacher and student handbooks, which were unique to her school that referenced the instructional coordinator. In addition, participants submitted professional vitas that detailed their educational training and positions held; and,
- 3) The researcher attended an elementary instructional coordinator district level meeting to add to the case study design. All elementary instructional coordinators were present at this meeting as was the Director of Elementary Operations.
- 4) The historical perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator was gained through personal communication with Dr. Fred Schnell, Dale County Superintendent from 1982-1989, whose vision it was to put instructional coordinators in Dale County schools and Linda Johnson, one of the first instructional coordinators in Dale County.

Isaac and Michael (1995) cautioned the researcher about the “one shot case study” and interjected the idea of transferability: can a single case study support generalizations that can be transferred to other similar situations? In contrast, other researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1986; Stake, 1994) provided the argument for the value of a single case study approach for context-specific activities such as the

instructional coordinator's perspectives of his or her role in the elementary school. Yin (1994) provided additional support for the single case study. He believed that the situation does exist where the researcher has the opportunity to both observe and analyze a phenomenon previously unavailable to scientific investigation. Such was the situation for this study of the role of the instructional coordinator. The perspective of the instructional coordinator was gained through the interpretation of the interview transcripts, which were generated through face-to-face interviews.

A research design is the "logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of a study" (Yin, 1994, p. 27). For this purpose, interviews were conducted with four ($N=4$) elementary instructional coordinators who were responsible for providing instructional leadership in their schools. The interviews allowed the investigator to obtain information that was not readily observable or obtainable through quantitative methods. For example, behaviors, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them are not always readily apparent (Merriam, 1988). The process of interviewing the participants allowed the investigator to gain through the collection of data the "richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in a social and cultural context" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 3) of how four elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role.

The type of interview conducted varies with the degree of structure. The informal conversation or unstructured interview does not use predetermined questions and is usually exploratory in design (Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1986). Outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each participant is involved in the general interview guide approach (Patton, 1986). In contrast, highly structured interviews consist of

predetermined questions asked in a particular order (Merriam, 1988). However, interview questions can encompass a combination of approaches. It is imperative that the researcher maintain a common theme and outline for each participant but not that the researcher maintains a single style of questioning throughout the interview. The intent of the interview should be to generate multiple insights on a single issue or set of issues.

It was not the researcher's intent to develop a scripted job description for the instructional coordinator. Rather, it was the intent of the researcher to use the results of this study to understand the dynamics of the instructional coordinator's role across four elementary schools. These results could assist schools and school districts in gaining insight into the role of the elementary instructional coordinator. Moreover, this study could help those most dependant on the instructional coordinator, the teachers, to understand the role of the elementary instructional coordinator.

For this study, a general interview guide was used with an open-ended approach. The open-ended questions were written in advance and used in the interviews (see Appendix A). The researcher asked both structured and unstructured questions because "the researcher cannot always know the ideal scope until data collection is underway" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16). Figure 3.1 identifies examples of open-ended questions that were written in advance, and it notates the interview in which they were asked.

Interview #	Question
1	Tell me about your job as an instructional coordinator.
2	What do you think teachers want and need from an instructional coordinator?
3	How is your role as an instructional coordinator alike or different from a grade chair's role?

Figure 3.1. Open-ended Questions

The majority of the questions written for the first interview were asked exactly as they were written. The second interview was more heavily influenced by the participants' responses in the first interview. Pre-written questions were asked but were open enough to correspond with the participants' immediate comments. Figure 3.2 delimits this process as it occurred in the second interview.

Pre-written Question Asked	Sample of Participant's Response	Resulting Question Asked
What did you think this job was going to be?	No one knows until they step in those shoes how big the job really is...	Why is that?
How did your perception change once you got the job?	...you just weren't going to go in there just make those grand, old, wonderful changes...	Do you think you'll ever be able to implement some of those things?
What gets in the way of you providing for teacher's needs?	I think it's those relationships and those bonds that you build with teachers...	How is the relationship that you have with teachers different from the relationship that your principal has with teachers?

Figure 3.2. Influence of Participants' Response on Questions

The third set of interview questions were rewritten after analysis of interview two transcripts, which revealed a need to ask questions that correlated more closely with the participants' previous statements, and this process allowed the researcher to direct the participant to clarify or elaborate on previous discussion topics. Figure 3.3 provides samples of initial questions for interview three that were deleted, and Figure 3.4 highlights new questions written that were formulated after the second interview.

Original Questions
What other role in education would you say your job is most similar to?
How does your principal impact your role in the building?
Why type of feedback have you received from the teachers in your building in regard to the work that you do?

Figure 3.3. Original Questions for Interview Three

Newly Formed Questions
Do you ever feel conflicted in your role as an instructional coordinator?
Is your job more important than the assistant principal's job? Why or why not?
What type of training did you receive for your job?

Figure 3.4. Newly Formed Questions for Interview Three

In addition, the interview-guide approach served to individualize each participant's responses within the construct of the elementary school in which they were the instructional coordinators.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interactionism guided the collection, analysis, and development of the study. The epistemology of symbolic interactionism is taken from the model of Dewey and Mead (Hamilton, 1992). Symbolic interactionism is "a perspective in social psychology" (Charon, 2001, p. 23). According to Mead (1962), "everything about the human being is considered a process, rather than stable and fixed" (p. 26). First, instead of focusing on the individual and his or her personality traits, symbolic interactionism:

focuses on the nature of social interaction, the dynamic social activities taking place among person. By focusing on the interaction as a unit of study, the symbolic interactionist creates a more active image of the human being and rejects the image of the passive, determined organism. (p. 23)

The perspective of the elementary instructional coordinator was gained from the social interaction of the researcher and participant during the interview process.

The theory of symbolic interactionism is also based on the idea that "human action not only is caused by social interaction, but also results from interaction within the individual" (Charon, 2001, p. 23). The active process of thinking influences what a person does more than his or her ideas or attitudes do. People act according to the way they think. People act according to the "way they define the situation they are in, and although that definition may be influenced by others with whom they interact, it is also a

result of their own definition” (p. 23). The researcher sought to investigate the role of the instructional coordinator in the elementary school by chronicling the perspectives of four (N=4) instructional coordinators. The way each of these instructional coordinators defined their situation was based on their own definition and was therefore relevant to this study.

In addition to spoken language, Baldwin (1986) also considered gestures to be a meaningful part of symbolic interactionism. He stated “the meaning of any given gesture lies in the information it carries—in its ability to predict the behavior that is likely to occur next” (Baldwin, 1986, p. 72). For this reason, all interviews for this study were conducted in person and fieldnotes from the interviews included gestures that occurred while the instructional coordinators were conversing with the researcher. When information from the interviews was being coded, the gestures notated were taken under consideration for purpose and meaning in relationship to the perspectives of the instructional coordinators.

The researcher sought to determine the role of the instructional coordinator based on the present perspectives of the instructional coordinators interviewed. The third concept of symbolic interactionism underscores that in keeping with symbolic interactionist theory, the focus of the perspective is on the present, not the past. Charon (2001) stated “what we do in any given situation is primarily a result of what is going on in that situation, not of what we bring to the situation from our past” (p. 24).

Finally, symbolic interactionism emphasized that the human being is “free to some extent in what he or she does” (Charon, 2001, p. 24). Using this concept, the analysis of data for this study was approached from the perspective that the participants

were active in their worlds. Charon (2001) reiterated that “we direct ourselves according to choices we make, we assess our actions and those of others, and we redirect ourselves” (p. 24). It is the interaction between the interview and participant, the social interaction within the individual, the focus on the present, and the perspective that this theory uses that provided the theoretical framework for this study.

While conducting the three interviews for this study, both the researcher and participant focused on interaction rather than personality or social structure, the present rather than the past, and all individuals as active rather than passive participants in the study. Blumer’s premise of social interactionism was based on the belief that “we jointly create meanings, and these meanings are ultimately responsive to contexts outside ourselves” (1969, p.2). He attempted to determine how “agents fit themselves into structures, and what the effects of structures are on the generation of meaning” (p. 2). The participants in this study were viewed as “emergent, always changing as he or she deals with situations encountered” (Charon, 2001, p. 34). Using the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism when conducting interviews and analyzing data gathered from the perspectives of four (N=4) instructional coordinators, the role of the instructional coordinator in the elementary school emerged.

Data Sources

Patton (1986) believed that qualitative research employed sampling that is purposeful in developing rich descriptions or information and that:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling. (p. 169, emphasis in the original)

Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select a sample from which the most can be learned about research. The importance is in the quality of the knowledge of the participants in the sample, not in the size of the sample.

For purposeful sampling to be effective a pool of participants must be identified based on qualifications or characteristics they possess related to the study. For this study, participants included four ($N=4$) instructional coordinators who worked at four elementary schools in a single county in Georgia. The researcher used Patton's (1990) description of homogeneous sampling to identify the four instructional coordinators along with stratified purposeful sampling. The instructional coordinators were a homogeneous group. The number of participants consisted of four instructional coordinators within a single school system.

In determining the sample to be used for this study, the researcher sought the following:

1. Four instructional coordinators from the county under study.
2. The researcher sought assistance from the Director of Elementary Operations in selecting a pool of six instructional coordinators to consider.

Considerations included:

- a. Experience as a teacher: The instructional coordinators considered should have five or more years of elementary teaching experience in the county in which this study was conducted, Dale County.
- b. Experience as an instructional coordinator: The instructional coordinators considered should have two or more years of experience

as an instructional coordinator in the elementary school that she was currently working.

3. From this list, the researcher chose four instructional coordinators with the two serving as alternates in the event an instructional coordinator dropped out of the study.
4. A small sample was used to preserve the depth of the data collected.

Wolcott (1994) believed, “increasing the number of cases serves only to reduce proportionately the attention that can be given to any one of them” (p. 182).

Permission was granted from the county superintendent (see Appendix B) to conduct the study. The location of the district was in close proximity to the researcher and will remain unidentified to ensure the privacy of the instructional coordinators.

Profiles of the Participants

The participants included four instructional coordinators: all of who worked in the same school system in Georgia. Each instructional coordinator worked at an elementary school in Dale County. All four participants were white females.

Educational experience ranged between 10 to 24 years. Participants had held the position of elementary instructional coordinator for a period of 2 to 9 years. Each participant's instructional coordinator experience was within one elementary school in Dale County. Figure 3.5 highlights the educational experience of each participant.

Participant	Total Years in Education	Elementary School Experience	Middle School Experience	High School Experience	Years as Instructional Coordinator	Highest Educational Degree
Stinchcum	27	15	7	3	2	Ed. S.
Richardson	10	7	0	1	2	Ed.S.
Thomas	24	15	0	0	9	Ed. S.
Goodman	11	8	0	0	3	Ed. S.

Figure 3.5. Profile of Participants

Participants' Beliefs about Coordinating Instruction

Each participant revealed her own personal beliefs about coordinating instruction in an elementary school. For example, Nancy Stinchcum believed that she “is a wearer of many hats.” She had to learn how to change hats very quickly. She leads by “modeling for people.” Prior to her instructional coordinator experience, when she was a resource teacher, she “looked forward to going into five different classrooms and working with the teacher and bring them materials, and finding them information.” Nancy Stinchcum sees the instructional coordinator and the assistant principal as “being on the same plane.” As far as she was concerned, “her job is more important than his.” She “fights hard” for the things she considers important to teachers. She has “done what she said she would do” in her job as instructional coordinator.

Renae Richardson believed that her “number one concern was helping teachers.” This is what she enjoys most about her job as instructional coordinator at McEntire Elementary School. Richardson is not the type of person that says, “This is what I want you to do.” She likes to get teacher input and is “here to support them.” She believes

that she “is the instructional leader” at McEntire Elementary School. Richardson focuses her day on “the teachers and instruction and making sure they’re getting the most out of their teaching day.” Richardson would “like to show teachers the newest things out there” and would always like to “spend more time with the teachers doing things that I feel would help the students.” “Teachers can come to me anything, if they need help,” stated Richardson.

Tracy Thomas stated that “you name it and I do it” when asked about her job. She “does everything.” Thomas found difficulty putting “everything” into words. She believes that she is “the ear that everybody bends” and perceives her job “as taking care of the people around her first.” Thomas believed that she will forever be “a teacher person,” and Thomas believed that the type of person that she is and the leadership that she portrays encourages teachers to “go further.” Her leadership style is “hands on” and includes active involvement. Thomas indicated each day she is “out and doing and getting things done for the kids and the teachers.”

Diana Goodman thought, “Her job was very important.” She considered herself a supporter for teachers. Goodman had “always enjoyed being in leadership roles and being a teacher and enjoying education.” She believed that she can be make a bigger difference in Dale County as an instructional coordinator than she could have as a classroom teacher. Goodman believed that as an instructional coordinator she could “reach more people and help more children,” and she believed that as an instructional coordinator, she can “help teachers do their job better.”

Data Collection Procedures

After completion of the sampling process, potential participants were contacted to ascertain their willingness to participate in the study. Participants were then given an informed consent form (see Appendix C) detailing the purpose of the study, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of participation. The consent form described the conditions for voluntary participation, confidentiality, and contacts for questions about the research and participants' rights. The researcher assured the superintendent of the school district and all participants that the name of the district, the schools, and the participating instructional coordinators would remain confidential. Aliases were developed for this purpose.

The consent form also explained that interviews would be audiotaped, transcribed, and kept in the possession of the researcher under lock and key. Participants were asked to sign two Participant Consent Forms. The participant received one copy while the other copy was retained for the researcher's records.

Multiple data collection sources are advocated for case study research (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Each interview was audio-recorded on a separate tape. Following each interview, tapes were assigned control numbers and labeled with the name of the participant, the date, and the time of the interview. For later comparison, fieldnotes were matched with interview transcriptions. All data were accessible only to the researcher and the researcher's major professor.

During interviews, questions that were probing in nature were asked as necessary to assist participants to describe their perspectives with great detail. Before each interview, participants were given the opportunity to voice any questions concerning the

research and to read the transcripts from the previous interview. Instructional coordinators were also informed that further inquiry might be necessary to provide clarification. Three interviews across a five-month period were conducted with each participant to:

1. Provide adequate time for the participants to offer data relevant to the guiding questions of this study.
2. Generate rich descriptions, over a period of time, of the processes through which instructional coordinators derive their role in the elementary school.

Relevant artifacts including the most current version of the instructional coordinator job description (see Appendix D), instructional coordinator meeting summaries, and central office communication with instructional coordinators were collected and then analyzed as necessary.

Stake (1994) defined triangulation as “trying to arrive at the same meaning by at least three independent approaches” (p. 263) and that from direct observation and additional sources, the researcher draws evidence for the conclusion” (p. 264). To triangulate data and analysis in this study of instructional coordinators, the data collection protocol listed below was used:

1. Three interviews were conducted with each instructional coordinator during this study.
2. The researcher attended one instructional coordinator district meeting at which all participants were present.

3. Relevant artifacts were collected (e.g., district instructional coordinator job description, instructional coordinator meeting agendas, instructional coordinator handouts or notes from central office personnel).
4. The researcher kept fieldnotes.

Interviews

After consent forms were signed and returned, interviews were scheduled and completed. For all three interviews, the participants decided the time and place for the interviews, and three private, face-to-face interviews were conducted with each participant. The average duration of the first interview was two hours. The average duration for the second interviews was one and a-half hours, and the average of the third interviews was one hour.

The interviews consisted of focused questions. Yin (1994) described a focused interview as one “in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time ... remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner ... following a certain set of questions derived from the case study protocol” (p. 85). An interview guide aided the discussion. Three interview guides were developed. The interview guides (see Appendix A) allowed the researcher to focus on the overall research questions that guided the study. However, the interviewer was still able to follow unexpected leads that arose during the interviews. Figure 3.6 provides examples of focused questions that were asked and questions that emerged during the interviews.

Interview	Focused Question	Question(s) that Emerged from the Focused Question
1	Tell me about your job as an instructional coordinator.	When you were listing the things that you do, you said you were in charge of instruction. What does it mean to be in charge of instruction?
2	What do you perceive to be your role in the elementary school now that you are an instructional coordinator?	Why is there a gap between what a teacher perceives an IC does and what the IC really does?
3	How is your role as an instructional coordinator alike or different from a grade chair's role?	When you talk about not knowing if you can do this job for 10 more years...that you might be burned out...what will cause the burnout?

Figure 3.6. Focused and Emerging Questions

Interview questions were examined for clarity and validity. A content validity check helped to ensure that the interview questions were likely to get at what they were intended to answer. A sampling of questions—the research question posed, the content validity question, and sample interview questions—are identified in Figure 3.7.

Research Question	Content Validity Question	Sample Interview Question
1. What leadership roles do these elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?	Do instructional coordinators empower teachers?	How does your job impact teacher leadership?
2. How do these elementary school instructional coordinators perceive their role?	What is the focus of the instructional coordinator's job?	What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
3. How did the work of these instructional coordinators shape their role?	Does the work of the instructional coordinator impact positively or negatively on their interaction with teachers?	Of the work that you do, what do you consider most beneficial to teachers?

Figure 3.7. Content Validity Data

The critiquing of the initial elements of the study was done by “gatekeepers, knowledgeable informants, or experts” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 234). The researcher asked two former instructional coordinators who were currently principals in Dale County to examine, and respond to, and to refine interview questions. The interview questions for the first interview guide were given to these experts. Their recommendations were used to make modifications to the interview guides. The second interview guide was developed using the same format. In addition, additional interview questions were added based on information that emerged during prior interviews.

The interviews were audiotaped for later analysis. Fieldnotes were taken during each interview to record observations and to notate interesting items. Participants were asked to review the transcripts for clarity and accuracy. Additions or modifications were then made, if necessary.

The researcher attended one meeting at which all four participants were present. The Director of Elementary Operations in the school system led this meeting. Any discussion or materials relevant to the study were collected. All instructional coordinators within the county attended, not just those in this study.

Artifacts

Artifacts were collected and analyzed. Artifacts included the district instructional coordinator job description (see Appendix D), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) report for each school, teacher handbook, memos, and information from the Director of Elementary Education. Artifacts were examined and then analyzed as part of the data from each participant.

Data Analysis

Inductive analysis is essential in qualitative research if the central aims are exploration and discovery. Patton (1990) indicated that qualitative research was “inductive to the extent that the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting. Yin (1994) stated, “data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study” (p. 102). Data analysis was an ongoing process that began with the first interview (Merriam, 1988).

Using the constant comparative data analysis procedures advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided the opportunity for analysis to occur at several levels. By using the constant comparison method, the research was able to code and form categories as they emerged from the data, both during and after data collection. This method also allowed the researcher to prevent from designating categories in a predetermined manner. As the instructional coordinators were interviewed, the researcher listened more a spoke little to allow the interview to shape itself to the meanings that the participants had for the work and role of the position of instructional coordinator.

The ongoing process of comparing in tandem all incidents observed and all data collected is known as constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method involved looking at the incidents, making comparisons as needed, defining any categories that emerged, and working toward a theory (Glaser, 1978).

Developing theory from the data in stages as data emerged and as analysis was made involved several processes that included, for example, noting categories from each

round of interviews and then developing follow-up questions for each participant and then across participants. Next came comparing and analyzing data to develop categories and their properties, constantly looking for particular attributes to refine categories and to notate the emergence of new categories.

The four participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts, clarify ideas presented, and provide additional information to further complete an idea expressed in previous interviews—and this process continued throughout each of the three interviews. From categories came further analysis of data to the point in which themes could be identified across each case. In the final stages of the constant comparative method, the participants were asked to review and validate findings to reduce distortion.

Fieldnotes were taken during the first interview as the participants talked with the researcher. The researcher recorded observations as well as spoken words. Upon transcription of the audiotapes, the fieldnotes were used to develop follow-up questions and later as a means to triangulate data and its analysis. The transcripts, fieldnotes, and artifacts were read to identify content. Memoing occurred at this data analysis stage, but the memos were more detailed with notation of the findings.

Coding and sorting were part of the management of the data (Bogden & Biklin, 1998). Codes with definitions and corresponding attributes were developed. This provided a system for categorizing and classifying concepts that emerged from the data. The coding and memoing was critical for it made allowances for the researcher to place the contents within a category or to develop a new category if the parameters needed expanding.

The coding system served as a representation of the interview context. The researcher recorded spoken words and observations during the first interviews. Transcripts of the interviews were compared with the fieldnotes to track emerging themes. This process continued until all data dissipated. The managerial system for the volumes of transcripts and categories that evolved from the transcripts and the codes that identified meaning from the data were developed.

Throughout the coding process, the data were analyzed for major themes and patterns. Overlapping findings and other outstanding data were noted and attached to the transcripts. Categories began to emerge. Figure 3.8 provides a sample of themes and codes developed by the researcher.

Code	Theme
F	Frustrations within Job Position
FL	Flexibility with Role
PLS	Personal Leadership Style
TN	Teacher Needs

Figure 3.8. Sample of Theme and Codes

Following the constant comparative method, after the initial coding, the researcher further divided the development of new categories and data. The process of coding, categorizing, and dividing continued until all data were dissipated and throughout this process of analysis, participants were involved. Each participant had the opportunity to respond to the analysis of data. The participants were asked to verify the data separated in categories and the analysis that the researcher made—the researcher sought to ensure that her own biases did not distort the analysis of the date. Figure 3.9 gives examples of how responses were categorized and coded.

Response	Theme	Code
That decision was made by the principal.	Association with the Principal	PA
I'm in charge of staff development.	Staff Development Responsibilities	SD
I've done what I said I would do.	Personal Perspective	PP
As far as instructional is concerned, I have more a handle on that than the assistant principal does.	Leadership Issues	LR

Figure 3. 9. Categorization of Responses

What Glaser and Strauss (1967) described as delimiting theory transpired next in this process. During this portion of the data analysis, the researcher reduced the categories by searching for higher levels of a match or fit of the content within and among attributes of the categories. This synthesis compelled the researcher to cull the properties of the categories instead of the incidents or frequency of the incidents. From this process, the deeper meaning emerged by analyzing the coding, memoing, and the researcher's log.

Safeguards were interjected into the research design to promote more dependable and therefore, more trustworthy findings. To minimize subjectivity in the data analysis process by the researcher, a personal statement of beliefs was audiotaped before initiating the study. The researcher consulted these belief statements often during the process to self-audit for bias and to ensure objectivity.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is necessary for this study because it deals with open-ended data (Merriam, 1998). For the researcher to establish trustworthiness, the researcher must "persuade his or her audiences (including self) that their findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Four

methods assist the researcher in obtaining trustworthiness: validity, reliability, generalizability, and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Validity

“All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner” (Merriam, 1998, p. 163), and the issue of validity must be accounted for in a qualitative study. McMillan (2000) described validity as “the extent to which inferences are appropriate and meaningful” (p. 118). Establishing validity in a qualitative study must be done in an ethical manner. Validity is established through careful attention to the study’s conceptualization and the way that the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted. McMillan (2000) defined validity as “the extent to which inferences are appropriate and meaningful” (p. 188). Maruyann and Deno (1992) referred to validity as “the extent to which a measure actually assesses what it is intended to measure” (p. 69). Validity is assessed by looking at the strengths of the relations of the measure with other measures of the same theoretical variable. Validity “cannot be assessed unless measures of other variables also are collected” (Maruyann & Deno, 1992).

The researcher chose respondent validation for this study due to the study being dependent on the perspectives of the instructional coordinators. Respondent validation was described by Silverman (2001) as “taking one’s findings back to the subjects being studied. Where these people verify one’s findings, it is argued, one can be more confident of their validity. This method is known as respondent validation” (p. 156). Figure 3.10 provides a sample of the opportunities for participants to verify the findings.

Researcher's Contribution to Respondent Validation	Participant's Contribution to Respondent Validation	Validation
I want you to look through it and see if there's anything you want to comment on or not.	No.	None of the themes in the interview were questioned.
I just want to give you a chance to read what you said and make sure it's what you meant.	I felt so bad last time, saying that I do a lot of things that the principal needs to do. But there are so many things he has to do.	The fieldnotes taken by the researcher accurately described the participant's hesitancy to discuss the principal.

Figure 3.10. Respondent Validation

Using this method of establishing validity was based on the belief that the subject's themselves, the four elementary instructional coordinators, were the experts in regard to their perspectives of the role of the elementary instructional coordinator position. After the first and second interviews, participants were given themes that had emerged from the data. Participants were then given the opportunity to either agree or disagree on the accuracy of those themes. Samples of the transcripts were given to the participants so that they could confirm their accuracy.

Once respondent validation occurred, internal validity was assessed. Internal validity addressed the issue of whether one's findings matched reality (Merriam, 1998). Ratcliffe (1983) stated that it should be remembered that:

1. Data do not speak for themselves; there is always an interpreter, or a translator.
2. One cannot observe or measure a phenomenon without changing it.
3. Numbers equations, and words are all abstract, symbolic representations of reality, but not reality itself. (p. 167)

Internal validity was assessed in the terms of interpreting the investigator's experience, rather than in terms of reality itself. After internal validity was addressed, external validity was considered. External validity was concerned with the "extent to which the

findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998). When the study was internally valid, external validity proceeded.

Merriam (1998) indicated that, “qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity of the researcher” (p. 42) and that, “all observations and analysis are filtered through the human being’s worldview, values, and perspectives” (p. 72). In 1990, Patton encouraged researchers to “report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis and interpretation either positively or negatively in the minds of users of the findings” (p. 472). Through personal reflection, the researcher identified personal experiences and biases that would possibly affect the study:

To ensure subjectivity, the researcher:

1. Recorded her perspectives about the work of the instructional coordinators and her prior background.
2. Articulated biases:
 - The researcher was an instructional coordinator for three years;
 - The researcher was currently working in an elementary school with an instructional coordinator;
 - The researcher knew all of the instructional coordinators; and,
 - The researcher worked in the same county in which the study occurred.
3. Audiotaped statements of personal beliefs.

Preceding this study, the researcher audiotaped statements of her personal beliefs concerning instructional coordinators and their role in the elementary school. Raising the awareness of the researcher in reference to her subjectivity was the intent, to protect the trustworthiness of the findings. Awareness of personal biases along with rigid data

collection protocols allowed the researcher to control the effects of personal opinions and prejudices (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Validity was evaluated throughout the researcher's work. Respondent validity, internal and external validity, and personal reflection controlled for various aspects that might have influenced the data to be anything other than the perspectives of the four (N=4) elementary instructional coordinators.

Reliability

Reliability is the "extent to which one's findings can be replicated" (Merriam, 1998). Maruyann and Deno (1992) stated that reliability refers to "the accuracy and consistency of a measure in assessing whatever it measures" (p. 69). Reliability is assessed by looking at the consistency of (a) the responses across the items that make up a measure, called internal consistency and (b) of measures across occasions and possibly settings called test-retest. Merriam (1998) argued that reliability "refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated" (p. 205) and stated that, "reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static" (p. 205). Qualitative research is not seeking to isolate human behavior laws, but rather, it seeks to "describe and explain the world as those in the world interpret it" (Merriam, p. 170). Reliability was preserved through a variety of means:

1. The investigator's position statements described the relationship between the researcher and the participants to allow for the researcher's biases to surface.
2. Triangulation of data from multiple sources (e.g., interview transcriptions, fieldnotes, artifacts) was used to confirm emerging themes within the data.

3. An anonymous auditor helped to “authenticate the findings” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207).

The researcher produced a sample transcript and a list of codes for each identified theme. The auditor was instructed to use the codes provided to code the sample transcript. Discrepancies between the auditor’s coding and the researcher’s coding were closely examined. The auditing process was incorporated within the context of the study to enhance the “consistency of the results obtained from the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). To ensure further reliability, the investigator initiated all interviews under the same conditions. All interviews occurred in the morning at the instructional coordinator’s school, and the instructional coordinators were given the same description of the study and identical instructions prior to the interviews.

Reliability in this study was addressed in three ways. The researcher recorded position statements that detailed the relationship with each the participant. Data from multiple sources were compared for common themes. An anonymous auditor was solicited to read and code selected samples of the data.

Generalizability

Is generalization from a single case study possible? Findings are generalizable if they “hold up beyond the specific research subjects and the setting involved” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Merriam (1998) stated, “the issue of generalizability centers on whether or not it is possible to generalize from a single case, or from qualitative inquiry in general” (p. 208) and offered two possible positions on this issue:

1. Generalizability is a limitation of the method; or,
2. The use of many cases as an attempt to strengthen generalizability (p. 208).

Merriam (1998) stated that “if generalization is reframed to reflect the assumptions underlying qualitative inquiry” then generalization from a single case study was possible (p. 174).

Merriam’s (1998) position that generalizability was a limitation of the method was applicable to this study. It was desired that the results of the study would prove valuable to other schools that employ the instructional coordinator by producing baseline data on the role of the instructional coordinator.

Limitations

Limitations did exist in this study. This study was limited to the perspectives of four elementary instructional coordinators; teachers and principals’ perspectives were not solicited. The depth and accuracy in which the instructional coordinators answered the interview questions pertaining to their role was limited to what they chose to discuss. 9

Chapter Summary

A case study approach was used to examine the perspectives of four (N = 4) instructional coordinators in elementary schools. The instructional coordinators were asked to provide a profile of their professional careers, to discuss the issues related to the work that they do, to provide their perspectives of the instructional coordinator’s position, and to describe the leadership roles that they assumed as an instructional coordinator.

The researcher chose four (N=4) instructional coordinators in Georgia to interview. These four instructional coordinators worked at elementary schools in the same school system. The participants were chosen because of the uniqueness of this position to the county in which the research was conducted.

A qualitative approach was used for this study. Data were gathered through the use of three semi-structured interviews. The majority of the questions were predetermined for each set of interviews. After each set of interview data was analyzed, questions were revised. Fieldnotes were taken during the three interviews and the district level meeting. Audiotapes were made during the interviews, and transcripts were made after each set of interviews from the audiotapes. Data were read and analyzed following each set of interviews. Respondent validity was incorporated to ensure proper analysis and categorization of codes, themes, and deeper meanings. The analysis began as topics written in the margins were streamlined into themes. The themes were then assigned codes. Through such an examination, it was hoped to gain a better understanding of the role of the elementary school instructional coordinator.

The study began in August 2000 with the review of literature. The first interviews occurred at the beginning third grading period of the 2001-2002 school year. The second and third interviews occurred during the 6th and 12th week of the 2001-2002 school year. The researcher completed analysis of the data in July and began writing in August 2002.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perspectives of four (N=4) elementary instructional coordinators and the roles they assumed in the position of instructional coordinator. This research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?
2. How do elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role?
3. How does the work of elementary instructional coordinators shape their role?

The study, conducted in 2002, included three interviews with the four participants, beginning in February and ending in June 2002. Through interviews and artifact analysis, data reflected the perspectives of the four (N = 4) elementary instructional coordinators and their role in the position of instructional coordinator.

This chapter details the findings as individual cases and then findings are aggregated across the cases to reflect the deeper meaning from the data. The findings were categorized and then themes were drawn from the instructional coordinator's perspectives. Examining the context of the district, each school site, and the profiles of each of the four instructional coordinators provided insight while analyzing data from each case then across cases. Because of their relative importance, the context of the school system and each site are presented to provide further analysis of findings.

For the purpose of this study, participants included four (N = 4) instructional coordinators who worked at four elementary schools in a single county in Georgia. The

instructional coordinators were a homogeneous group in that they were all female, worked within the same county, and had similar backgrounds before assuming the position of instructional coordinator. In determining the sample for this study, the researcher sought:

1. Four instructional coordinators from the county under study.
2. Four instructional coordinators with a minimum of two years experience in their current elementary school setting.
3. Assistance from the Director of Elementary Operations in selecting a pool of six instructional coordinators to consider. From this list, the researcher chose four instructional coordinators with two serving as alternates in the event participants dropped out of the study. Considerations included:
 - a. Experience as a teacher: The instructional coordinators should have five or more years of elementary teaching experience in the county in which this study was conducted, Dale County.
 - b. Experience as an instructional coordinator: The instructional coordinators considered should have two or more years of experience as an instructional coordinator at the same elementary school.
4. A small sample to preserve the depth of the data collected.

Permission was sought from the county superintendent (see Appendix B) to conduct the study, and the district was assured that its identity would remain unidentified to maintain the confidentiality of the instructional coordinators.

Context of the Study

This study focused on the role of the elementary instructional coordinator and was conducted in a rural school district located approximately one hundred miles south of Atlanta, Georgia. The Dale County School System's mission statement is to:

Produce lifelong learners and contributing members of the community by providing our citizens with the highest quality academic and social skills necessary to respond to the challenges of a changing society. (Dale County Board Minutes)

The school district provides educational services for over 22,000 students. There are 2,813 full-time employees and 1,740 certified employees. The district is comprised of 33 campuses, and during the 1999-2000 school year, 1 primary center, 2 elementary schools, and 1 middle school opened to help accommodate student growth. The Dale County School System population has increased by more than 500 students per year for the past several years. Figure 4.1 highlights the demographics of the four elementary schools selected for this study.

Name of Elementary School	Number of Students	Percentage of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch	Percentage of Students with a Disability	Number of Administrators	Number of Counselors	Number of Teachers
Maines	592	20%	11%	2 1/2	1	41
McEntire	609	25%	13%	2 1/2	1	42
Hill	283	48%	20%	1 1/2	½	20
Evans	502	31%	10%	2 1/2	1	36

Figure 4.1. Demographic Information—Dale County School System

Of the 33 schools in Dale County, 7 are middle schools, 5 are high schools, 1 is a special entity school, and 20 of the schools are elementary schools. Many of the schools have been recognized at both the state and national levels on criterion referenced tests

and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Eight elementary schools in Dale County have been named Georgia Schools of Excellence for a total of 24 times since 1984. In addition, one elementary school and two high schools have been named National Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the United States Department of Education. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has accredited every school in the district. The district per-pupil expenditure was \$6,057.00 in 2000.

The elementary curriculum includes Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health and safety, music, art, and physical education. The early childhood curriculum is designed to develop a child's positive self-concept and attitude toward school and learning and to provide foundational experiences, which enhance the child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Emphasis is placed on an integrated Language Arts program, which includes reading, process writing, spelling, grammar; and a hands-on computational skills program in math, which uses a laboratory model and manipulatives for instruction. The science program also uses an inductive, hands-on laboratory model, and the social studies curriculum is sequenced to parallel the student's growth and to assist with developing relationships with others.

The basic program at the elementary level (grades K-5) is supplemented by special programs such as Title I reading and math, special education, and gifted classes. A program of computer and technological awareness is being phased in at the elementary level. All of the schools have a fully automated media center and high-speed Internet access in all classrooms. Each school has its own web page. On average, the elementary schools in Dale County continue to score above the state and national average on standardized tests such as the Criterion Reference Curriculum Test and the Stanford-9.

The Dale County Elementary Schools are all accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Elementary/Middle Commission. Dale County schools are eligible to receive recognition in the following programs: Charter School, Pay for Performance Program, Georgia School of Excellence, and National Blue Ribbon School. None of the participating school sites received recognition through any of these programs during the 2000-2001 school year.

Enrollment figures and state guidelines determine the number of certified personnel for Dale County Elementary Schools. The certified personnel staff at each elementary school is similar in design. The elementary administrators are on contract for an average of 213 days with support personnel and teachers on contract for an average of 190 days yearly.

Maines Elementary School

The student population of Maines Elementary totals 592 (see Figure 4.1). The enrollment by race, ethnicity, and gender is 9.5% black, 86.5% white, 1.7% Hispanic, 1.7% Asian, and 0.7% multiracial students. On average, 52.9% of the students are male, and 47.1% of the students are female. The student body represents all socio-economic levels, and housing for this population includes ranges from low to upper income facilities.

Students at Maines Elementary are served according to their physical and intellectual needs, and 20% of the student population is eligible for free and/or reduced lunches (see Figure 4.1) as compared to an average of 36% in the county and 43% in the state. The Special Education Program consists of 11% of the population compared to a 12% rate in the Dale School System and an 11% rate in the state of Georgia. Students

who qualify for the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program are served at an ESOL center located at another elementary school, which accounts for the 0% of ESOL students at Maines Elementary. The gifted program enrolls 5.7% of the student population. Five white students were retained at Maines Elementary School in 2000-2001; 40% were male, and 60.0% were female.

The administrative team at Maines Elementary School consists of three members: a principal, a half-time assistant principal, and an instructional coordinator. During the 2000-2001 school year, teachers, administrators, and support personnel were all female except for one male. All 3 administrative members had completed their 6-year specialists' degree, and 20 of the 41 teachers on staff had completed their masters' degree. The average years of experience for the administrative team were 19. Twelve years were the average years of experience for teachers.

Since the reporting of the 2000-2001 Georgia Public School Report Card, the female principal at Maines Elementary School retired, and this position was filled by the male assistant principal who worked for one year on a half-time basis at the school. The new assistant principal is a female who previously worked as an elementary instructional coordinator. The instructional coordinator, Ms. Stinchcum, has served in this position throughout this transitional period.

McEntire Elementary School

McEntire Elementary is one of the largest elementary schools in Dale County. The student population totals 609 (see Figure 4.1), and represents all socio-economic levels. Ethnicity is 14.8% black, 83.3% white, 0.7% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian. Males comprise 55.3% of the student population, and females makeup

44.7% of the population. The student body represents all socio-economic levels, and housing for this population includes low to upper income facilities.

Students at McEntire Elementary are served according to their physical and intellectual needs, and 25% of the student population is eligible for free and/or reduced lunches (see Figure 4.1) as compared to an average of 36% in the county and 43% in the state. The Special Education Program consists of 13% of the population compared to a 12% rate in the Dale School System and an 11% rate in the state of Georgia. Students who qualify for the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program are served at an ESOL center located at another elementary school, which accounts for the 0% of students at McEntire Elementary.

Various academic levels exist within the school. The gifted program serves 5.3% of the student population. Eight students were retained at McEntire Elementary during the 2000-2001 school year, and of this number, 12.5% were black; 87.5% were white; 12.5% were males, and 12.5% were females.

The certified personnel at McEntire Elementary consists of administrators, teachers, and support personnel. There are 3 administrators and 42 teachers at the school. The majority of the personnel are female with an average of 10 years teaching experience. All administrators have completed their 6-year specialist's degree, and 19 of the teachers have their masters' degree. The average years of experience for the administrative team were 15, and teachers had an average of 10 years experience.

Since the 2000-2001 Georgia Public Education Report Card, the principal position was vacated by the female principal, and this position was filled by the male assistant principal who was working half time at the school. Previously, he served as an

elementary and middle school instructional coordinator and an elementary assistant principal in Dale County. A female now occupies the half-time assistant principal position with prior experience as a middle school instructional coordinator. The instructional coordinator, Ms. Richardson, has served in this position throughout this transitional period.

Hill Elementary School

Hill Elementary School has the smallest student and teacher population of the schools represented in this study. The student population of Hill Elementary totals 283 (see Figure 4.1). The student body represents all socio-economic levels, and housing for this population ranges from low to upper income facilities. The enrollment by race and ethnicity is 27.6% black, 70.7% white, 1.8% Hispanic, and 51.9% male, and 48.1% female.

Students at Hill Elementary are served according to their physical and intellectual needs, and 48% of the student population is eligible for free and/or reduced lunches (see Figure 4.1) as compared to an average of 36% in the county and 43% in the state. ESOL students from McEntire, Maines and Hill Elementary Schools are served at Hill Elementary, which is the county designated ESOL center.

Enrollment in compensatory programs is included in the Georgia Public Education Report Card. The Special Education Program consists of 20% of the population compared to a 12% rate within the entire Dale School System and an 11% rate in the state of Georgia. The gifted enrollment consists of 3.2% of the population. Only one black, male student was retained at Hill Elementary during the year of data collection.

The administrative staff and faculty are made up of 2 administrators, 2 support personnel, and 19.5 teachers. Both administrators have 6-year specialist's degrees. Seven of the 19.5 teachers have completed their masters' degree. The only males on staff are the principal and physical education teacher with the average number of years teaching experience being 13. The administrative team has an average of 17 years of experience.

The administrative staff is comprised of the principal and instructional coordinator. Hill Elementary does not receive funding for the position of assistant principal. The instructional coordinator, Ms. Thomas, at Hill Elementary has the most administrative experience of the participants in this study. She has worked under two different principals at Hill Elementary. The current principal has served as principal for three years.

Evans Elementary School

Evans Elementary School has been in existence longer than any of the three schools previously described. The student population of Evans Elementary totals 502 (see Figure 4.1). The enrollment is disaggregated by race and ethnicity with 21.7% black, 71.1% white, 4.2% Hispanic, 2.4% Asian, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.4% multi-racial. Males outnumber the females with 55.2% male representation compared with 44.8% female representation. The student body represents all socio-economic levels, and housing for this population ranges from low to upper income facilities.

Students at Evans Elementary are served according to their physical and intellectual needs, and 31% of the student population is eligible for free and/or reduced lunches (see Figure 4.1) as compared to an average of 36% in the county and 43% in the

state. The Special Education Program consists of 10% of the population compared to a 12% rate within the entire Dale School System and an 11% rate in the state of Georgia. Students who qualify for the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program are served at an ESOL center located at another elementary school that accounts for the 0% of ESOL students at Evans Elementary. Gifted services are provided to 4.4% of the students.

Evans Elementary School retained 10 students in 2000-2001. Nine students were male, and 1 was female. The majority of the students were white. Evans Elementary retained the largest number of students of the elementary schools studied.

The administrative team at Evans Elementary School consists of three members: a principal, a half-time assistant principal, and an instructional coordinator. During the 2000-2001 school year all teachers, administrators, and support personnel were female except for three teachers. All three administrative staff members had completed their 6-year specialist's degree with four teachers holding specialist's degrees. Sixteen of the 36 teachers had masters' degrees. The average years of experience for the administrative team were 16, and the teachers had an average of 10 years of experience.

Since the reporting of the 2000-2001 Georgia Public Report Card, the female principal at Evans Elementary School retired, and this position was filled by the female assistant principal who worked for two years as an assistant principal at another elementary school in Dale County. The half-time assistant principal was hired as an elementary principal during the interim period of interviewing for an Evans Elementary principal. The new female principal replaced this vacant assistant principal position with a female high school teacher with no years of administrative experience. The

instructional coordinator, Ms. Goodman, has served in her position throughout this transitional period.

Instructional Coordinator: The Position

The instructional coordinator position was created to provide additional support and leadership to teachers to improve classroom instruction. This position is an offshoot of the lead teacher position developed in the 1970s to augment the reading program and later the math program while providing support and assistance to teachers in Georgia (Bruce, R., personal communication, January 25, 2002). The instructional lead teacher program then grew to include responsibility for the total school curriculum and instructional program.

Dale County's superintendent, Fred Schnell, embraced the lead teacher concept and presented a proposal to the board of education that made provision for additional training classes to be offered to teachers interested in applying for the position of instructional coordinator. This proposal stemmed from a need of additional help for teachers. Schnell noted, "Even with department chairs, we were unable to provide the support that teachers needed to be effective in the classroom" (Schnell, F., personal communication, August 1, 2002). The board of education approved this proposal and the year long classes were formed. No opposition to this new position was presented by either the board of education or the principals at the secondary, middle, and elementary levels.

Under the direction of Dr. Doyen Smith, a University of Georgia professor, the coursework was developed and offered to any teacher in Dale County. The local course

of study included training in all curriculum areas. Public relations and communication training were also key components of the coursework.

The participants in these training sessions were able to apply for the instructional coordinators positions. The position was advertised as one where 80% of the job responsibility should include supporting teachers and working in the classroom. No additional leadership training or degree was necessary.

Full-time instructional coordinator positions were first included as part of the administrative team at the high school and middle school levels. Eventually, elementary schools incorporated this position into their faculty design. The instructional coordinator was paid a teacher's salary according to the Georgia pay scale. The local, Dale County teacher's supplement was included in the pay for this position as was a minimal contractual supplement. Ten additional contract days were later added to the work contract of instructional coordinators.

Linda Johnson was one of the first instructional coordinators hired in Dale County. Her prior experience included teaching English at the junior high level. At the time of application for the instructional coordinator position, she was working as a junior high school guidance counselor. During the interview for this position, Johnson surmised, "The interview questions were very specific as to how I was going to support teachers in the classroom" (Johnson, L., personal communication, August 1, 2002). Johnson completed her degree in leadership through the University of Georgia co-hort program. In 1982, she was assigned to Staley Middle School as its first instructional coordinator.

“The instructional coordinator position in Dale County was primarily the result of the instructional vision of the superintendent, Schnell” (Johnson, L., personal communication, August 1, 2002). This position was created simultaneously with the piloting of the middle school concept and the implementation of a shared leadership concept across the Dale County Schools. Johnson experienced frustrations and conflicts similar to those of the participants interviewed for this study. When traveling to shared leadership conferences, other administrators were curious about her position and how it fit into the administrative tier. Her initial days as an instructional coordinator were spent performing secretarial duties as assigned by the principal such as calling in substitutes, until she was able to share her perspective of the role of an instructional coordinator and encourage the principal to support her in this role.

Johnson’s “hands were full” (Johnson, L., personal communication, August 1, 2002) from onset of her job. The majority of her day was spent observing in classrooms and meeting with parents and students. During the crossover from junior high to middle school, the principal directed the staff to meet with every parent and student in the building. Johnson was largely responsible for initiating these meetings and organizing this procedure. In addition, she met with the teachers, parents, and students whenever she could. Johnson also involved the community in the instructional practices at Staley Middle School. She invited parents and community members into the classroom to view the quality educational practices and to assist in the instruction as a guest speaker whenever the opportunity allowed.

Following the retirement of Superintendent Fred Schnell, the instructional coordinator job description and qualifications were revised. Instructional coordinators

must now hold a minimum of an L-5 certification in educational leadership whereas during Schnell's tenure, a teaching degree and completion of the local coursework satisfied the job qualifications. L-5 certification requires a passing score on the Praxis, a standardized test for administrative and educational leadership candidates in Georgia, and a minimum of a masters' degree with an additional add-on degree at this level in educational leadership and administration. An advanced degree in supervision and curriculum no longer qualifies a person to interview for an instructional coordinator position.

The job description for the instructional coordinator position was revised and adopted by the Dale County Board of Education in 1989. It states, "The primary function of the instructional coordinator shall be to work directly with teachers to improve instruction." Appendix D contains the complete job description of the instructional coordinator as adopted by the Dale County Board of Education in 1989. These duties and responsibilities range from observing in classrooms to conferring with textbook representatives and to assisting substitute teachers. Specific duties and responsibilities are:

- Observing classroom teaching and working in the use of school system curriculum guides.
- Supervising and assisting teachers in the use of school system curriculum guides.
- Planning with department chairman the instructional programs in the school.
- Assisting in evaluation of instructional materials and their use.
- Maintaining a proper balance in the variety of learning experiences, enrichment activities, and course offerings.
- Assuming any other duties assigned by the principal, the assistant superintendent for instruction and the superintendent.

(Dale County policy manual, GBBAD)

The job description of the instructional coordinator serves as a foundation for other duties and responsibilities of the instructional coordinator. One of the specific duty areas for the instructional coordinator is to “serve as staff development representative in the school(s) to which assigned” (Dale County Policy manual, GBBAD). As staff development coordinator, the instructional coordinator is responsible for overseeing the staff development activities at the building level. Each year instructional coordinators are given an updated staff development manual that serves as a guide for the process of securing staff development funding, reimbursement, and credit for teachers.

In addition to the staff development manual that the instructional coordinator receives, the Dale County School System has a staff development handbook for all certified employees. While there is not a copyright date noted, it can be derived from references to testing dates and certification tests that the manual was first published in 1997. No updates or changes have been made to this original version. In this manual, a section is devoted to staff development and the instructional coordinator is expected to:

The instructional coordinator receives and distributes staff development unit (SDU) information, applications, and handbooks. The coordinator arranges the on-the-job assessment when necessary. Instructional coordinators will assist in the maintenance of SDU records as will the Staff Development Office. The coordinator acts as a liaison between the school, the Central Office, and the Staff Development Committee concerning up-to-date Staff Development information. Instructional coordinators are a vital link and necessary between the school and the Staff Development Office, participating in needs assessments and channeling information to school personnel. Please direct questions concerning classes or other Staff Development offerings to this key contact in your school. The instructional coordinator will contact our office if additional information is necessary. Administrators may help with on-the-job assessments, if they so desire; each instructional coordinator will maintain file materials for professional

travel, individual SDU activities, college tuition reimbursements, and other SDU and certification related materials. (p. 2)

The instructional coordinator job description also maintains that the instructional coordinator will “assist in coordinating the school testing program” (Dale County Policy Manual, GBBAD) as a specific duty. Since the inception of this job description, this duty has evolved to include coordinating – not assisting – the school testing program. Previously, counselors oversaw the school-testing program. However, in the 1998-1999 school year, instructional coordinators were given this responsibility. No changes were made in the job description of either the counselor or the instructional coordinator, and no monetary amounts were added to either position.

Instructional coordinators were cognizant of the fact that even though the job description was adopted by the board of education, their work continued to include additional duties and responsibilities other than those listed as a specific duty. To cope with this ever-changing job, the instructional coordinators developed their own pacing guide. The pacing guide tracked the many types of documentation and paperwork due throughout the school year. For example, in September it was noted: “Check on report cards. See if you have enough. You’ll need to order them from central office. You’ll need to order brown envelopes and labels” (Pacing Guide, 1999). Another entry in September was: “CogAT testing will be done October 17-19. Dr. Smith will send you materials. You will want to send a letter home to parents telling them about the test prior to those dates” (Pacing Guide, 1999). This 12-page document allowed a new instructional coordinator to better prepare for upcoming events and assisted veteran instructional coordinators when planning their yearly schedules. This document was kept used as a

resource for new and veteran instructional coordinators, alike. It was not submitted to any central office personnel nor was it ever presented to the board of education.

After a pacing chart was designed by the elementary instructional coordinators, their attention was focused on constructing a job description that parodied their actual duties at the elementary school. In response to additional duties and responsibilities such as the testing coordinator assignment and in response to the consensus of the elementary instructional coordinators that “their role was not described, recognized, or understood in the manner that it should be” (Thomas, T., personal communication, March 3, 2002), the elementary instructional coordinators, as a collective group, worked together during district level meetings to develop a new job description. Their goal was to develop a job description that they believed encompassed all of their actual duties and responsibilities and reflected their role in the instructional program at the elementary school.

After several meetings, the instructional coordinators produced a new job description. Every elementary instructional coordinator agreed that this new job description reflected the actual duties of an instructional coordinator (Thomas, T., personal communication, March 3, 2002). This job description was developed with the intent to present it to the Dale County Board of Education with a request for more salary funding and additional contract days. However, this never occurred. This unofficial job description listed overlooked or unrecognized duties and responsibilities as well as those already included in the Dale County job description. Examples of duties *not* listed in the official job description recognized by the Dale County Board of Education but are performed by elementary instructional coordinators include:

1. Assisting teachers with field trip paperwork.
 - A. Typing/sending in request
 - B. Duplicating parent letters
 - C. Contacting bus barn
 2. Preparing the school's master schedule
 - A. Art, Music, PE
 - B. Computer Labs
 - C. Playground
 - D. Bulletin Board
 - E. Bus Duty Roster
 - F. Lunch Schedule
 - G. Check teachers' individual schedules
 3. SACS Chairperson
 - A. Assisting in preparing the annual report
 - B. Coordinating interim five-year study
 4. Assisting with preparation of faculty and staff handbook
 5. Textbook Inventory
 - A. Keeping current inventory
 - B. Requesting textbooks as needed
 - C. Distributing textbooks
 - D. Preparing annual report
 6. Coordinating school's parent volunteer handbook
 - A. Preparing handbook annually
 - B. Preparing and distributing letters
 - C. Conducting orientation
 - D. Working with parent coordinator in obtaining tutors, etc.
 - E. Keeping roster of volunteers who cleared
 - F. Assisting teachers in obtaining volunteers as needed
- (Pacing Guide, 1999)

The pacing guide and new instructional coordinator job description were examples of the artifacts uncovered and collected from the participants during the interview portion of the research study. Each participant was asked to submit artifacts that described or referenced the instructional coordinator at her particular school. No specific examples of what to submit were given by the researcher in an effort to obtain

artifacts that, from the sole perspective of the participant, related to or outlined her job.

Figure 4.2 outlines the artifacts that each participant submitted.

Three of the four participants submitted artifacts that they considered relevant to the instructional coordinator position. Stinchcum indicated that she was “too busy to collect artifacts.” Richardson provided a copy of the teacher handbook, the mid-term progress report, the report card, and the discipline plan for the researcher. Thomas provided the school improvement plan, sample E-mails of staff communication, and the teacher handbook. Included in Goodman’s artifacts were a lesson plan notebook, staff communication logs, staff development information, and the school handbook. The participants contributed to either the design of the document submitted or had a role in the completion of the data required for each sample document.

Participant	Artifacts Submitted	Reference to IC Work
Nancy Stinchcum	None	*Participant stated that she was too busy to collect the artifacts related to her work as an IC.
Rena Richardson	Teacher Handbook Mid-term Progress Report Report Card Discipline Plan	Lists other IC duties IC collects data IC collects data IC assists in development of plan
Tracy Thomas	School Improvement Plan E-mails of staff communication Teacher Handbook	IC implements plan IC is responsible for distributing information to faculty Lists additional duties of the IC
Diana Goodman	Lesson Plan Notebook IC Duties and Responsibilities Staff Communication Logs School Improvement Plan Special Education Placement Committee letter K-3 Reading Grant Data Staff Development Parent Communication Sample Letters Accelerated Reader School Handbook	Gives IC feedback to teachers Lists unofficial IC work Tracks IC communication with staff IC implements plan IC completes paperwork and attends meetings IC writes letters IC completes application, purchase orders, and final report IC completes needs assessment, paperwork, purchase orders, and plans staff development for teachers IC responds to parents IC tracks student progress, makes purchases, plans awards ceremony IC compiles

Figure 4.2. Building-Level Artifacts

The artifacts collected from the instructional coordinators assisted the researcher in analyzing the data from interviews and fieldnotes. The artifacts presented by the participants related the work and the myriad roles assumed by the instructional coordinators. Examples of the work of these elementary instructional coordinators, particularly paperwork, were provided through artifacts such as the school handbooks, parent letters, and report card data. The artifacts gave the researcher a clearer understanding of the role of the instructional coordinator from the perspective of the elementary instructional coordinators in this study. Analysis of the interview transcripts and fieldnotes provided the primary insight into the role of the elementary instructional coordinator in reference to teacher leadership, perspective of the role, and the work that shapes the instructional coordinator's position.

Individual Cases

Analysis of the interview transcripts and fieldnotes provided critical information in reference to the role of the instructional coordinator. The following section provides findings across the four participants as individual cases. An overview of the participants, four elementary instructional coordinators, along with other pertinent information is presented in Figure 4. 3.

Name	Yrs. In Education	Elem. Yrs.	Voted Teacher of the Year	SIA Teacher	Mentor	IC Yr	Degree
Nancy Stinchcum	27	15	X	X		2	Ed. S.
Rena Richardson	10	9	X		X	1	Ed. S.
Tracey Thomas	24	15		X		9	Ed.S
Diana Goodman	11	8	X	X	X	3	Ed. S.

Figure 4.3. Profile of Participants

Nancy Stinchcum

Nancy Stinchcum has been the instructional coordinator at Maines Elementary School for two years. In her professional vita, she lists her various titles as: “testing coordinator; interview coordinator; parent volunteer program coordinator, and staff development coordinator.” She provides examples of her daily activities which include such tasks as: reviewing lesson plans, planning the instructional budget, ordering instructional supplies, collecting Dale County Literacy Inventory data, and writing the “Maines Breaking News” letter to staff members each week. In addition, she has worked as an elementary, middle, and high school teacher. Stinchcum was “Teacher of the Year” at two different elementary schools, and she views this as an accomplishment. Stinchcum earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology; her master’s degree in early

childhood, and from the University of Georgia, she received her specialist's degree in educational leadership. Stinchcum holds an L-6 certification in administration and supervision.

Fourteen major findings emerged during the course of these interviews with Ms. Stinchcum. Three findings addressed the leadership roles that elementary instructional coordinators fulfilled. Five findings portrayed how elementary instructional coordinators viewed their roles, and six findings addressed the work of the instructional coordinator. Figure 4.4 portrays the major findings that emerged from each overall research question during the interviews with Ms. Stinchcum. The discussion that follows examines each research question within the framework of the three interviews and from the transcriptions and fieldnotes collected during the interviews with Stinchcum.

Research Question	Major Findings
What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?	Personal Leadership Style, Conflict and Leadership, Teacher Leadership
How do elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role?	Supporting Students, Supporting Teachers, Role Conflict and Ambiguity, Personal Perspective, Administrative Hierarchy
How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?	Paperwork Issues, Meeting Teachers' Material Needs, Testing Constraints, School Meetings as a Hindrance, Interaction with Teachers, Additional Duties and Responsibilities

Figure 4.4. Major Findings: Nancy Stinchcum

Leadership

Stinchcum responded to several questions designed to discover the leadership roles that she viewed to be unique to the instructional coordinator. In response, Stinchcum described in-depth the leadership roles she assumed at Maine Elementary School. Stinchcum's description of the leadership roles that she fulfilled included

focusing on what is most important to her. Leadership for Stinchcum included understanding her personal leadership style and her role as an instructional leader, focusing on instruction, putting teachers and children first, and empowering teachers as leaders. Stinchcum encountered role conflict and role ambiguity as an instructional leader despite her clear and focused goals. However, she continued to work toward alleviating this problem while fulfilling what she considered to be her leadership roles.

Personal Leadership Style

Stinchcum discussed her personal leadership style as well as her strengths and weaknesses as a leader and the conflict that she encountered while fulfilling her duties as an instructional coordinator. As an instructional leader, Stinchcum “likes to lead by modeling for people, guiding them along.” When faced with conflict or when her leadership role was challenged, she was “not good at getting in your face.” However, she “is a very good organizer” and places expectations on her faculty that “once I do get things organized, I expect people to follow my lead.”

Stinchcum “does not like confrontation and never has.” Preferring “the ‘follow me’ kind of leadership,” one of the goals as an instructional coordinator that Stinchcum set was “to help teachers,” and Stinchcum related that she worked hard to assure teachers that “I wasn’t going to be an evaluator, and I wasn’t going to take over the principal’s leadership responsibility.” Stinchcum had the opportunity to use her leadership strengths on many occasions. One such situation involved conflict between a team of teachers.

Stinchcum described the incident:

The teachers had a grievance. They came to me with their problem. Once we all got in the same room and began talking it out, it was over in a matter of seconds. I made some suggestions, and we went on to talk about other things. I was able to get the teachers to see both sides of the situation. Each person was able to better

understand the other person's point of view. I was able to mediate this situation and resolve the problem.

Stinchcum concluded this discussion by using such words as teacher growth, development, and teacher empowerment to describe what she wanted to achieve as a leader.

Teacher Leadership

When discussing teacher leadership, Stinchcum knew “they (teachers) need reassurance” to be successful. The fact that an instructional coordinator “has to be patient and flexible and forget about the things that she has to do” and “listen to teachers when they need to talk” was discussed by Stinchcum. “You have to be very flexible,” she noted. Stinchcum liked “to talk to them (teachers), ask them questions, try and get them to figure out what the problem is and what they can do to fix it.” “If people have ownership of the problem and the solution, then it's easier for them to solve it, and I think they're a better person for it,” indicated Stinchcum. Stinchcum “understands the frustration” that occurs due to excess paperwork. To be a successful instructional coordinator you have to “be a model, be flexible, be an organizer, be a decision-maker, and be a very good listener,” Stinchcum reported. “Only an instructional coordinator who portrays a combination of supportive and empowering leadership will promote teacher leadership,” stated Stinchcum.

Role Perspective

When asked to elaborate on her perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator, Stinchcum noted:

The first year you are an instructional coordinator you don't have a clue what you're suppose to do. By the end of the year, you've figured it out. At the beginning of the second year, you know what's required and what you're suppose

to do and what you want to try to change. And you're like 'How am I going to do this?' You have this picture of what you need to do. You have to decide—will I be able to do this job and is this important enough that I will make time to do it?

Stinchcum spoke of the fact that it was imperative to break away from the “agenda of others” such as the principal and to “look at the big picture and say, ‘Okay, what is my role?’” Stinchcum defined her role as “in charge of instruction.” From her viewpoint, “the most important thing we’re (the faculty) there for is to lead the children in the learning experience, and I’m an important part of that.” She believed “you always remember who is at the center of that instruction and that’s the child. You have to base your decision on what’s best for the students.” At times, she knew that “the issues get clouded.” Role conflict and ambiguity were included as factors in her perspectives of her role as an instructional coordinator as was the administrative hierarchy in her school. A key element of Stinchcum’s perspective of the instructional coordinator’s role was “remembering that the children and the teachers are the reason that we (instructional coordinators) are here.”

Teacher Support

With student learning her focal point, Stinchcum said if she was “not supporting the teachers the way they needed to be supported, then the learning is not going to go on.” It was this support that Stinchcum viewed as a vital component of her role as instructional coordinator. Stinchcum stated:

You always have to be flexible and make time for teachers. When you are working in your office or walking down the hall and you know that you are on a mission, it’s very hard not to be rude to someone who just wants to chat. But you have to be able to make time to support that teacher both professionally and personally so that she can be the best instructor for those students that day. Your words of encouragement or of support can make the difference in the type of instruction children receive in that classroom that day. You have to be patient and

flexible and forget about the things that you need to do. What teachers need is reassurance and support.

Stinchcum found it to be “really exciting” when supporting teachers in the classroom.

Supporting teachers “is a lot of hard work, but that it’s my most important job in the elementary school,” reiterated Stinchcum.

Stinchcum’s focus and objective as an instructional coordinator has been to establish a relationship with teachers that would allow her to support them in their teaching efforts. Said Stinchcum, “that’s really...what I wanted to do, and I feel comfortable now that they (teachers) will come to me to ask me to help them to do things.” She indicated “they had to learn to trust me and to know that I was going to help them and that I wasn’t going to tell them to do it a certain way.” Stinchcum emphatically stated, “I have done what I said I would do.” Supporting teachers was what she believed was “making a difference.”

Within the framework of providing support for teachers, Stinchcum also viewed her role as “making it special” for teachers. Always searching for a time when “I could be walking around the building and talking with teachers,” was Stinchcum’s focus. She “would like to get what teachers need.” When it came to supporting her teachers and their efforts in the classroom, she “fights hard for those kinds of things.” In her endeavor to support teachers, Stinchcum “likes to help teachers by telling them and showing them” new ideas or suggestions. For example, Stinchcum shared:

I went into a kindergarten room and they were talking about rabbits and Easter eggs. I told the teacher that I had a friend who could give us some fertilized eggs that the students could hatch, if she wanted me to do that. She was thrilled with this idea. I mentioned my idea to first grade teachers and they were so excited. I brought the eggs, and we hatched the chickens. I made sure I helped the teachers check the chicks each day. I believe my suggestion and support helped teachers plan a new activity that benefited students.

To support teachers, “we have to learn how to get their trust. It’s a lot about trust,” noted Stinchcum. The relationships that Stinchcum fostered as an instructional coordinator built trust between the faculty and instructional coordinator.

Stinchcum continued to expand on the importance of trust between herself and teachers by relating the importance of “getting into the classroom more and listening to teachers and seeing what’s going on and getting a better handle on what teachers need.” Stinchcum wanted “to take a more active part in that,” and she believed that “they need more support. They need more modeling, in a non-threatening way.” Stinchcum stated, “I am always looking forward to sharing with teachers at the grade level meetings.” In addition, “it’s just that I want them to do the best job that they can, and that’s why I want to help them,” Stinchcum reported.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Despite the clear and focused goals and objectives that Stinchcum strived to implement as an instructional coordinator and teacher supporter, she viewed and noted the frequency of conflict in how her role was defined by others such as central office personnel, her building principal, and the community. Stinchcum explained it this way, “the only thing in our job description is ‘you are an administrator,’” and she explained that the independent curriculum audit team that visited Dale County during the 2001-2002 school year reported informally that “a lot of people don’t know what the instructional coordinator is.”

Stinchcum stated that central office personnel have one definition or perspective of her role, and she has a totally different perspective. Stinchcum was asked to complete reports, distribute memos, and attend meetings as directed by central office staff that she

believed did not directly impact instruction. She often hears the phrase “the instructional coordinators can handle that” at her district level meetings. Her principal comes back from her district level meetings with “information for the instructional coordinator.”

In her opinion, when central office had something new that needed to be completed or administrated, this responsibility fell to the instructional coordinator for lack of a better system of assigning new duties or responsibilities. For example, with the development of the Dale County Literacy Inventory, Stinchcum had to compile data for the Dale County Literacy Inventory three times a year. While she supported the use of the Dale County Literacy Inventory, she believed that someone else could be assigned the responsibility of “number crunching” while she spent time working with teachers to improve the reading level of the students who were in danger of not passing the Dale County Literacy Inventory.

Stinchcum experienced role conflict and ambiguity within her school as well as with central office personnel. Her principal, in particular, continued to change the responsibility or focus of the instructional coordinator position. Stinchcum noted:

Last year she (principal) gave me a tremendous amount of work. I’ve tried to figure out why that was. I don’t know if she thought I could handle it or she felt like she needed to know what I could or couldn’t do. And then this year, she is always asking me, ‘What can I do to help you?’ and saying, ‘Let’s let the assistant principal handle this.’ I don’t feel like she’s doing this because she knows I’d mess things up and not do a good job. I feel like she may be doing this because she really does want to help me because she realizes the amount of work responsibility I encounter each day. But I’m not really sure of why she makes changes in my job responsibilities when she does.

Stinchcum had her own opinion of what her role was and what her role was not. For example, when describing what her role did not entail, Stinchcum pointed out that she did not “see myself that much as an evaluator.” However, Stinchcum struggled to

support her viewpoint because her position was considered administrative, and she was put in situations that called for her administrative position to be evaluative in nature.

The terms evaluator and administrator were interchangeable for some administrative positions within Dale County. Stinchcum did not see a connection or relationship between the two terms in reference to her role as instructional coordinator. However, there were situations when Stinchcum saw it necessary to address instructional weaknesses or gaps with individual teachers and use an evaluative perspective. When a situation arose like this, Stinchcum stated, “It’s hard to know when you’re suppose to be an administrator and ‘sort of’ get on people for the things they’ve not done and then on the other hand, you’re suppose to help them fix whatever is wrong.” Stinchcum viewed situations such as these as creating conflict within her role as instructional coordinator.

Stinchcum sought her principal’s guidance and direction when situations arose that created a conflicting situation in her role as instructional coordinator. In addition to looking to her principal for guidance and direction during role conflict encountered with central office, the community, and other administrators, she also followed his leadership with regard to her position within the administrative hierarchy at her school. From Stinchcum’s perspective she “believes that the principal has the last call” but considers herself “lucky” because she and her principal “get along and are usually on the same line.” She noted that her “principal gives her a tremendous amount of responsibility and supports her perspective of her role as instructional coordinator in the majority of the situations she encounters.”

Administrative Hierarchy

The administrative team at Maines Elementary School consisted of the principal, the assistant principal, and the instructional coordinator. When asked about her perspective of her role with regard to these positions, Stinchcum believed her position as instructional coordinator and the position of the assistant principal were “equal” and said, “I see the assistant principal and myself on the same plane,” but she believed that her job was more important and indicated, “as far as I am concerned, my job is more important than his, and I feel like we need to reverse the progression so the progression would be principal, instructional coordinator, assistant principal.” In relationship to the assistant principal, Stinchcum pointed out:

I have more of a handle on instruction than he does. The assistant principal gets the substitutes and deals with discipline. Those things are important, and they do keep the school functioning. But if we don't have a substitute or if we have a discipline issue when the assistant principal is not there, then the principal or myself is going to cover the class or talk with the student. But if I am not in the building, no one does my work. It piles up. The job is still there, and no one has done it. As an instructional coordinator, if you're not there to do your job, then it's not going to be done.

She also added that she understands his role and job responsibilities because she “has to do it all, because we have an assistant principal who's only there two and one half days a week.”

Work Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

Within the context of three interview sessions, Stinchcum was asked to detail the work she deemed to be the responsibility of the instructional coordinator. In addition, she was asked to explain how the work she did shaped her role as an instructional coordinator. In response to these questions, Ms. Stinchcum said that in addition to learning the job of the assistant principal, she has “had to do it all.” She is “a wearer of

many hats.” One thing she’s had to learn is “how to change those hats very quickly.”

She said, “You never know what one day is going to bring.” She states, “There are a lot of things that you’d like to put in nice neat categories, but it doesn’t work that way.”

Counting testing materials, attending school meetings, ordering instructional materials, or completing additional duties were examples of work areas that Stinchcum described in-depth as being a part of her work as an instructional coordinator. In spite of the many tasks and responsibilities of her work, Stinchcum usually “tries to have a plan for the day, but it never works out that way.” Based on these and other statements, the researcher sought to study how the work of the instructional coordinator shaped their role. In defining the work that the instructional coordinator does and if this work shapes her role, Ms. Stinchcum mentioned eight specific tasks or areas of work, listed in Figure 4.5.

Work Areas	Number of Times Referenced in Relationship to Work of the IC by Stinchcum
Paperwork	39
Testing	19
Lesson Plans	5
Early Intervention Program	5
School Meetings	4
Materials	4
Budgeting	3
Additional Duties	2

Figure 4.5. Work Areas: Nancy Stinchcum

Paperwork

Before assuming the role of instructional coordinator, Stinchcum “knew that they (instructional coordinators) did a lot of paperwork.” Now that she is an instructional coordinator, “As it turns out, the paperwork takes up the majority of my day,” she noted. After the researcher culled the work mentioned by Ms. Stinchcum that may influence her

role as an instructional coordinator, the paperwork she must complete was discussed more than any other task assigned to her. Ms. Stinchcum stated that the “paperwork end of my job doesn’t allow as much of that (classroom observations) as I would like.” The “paperwork” was what Stinchcum considered to be the least beneficial in helping teachers. Stinchcum also pointed out that teachers “don’t understand why I sit at my desk for hours at the time.”

One of the reasons she was sitting at her desk was to check her e-mail, and “every one of those e-mails is something that I have to do.” In addition, when the Dale County intra-mail system arrives each day, she “has about three envelopes. ...That involves doing something with those envelopes and that involves doing something or passing something out. There’s a lot of paperwork involved there.” Stinchcum admitted that she “keeps pretty good records” but there are times when even she “is scrambling to complete all the paperwork.” The researcher noted that in spite of her determination to not let the paperwork overwhelm her, Stinchcum described “the paperwork” as one of the reasons that may cause her to burnout in the future. However, Stinchcum adamantly stated that while assuming the position of instructional coordinator she was still “committed to helping teachers – not just doing the paperwork!”

Stinchcum offered that if she does not complete the large amount of paperwork required that “they’re (teachers) going to have to do it; that’s what’s going to happen.” Stinchcum added, “I think that’s what I do. ...I disseminate information, and I try to take all the paperwork away from them (teachers).” Stinchcum believed that she “frees up my teachers from a lot of paperwork and lot of legwork that they don’t have to do.”

Stinchcum stated:

Who's going to do all the paperwork if I don't? The teachers are. The other two administrators are not going to have time to do it because they have to deal with students and parents and other paperwork that they have to complete. Who's going to end up doing the Dale County Literacy Inventory paperwork? Who's going to send in that report? They (teachers) are. Who's going to send in Early Intervention information for to the central office? They're (teachers) going to have to do it. That's what's going to happen if I don't complete the paperwork for them. Who's going to disseminate information from the central office? Are they (central office) just going to send e-mails and teachers have to figure it out?

One example of the paperwork that Stinchcum takes off of teachers was the Early Intervention paperwork. The Early Intervention Program was a program that requires a large amount of individual documentation for all students in the building. The "Early Intervention Checklists," in particular were an area that she must complete. This paperwork was closely tied to funding paperwork. The bottom line is that "she is in charge of the Early Intervention Program and keeping up with that." This program was one of the many that entailed a large degree of paperwork. Stinchcum maintained that she made every effort to complete the documentation and reports required for these programs without having to ask for assistance from teachers. Stinchcum found irony in the fact that her desire to shield teachers from having to complete paperwork prevents her from being able to work with them more closely to plan instructional lessons.

In summary, Stinchcum "wishes that she had more time" to support teachers in the classroom, but she says, "The paperwork end of her job doesn't allow as much time of that as I would like." Without the paperwork part of her job, Stinchcum knows that she "could get out and do the things that I'm supposed to do." Because of paperwork, she "doesn't get to do that near as often as I should." Staff development reports, textbook inventories, school improvement documentation, and grading documentation added to her

“time off task” in relationship to supporting teachers. Despite these constraints, Stinchcum was always trying to “spend more time in the classroom, spend more time walking around the school.” “As it turns out, the paperwork takes up the majority of my day, and I’m not getting to work as closely with teachers as I would like to do,” Stinchcum lamented.

Lesson Plans

One of the few paperwork tasks that Stinchcum described as critical and imperative to her role as instructional coordinator were the teachers’ lesson plans that she assessed on a regular bases. Lesson plans were discussed in the context of and in direct relationship to her role as the instructional coordinator. Stinchcum was the designated person to “check lesson plans.” Checking lesson plans was a task she viewed as “vital to instructional improvement.” Stinchcum had established a method to completing this task. Striving to always “compliment teachers on the things they’re doing well and make constructive comments about the things that I think they need to improve on,” was a goal set by Stinchcum.

Maintaining her position that her role was to support and motivate teachers, she “always tries to include a note to teachers that mentions a strength or positive aspect of their lesson plans.” But even with this strategy, when “I come around and check lesson plans, they (teachers) are totally freaked out” even though they are provided with “immediate feedback.” The teachers’ reactions to her feedback reinforced her desire to establish a relationship built by supporting and empowering teachers. Despite the teachers’ sometimes less than positive responses, Stinchcum believed that “it is important

to have those lesson plans” and pointed out that this part of her work laid the foundation for others methods of supporting teachers’ instructional practices.

Budgeting for and Purchasing of Instructional Materials

Stinchcum not only maintained reports and documentation for programs such as the Early Intervention Program and Staff Development Program while assessing lesson plans for strengths and weaknesses, she also handled the financial aspect of these programs and others. Stinchcum noted that she “is responsible for keeping current financial records on all program budget” and said, “I purchase materials for teachers to effectively conduct instruction for individual students and whole group lessons.”

Stinchcum considered “locating materials” for teachers to be one of the most beneficial aspects of this work. A situation when Stinchcum “met an instructional need by researching and purchasing a particular type of incubator” for an egg hatching activity was described. “Purchasing staff development materials that will benefit teachers as they work to address a particular child’s instructional struggles or enhancement needs” were another aspect of Stinchcum’s budgeting and purchasing responsibilities. Stinchcum was very conscientious and cautious with the allotment and was careful not “to spend money on something that will not be advantageous to teachers” and she insisted on “getting teacher input” before ordering materials. Her desire and goal was to always make purchases that were “what the teachers needed to meet a particular and specific classroom need.”

Testing Responsibilities

Stinchcum described her work as the school testing coordinator to be another work area that shapes her role as an instructional coordinator. The work encountered as

the designated school testing coordinator shaped her role as an instructional coordinator because she is “in charge of testing.” Stinchcum believed that this “could be a job by itself because in addition to the state mandated tests you have the Dale County Literacy Inventory which they (teachers) complain so much about...that takes up a lot of my time.” Testing “takes me away from walking around the building and seeing what’s going on and talking and listening,” states Stinchcum.

Stinchcum described her involvement and responsibilities of coordinating the Stanford-9, norm-referenced test as an example of the work she does as testing coordinator. During the preparation for the Stanford-9, a state mandated test, this year, Stinchcum “single-handedly bubbled in the identification items of each individual student in the entire building” because she did not want “teachers to give up their planning time to bubble answer sheets and testing booklets” because Stinchcum believed “their first priority was to the students in their classrooms.” To remain in the classroom during testing times, Stinchcum must fulfill her testing responsibilities after hours. Stinchcum described her work:

I have to go on weekends to the school and spend entire afternoons during the week working with the testing materials. I don’t have enough time in my school day to do this without slighting teachers. I get interrupted during the day. I am fortunate to have a counselor that is willing to assist me with this job. Accounting for testing materials is just something that I have to do.

When directed again to testing issues, Stinchcum reiterated that “testing consumes a lot of my time...and we do a lot of testing.” Before becoming an instructional coordinator, she knew that instructional coordinator’s “were in charge of testing,” but she was unaware of the “magnanimous amount of work and time” that testing would entail. Stinchcum encountered frustration when handling testing issues. Stinchcum underscores

that many times she only performed a testing task once a year and by the time it is time to do it again, “you’ve forgotten what you did,” and it was difficult to establish a routine or improve on the procedure she used for coordinating a single testing event only once a year. For example, she was responsible for giving the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to two grade levels on a yearly basis. Remembering the correct procedure and the testing regulations for this particular test consumed a lot of her time. One factor that was constant throughout her discussion of testing issues was that each and every time she was working with testing material and other relative paperwork, she was unable to assist teachers in the classroom; something she considered to be an important part of her role as an instructional coordinator.

Stinchcum further detailed the work of the testing coordinator as deciding:

Who is going to test special education children because a certified teacher has to test them... working on this (testing) for countless hours at school ... and at my computer at home, ... spending her Sunday afternoon sorting and counting out tests because that’s the only time I can do it without interruptions, and answering the many questions that teachers have about an upcoming test throughout the course of the school day.

It is critical that Stinchcum makes sure that “the numbers correspond to one another and that every teacher has the correct amount” of testing material, she noted. When discussing testing issues, she stated, there is so much that she “has to analyze and calculate.” Testing “takes me away from walking around the building and seeing what’s going on and talking and listening to teachers.” She “can’t do that near as often as I should” prior to, during, and immediately following the designated testing periods. In addition to accounting for testing materials within the building, the instructional coordinator must also prepare a report for the state department:

Where we have to account for the number of students that took the test and have to given an explanation as to why a student missed taking a particular test or was not given an opportunity to make-up the test.

Through only mentioned by Stinchcum four times during the interview process, Stinchcum noted that the documentation and distribution of testing materials occupied a large percentage of her time and focus throughout the school year.

School Meetings

The meetings that Stinchcum attended throughout the school year were introduced by the participant as another part of her work. Frustration and exasperation were apparent as Stinchcum listed the before, during, and after school meetings she participated in each year. Stinchcum was “required to stay for all the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings...all the programs” and stated, “you’d be surprised at how much that adds” to her work day. School meetings that occurred during the regular working day are another type of meeting that she mentioned in her interviews. One such organized group that met during the day was the grade chairs. Stinchcum oversaw these “grade level meetings.” Stinchcum also “sits in on placement meetings” and “we (the principal and instructional coordinator) take turns and then tell each other what’s going on.” In addition to PTA, grade level meetings, and other school meetings, Stinchcum had “other incidental meetings to go to” which prevented her from participating in activities such as observing classroom instruction or mentoring teachers—all work she viewed as the means to fulfill her role as instructional coordinator.

Stinchcum considered incidental meetings to hinder her contribution to hiring new staff as well as to supporting teachers already on staff. Interviewing prospective teachers or working with current teachers, activities that Stinchcum considered functions that

should be within her job description, occurred without her input or direction due to the fact that was attending another meeting at the time of the interview or when teachers had their planning period. Despite her inability to attend events where staff were hired or instructional discussions were held and to her dismay, Stinchcum was still responsible for coordinating the event. Case in point, when a new staff member was needed, Stinchcum “handles setting up those, too.” In addition, she scanned the resumes and “calls and sets up the interviews” and then “the principal and I have to make that decision” of who to hire. This decision was usually based solely on the principal’s perspective and opinion because Stinchcum was in attendance at another scheduled meeting at the time that the interviews were scheduled.

Working with Teachers

Extracted from her interview responses was the discussion of Stinchcum’s work with teachers. Stinchcum mentioned that she is “in charge of staff development.” This work included doing “a lot of work with long-term subs.” Her work involved helping teachers and answering their questions. In addition to staff development work with substitutes and reports, Stinchcum’s classroom observation tasks, which she considered the “main thrust of staff development,” occupied her day. Stinchcum defined her classroom observation work as when she “goes in and observes, not in a formal way where I critique teachers, but I go in and observe...and I leave a note or we’ll talk later.” She described an observation as “when I go in, I sit and watch part of the lesson” and later she addressed the strength and weaknesses in a conference with the teacher.

Relative to classroom observation were the needs of teachers. Identifying and meeting the needs of teachers were also considered by Stinchcum to be an integral part of her work as an instructional coordinator. “A lot of times...a teacher will come to me with a problem.” One example Stinchcum gave was when a third grade teacher came to her and said that she was having trouble finding samples for the writing assessment in a particular area. Stinchcum’s response was “How about if I come and teach a lesson and let the students write afterwards to see if we can’t get some good samples from that?” Stinchcum’s “modeling of lessons” was something she aspired to be a part of her work everyday, and was one of the things that she considered to be most beneficial to teachers. She was always “offering to go in” and teach a lesson for teachers and will continue to search for ways to better incorporate this aspect of her work into her schedule.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

There are many days when Ms. Stinchcum was assigned additional tasks or duties that she believed directly hindered her work as an instructional coordinator. For example, she said, “Sometimes I have to help entertain” As an example, Stinchcum referenced an impending board meeting “...we have to plan a meal for that. Sometimes we want to do something special for the teachers. I help my principal plan for that.” She described these situations as a hindrance to her completing what she viewed to be crucial instructional coordinator work as the “bus duty I do every day.” Ms. Stinchcum referred to that fact that “I do the buses” not once but three times in her interviews. She also noted that she “opens car doors every morning” for students who are dropped off at school. When referencing duties such as bus patrol and planning for social events, she said that, “a lot of little things get in the way” such as “fire drills” and “before you know

it, it's lunchtime, and I had not engaged in an instructional activity or discussion with any teacher in the building."

As previously indicated, the work that Stinchcum was responsible for completing would define her schedule for the day. At the beginning of the year, she was busy "trying to figure out the schedule...and putting the children in classrooms, doing class rolls." To reinforce this perspective, she said, "many days I wake up and I say, 'Well I wish I could just work with testing today,' and then a Kindergarten teachers comes in and mentions, 'We've got a problem here, and we need to fix this.'" Stinchcum continued, "Then the lunchroom lady comes in and says, 'I just wanted to let you know that we're running 15 minutes behind on the line.'"

Case Summary

In summary, Stinchcum provided a detailed and exact account of the leadership roles that she fulfilled as an instructional coordinator. Her unique perspective of her role as an instructional coordinator was examined through her various descriptions, namely how the work of the position shaped her role as an instructional coordinator. The findings that emerged brought to light the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional aspects of the role of instructional coordinator and provided a more complete understand of this role from the perspective of Ms. Stinchcum.

Rena Richardson

Rena Richardson has been the instructional coordinator at McEntire Elementary School for two years. In her letter of application for the McEntire instructional coordinator position, she stated:

The Instructional Coordinator of a school is a wearer of many hats. One of the most important hats would be developing instructional strategies for language

arts, science, social studies, and math based on results from standardized tests. The IC should work with teachers to find instructional materials and lessons to enhance instruction and plan time for cross grade level planning. The IC is also responsible for budgeting, ordering supplies, arranging field trips and guest speakers, working with teachers in classrooms and giving ideas to enhance instruction.

In addition, Richardson has worked as an elementary school teacher and a high school home economics teacher. “Teacher of the Year” was an accolade Richardson received during her elementary teaching years. In addition, Richardson was selected by her principal to receive Teacher Support Specialist Training Certification and to use this certification to mentor new teachers. She earned her bachelor’s degree in home economics; her master’s degree in early childhood, and she received her specialist’s degree from the University of Georgia in educational leadership. An L-6 certification in administration and supervision is the type of certificate Richardson holds.

During the course of the three interviews with Ms. Richardson, fourteen major findings developed. Three major findings transpired from the interviews with Ms. Richardson related to the leadership roles that elementary instructional coordinators fulfill. Five findings portrayed how elementary instructional coordinators perceive their roles, and six findings addressed the work of the instructional coordinator in relationship to the role of the instructional coordinator. Figure 4.6 portrays the major findings that emerged from each overall research question during the interviews with Ms. Renae Richardson.

Research Question	Major Findings
What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?	Various Leadership Roles, Personal Leadership Style, Teacher Leadership
How do elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role?	Stress Reliever, Supporting Teachers, Listening to Teachers, Role Conflict and Ambiguity, Messenger, Administrative Hierarchy
How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?	Work of the IC, Paperwork Issues, Everyday Tasks, Additional Duties, Staff Development, Classroom Observations

Figure 4.6. Major Findings: Renae Richardson

Leadership

Richardson “loves helping children.” The administration of McEntire Elementary School was in the “parent pleasing business,” stated Richardson, and therefore, the staff at McEntire Elementary School was constantly evaluating and reevaluating their effectiveness in the classroom. Richardson thought that as an instructional coordinator she would be:

Checking lesson plans, going in classrooms, making sure teachers were teaching the curriculum, working on testing issues, and helping teachers find new ideas. I had big plans. I was going to be the one that if a teacher was teaching a unit on money, I was going to go ahead and get new ideas and materials for the teacher to use. I soon found that there’s not a whole lot of time to do those kinds of things.

Upon becoming an instructional coordinator, Richardson strived to play an instrumental role in the teachers’ success. Stemming from the belief that “teachers have the hardest job in the building,” Richardson considered her job as instructional coordinator to be a pivotal one in relationship to teacher effectiveness. Richardson’s personal leadership style, the various leadership roles that she assumed, and the role her leadership played in guiding teachers to leadership were key elements in her discussion of the leadership roles of the instructional coordinator.

Leadership Responsibilities

It was not a rarity for Richardson to assume a variety of different leadership roles as an elementary instructional coordinator. For example, Richardson stated, “I have to assume the principal’s role if he’s not here.” If the principal is out of the building, then she “is in charge of the building for the day.” Richardson described herself as “the instructional leader.” During her first year as an instructional coordinator, she realized that there “is a lot of responsibility that comes with this job.”

Not only was Richardson responsible for assuming the principal’s leadership responsibilities in his absence, she was also required to assist the assistant principal with behavioral issues. With more frequency than she preferred, Richardson would spend the majority of her day serving as a “disciplinary leader.” When acting as the disciplinary administrative figure, she “has to deal with parents.”

When discussing the various leadership roles that Richardson assumes, she stressed her intent of providing instructional leadership “first and foremost.” To meet this personal objective, Richardson tried to provide instructional leadership by focusing “her days on instruction and the teachers and by helping them to get everything they need to have a good day.”

Personal Leadership Style

As a provider of instructional leadership, Richardson closely analyzed her personal leadership style: its strengths and weaknesses. Her leadership style was described as definitely not “authoritarian.” Rather, Richardson “likes to do things my way, but yet, I’m always open to suggestions from staff members.” Richardson “is flexible.” “A dictator” she is not. Richardson does not “come in and make demands

such as, ‘this is what we are going to do,’” but rather, Richardson “listens to teachers’ ideas and tries to do things that will help teachers.”

Richardson reiterated during an interview session that she was not “the authoritative type.” Richardson learned that her leadership style was not:

Confronting parents or teachers about a situation. I’m a people pleaser, and I want everyone to be satisfied. I have learned to let people vent for a while, and then I can just talk to them and tell them what they are doing positively or negatively that impacts the situation. Then usually everything is resolved. Confrontations are not my way of solving problems.

Moreover, she was the type of person that “if I see something that needs to be done, no matter whose job it is, I’m going to try and get it done.” Richardson was a goal setter and “likes to reach goals.” Richardson stated, “If there’s a higher level to be reached, I want to reach it.” Teachers viewed her as “dependable because they can depend on me,” pointed out Richardson. “I enjoy what I do,” declares Richardson.

One of Richardson’s strengths was that she had a “clear understanding and respect for the teacher’s position.” Richardson was “never going to forget what it’s like to be a teacher.” To reinforce her statement, she reminded the researcher that she “remembers what it’s like to be a teacher and for somebody to come down and say, ‘this is the way I want you to do this and this and this.’” Richardson mentioned, “My most favorite job that I’ve ever had was being a teacher.”

In the past, Richardson’s experiences as a teacher working with an instructional coordinator were not always positive. She surmised:

I just didn’t feel like the instructional coordinator I worked with when I was a teacher was someone I could go to for my instructional needs. As a teacher I felt that if I was struggling with a teaching a concept such as money that the instructional coordinator would think that I didn’t know what I was doing if I talked to her. Because of this feeling that I got from her leadership style, I never asked her for help. She seemed to be very dictatorial and always sending out

orders to us. I vowed that if I was ever an instructional coordinator that I would not be like this person. I didn't want the teachers I worked with to view my leadership like this. I tell them to remind me if I am forgetting what it is like to be a teacher.

Drawing from her own experiences as a teacher working with an instructional coordinator, Richardson believed that an effective instructional coordinator should be a "teacher advocate."

Teacher Leadership

Richardson's leadership role as an instructional coordinator directly impacted teachers. When referring to the relationships that she established with her faculty, Richardson offered that the teachers "know that I'm an administrator, but they also know that I'm here to help all I can." What Richardson enjoyed and appreciated was "that relationship that I have with them." Fostering a strong foundation for her relationships with teachers was the fact that Richardson "likes to include teachers in the decision-making process." Richardson explained:

If teachers come to say, and me 'I want to try this. I want to do this.' I let them. They are professionals; they know their students better than I do. They know what will work and what won't work. With Four Block, for example, some teacher may say the guided reading groups won't work with her students. I tell her to do whatever it takes to her children to learn the best that they can. I treat teachers as the professionals that they are.

Richardson noted, "If it's something that needs a decision, I like to get my teachers' perspective, as well as other administrative staff members."

Not only did Richardson facilitate teacher leadership by involving teachers in the decision-making process, but she also enabled them to be empowered as a collective group. Richardson facilitated teacher leadership through the collaboration of the administrative team and the teachers. Her school had a leadership team made up of

administrative staff members and teachers. They met once a month, and teachers had the opportunity to “bring their concerns to the meeting.” Richardson noted that if an instructional concern was brought up that she would always “work with them (teachers) to try to solve whatever issue it is.” Richardson maintained, “The purpose of this leadership team was to enable teachers to provide input and direction and well as to voice disapproval regarding administrative decisions.”

In addition to the school leadership team, Richardson promoted teacher leadership within her building through other means. For example, she stated, “I like to get input from teachers.” Richardson related:

If a teacher has one particular child that no matter how hard she tries she still can't reach him, she needs to be heard and understood and given the freedom to teach this child in the way she believes is best. I try to get her whatever materials she needs, and I try to help her implement whatever strategies she feels are necessary. She is the leader in this situation.

Richardson never liked to “just make a decision and say, ‘this is what I want you to do.’”

Richardson said, “Teachers feel like they have a voice, and they feel like their opinion really matters.” She strived to “ensure that they feel that way.” Her dedication and determination to promote teachers as leaders stemmed from her desire that teachers receive the support and leadership needed for them to be successful in the classroom.

Role Perspective

The ability for Richardson to promote teacher empowerment within her building, brought to light Richardson's perspective of the role that she played as an instructional coordinator at McEntire Elementary School. Richardson viewed her role as “multi-faceted and teacher-centered.” Acting as a stress reliever for teachers, listening to teachers, providing continual support for teachers, and serving as messenger for other

departments were foremost in Richardson's perspective of her role as an instructional coordinator.

Teacher Support

Richardson maintained that as an instructional coordinator it was her responsibility to ensure that teachers "know they have someone in the building that they can come to for help that they feel safe" talking to and confiding in about any issue." She knew that teachers "are not threatened by me or by what I have to say." The relationship that she established with teachers was a priority for Richardson.

To "know that they feel like they can come to me with anything," was a positive for Richardson. For example, teachers recently spoke to Richardson about issues with the counselor. Richardson offered, "I feel like I'm the liaison in a lot of ways with that situation." From Richardson's perspective, this was one of her primary roles in the elementary school: providing support for teachers.

Richardson offers constant support for teachers. She mentioned, "I do not want them to think that if they come to me because they are struggling to teach some concept... I don't want them to think that I am going to be judgmental or whatever." Richardson said, "I want them to know that I am going to be the kind of person that is going to say, 'let's go find something to help you out.'" Richardson continued to "work with teachers and help them with their curriculum and make sure that they have the materials that they need in their classroom."

When asked to tell the researcher about her job as an instructional coordinator, Richardson replied, "My number one concern and what I enjoy doing the most with my job is helping teachers." Richardson's main objective was "to support them." She

“focuses her day on the teachers and instruction and making sure they’re getting the most out of their teaching day.” Richardson supported teachers by “showing them the newest things out there.” Richardson also offered support by:

Talking to other instructional coordinators and asking them if they knew of any new programs that might work in a particular situation that was unique to one teacher. I talk to other teachers at other schools as well. I am always asking other people about new programs. If someone tells me that they have a problem, I go find out everything that I can from different schools to try to share with teachers to help them with that one particular child.

Teacher Stress

Richardson viewed her role as helping to relieve the stress that teachers feel, and she related that on one occasion, a teacher who was very stressed about some issues came to her. The teacher has several student papers that needed to be graded. Richardson described the situation by stating, “I went to her classroom, and I got her papers and took them home, and I graded them for her, and I put them in her gradebook.” She knows that “they (teachers) feel like ‘if I get too stressed out and there’s just too much, I know Richardson will come in and help me.’” Richardson believed that “they feel like they can come to me with anything.” Richardson believed she has this relationship with teachers because “I’ve spent a lot of time in their classrooms.”

Richardson stated that her role was to “make their job a little easier.”

Richardson’s teachers know:

That if they are stressed because they need advice on a lesson that they are doing or need help getting the materials that they need, they can come to me. I like to spend time in their classrooms. After a lesson is over, they will say, ‘Well, what did you think?’ I give them feedback and relieve their stress level by giving them this feedback and assistance that they asked for from me.

Richardson alleviated stress for teachers by being “a researcher for them if they are having a difficult situation.” For example, if a teacher had problem teaching long

division to a class, Richardson researched different methods to use when teaching long division. By completing some of the legwork for a teacher, Richardson strived to reduce some of the stress encountered as a teacher.

Listening to Teachers

Not only did Richardson perceive her role to include relieving teacher stress, but also Richardson introduced her belief that she was to serve as a sounding board for teachers. She said, “I think they (teachers) know that no matter what’s going on with me...no matter what I’m working on... if a teacher comes in to talk, I would stop what I was doing and listen.” Richardson noted:

I worked in a situation with a principal before where it seemed that no matter what time of day it was, it just wasn’t a good time to approach that person. I believe that even if I’m walking down the hall and I’m on a mission to get somewhere or do something that if somebody stops me, then I should just stop and listen. I make time for anyone who needs me.

Richardson viewed her office as “an inviting place for them (teachers).” Richardson reiterated that she would never say, “No, I don’t have time for you.” Richardson reported, “I just make time for them, and I think they know that no matter what’s going on with me... I will listen to them.”

Central Office Messenger

Richardson viewed her role as instructional coordinator to also be that of “a messenger.” Sharing information that has been given to her by central office personnel or her principal to share with her teachers was a common task for Richardson. “There are times when I get aggravated,” Richardson conveyed during the interview.

Richardson explained, “Teachers get upset with things that I have to ask them to do.” Richardson stated that the items she asks them to complete are items such as

“Running Records and report cards and things like that.... not things that I am personally asking them to do” for her benefit or gain, but rather reports that are required by central office personnel. However, Richardson states, “I feel like they’re upset with me.”

Richardson struggled with how to effectively fulfill this role with teachers. She handled situations such as these in a manner that contradicts her leadership style but satisfied central office demands: Richardson explained:

Now I don’t worry about teachers being upset with me when central office reports are due. I have one teacher that never turns her reports in on time and never does the things that I expect her to do. In the past, I would worry about this situation, but now I just confront her with the issue and stand in her room until I get the information that I need from her. I regret that the circumstances call for this type of interaction with her, but central office personnel expect me to complete their reports on time.

Richardson viewed this part of her role to be controversial and conflicting in nature, but she explained her perspective was not the issue in this situation and did not carry much weight.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Richardson encountered other situations that did produce role conflict and ambiguity. For example, Richardson relayed that her job was “an administrative position.” However, Richardson stated that most people “have no clue as to what we do.” In light of this perspective, Richardson did not feel like people treated her role as an administrative role. Richardson lamented:

My parents, my friends, or people who are not in the school system ask me all the time what I do. They’ll say, ‘Are you still a teacher?’ When I tell them that I’m an instructional coordinator, they say, ‘What is that?’ I don’t try to explain to them everything that I do because they wouldn’t begin to understand it. I just go through all the little duties that I know they can relate to and understand.

“When somebody hears you’re an assistant principal or you’re a principal” they understand your role, Richardson projected. “But if you say you’re an instructional coordinator, they make you feel like you’re a custodian.”

Richardson did not believe that the instructional coordinator position was “a very important position to people outside or within the school system.” Richardson went so far as to say she viewed her role as being “the women behind the men.” Richardson was often in conflict with her principal because there are “a lot of things that he and I don’t agree on.” Richardson faced conflict with her principal and argued over “her job itself and what she was asked to do.” She viewed her role as an extremely vital one in relationship to teacher success and said, “I just wish it was viewed as a more important position than it presently is viewed.”

Richardson believed that open communication and continued dialogue would resolve this issue of role conflict with her principal. Richardson admitted, “The principal and I don’t always agree on the way I do things.” The fact that her principal was also a former instructional coordinator reinforced her belief that they would be able clearly define her role as the instructional coordinator at her school as time progressed.

Administrative Hierarchy

Richardson emphasized her confusion regarding the administrative responsibilities and levels at her school. “Assistant principals are held on a higher pedestal, and I’m not sure why,” commented Richardson. The counseling position also provided confusion for Richardson when she sought to analyze her role as it fit in to the administrative design at her school. Richardson cited the fifth grade graduation ceremony as one example:

Our principal, assistant principal, and counselor worked on the ceremony. This year it was just the principal and counselor. I'm thinking, 'Well, why don't I fit into this picture of administrators? I just feel sometimes I don't fit into that picture. I don't know if it's the teachers' perspective, and they ask these administrators to be a part of the program and participate without me or if it's the administrators perspective or the perspective of just the principal and counselor, and they exclude me.

Richardson realized that the principal should be a part of the planning for this event as well as a part of the actual program, but she was not sure "why the principal steps over me." This lack of respect or effort to involve Richardson as a part of the administrative team bothered her. Richardson surmised that her situation was similar to other schools, but it was not the normal design at other schools.

Work Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

When questioned about her work as an instructional coordinator and how this work impacted her role as an instructional coordinator, Richardson described in-depth the many tasks that she considered her responsibility (see Figure 4.7). Work responsibilities such performing everyday duties, accounting for testing materials, budgeting instructional items, and analyzing lessons plans accounted for the majority of her time.

Work Areas	Number of Times Referenced in Relationship to Work of the IC by Richardson
Everyday tasks	25
Paperwork	10
Testing Documentation	8
Ordering Materials	4
Lesson Plans	4
Budgeting Items	2
Early Intervention Program Data	2
Dale County Literacy Inventory	1

Figure 4.7. Work Areas: Renae Richardson

Reports

Richardson listed specific tasks that occupy a large percentage of her time.

Richardson replied, “The reports and things that you have to do” for the Dale County Literacy Inventory and Early Intervention Program “take a lot of time.” For example, with the Dale County Literacy Inventory, “you have kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. I have five teachers on each grade level. I have to total all their points and do the percentages and get all that kinds of stuff and that takes awhile.” Richardson oversaw the Dale County Literacy Inventory work as well as the Early Intervention Program Data. She also “has to meet with Early Intervention teachers” and assist them with completing reports.

Budgeting for and Purchasing of Instructional Materials

In addition to managing the Early Intervention and Literacy Inventory programs, Richardson was responsible for the instructional budgetary allotment. Richardson said, “I do purchasing.” Instructional coordinator’s “handle all the purchase orders.” She stated, “I handle all the budgeting, all the funding. Everything involving money. I’m responsible for making sure that we don’t go in the hole.” While Richardson felt she should play a major part in selecting materials for teachers, she did not see any benefit from handling the accounting and paperwork aspect of purchases when her principal made all the final decisions in this area. Richardson explained:

I know when there are things that teachers want, and I feel like I have to justify every purchase with him (principal). I’m not going to go and buy something that I don’t think we could use or something that wouldn’t increase test scores. But I still have to explain to him why I am asking to make a purchase. Why am I in charge of budgeting and purchasing when I have to ask him for permission to buy anything?

If Richardson did not have to be responsible for processing purchase orders or tracking account budgets, she would be able to “spend more time locating materials for teachers.” Richardson “helps teachers find materials to enhance their instruction.” She “makes sure that they have all the textbooks that they need.” “Any materials that they need” she gets. She “spent a lot of time this year ordering level books and getting them leveled and into libraries.” Richardson reiterated that she was “always making sure they have the materials that they need.” Richardson reported that she “knows when there are things that we need... things the teachers want.”

Staff Development

Not only was Richardson responsible for locating materials for teachers, but also she was also responsible for their staff development training. Richardson mentioned staff

development as an item she considered being an important part of her work as an instructional coordinator. Richardson was responsible for writing the staff development plan. She ‘surveyed all the teachers’ and wrote the final report. Whether it is “training proctors on how to help give a test properly” or training teachers, Richardson was the person who coordinates these events. “If a teacher needs training...I feel like I’m the resource person...I work with them,” stated Richardson. If teachers “need to take staff development classes, I help them,” she added. In the spring or fall when Dale County teachers sign up for staff development classes, Richardson “helps them pick out the courses they need.” She “fills out the forms to get them approved for staff development.” In addition, Richardson helped to “make sure their teaching certificates are current.” Richardson was also responsible for ensuring that she familiarizes teachers with “any type of new programs that come into our school.”

Time was again a factor when trying to schedule staff development for teachers. Richardson noted, “there’s just not enough time during the day to sit down with them.” Initially, Richardson “had all these big plans” of spending so much time each day “looking in all these teacher magazines” and finding staff development ideas for teachers. Although “some days are better than others,” she did not have the time to follow through with her plans, as she would like to do.

Coordinating staff development gave Richardson the opportunity to work with teachers in a non-evaluative manner. “I like going in their classrooms,” Richardson expressed. She said, the central office had directed instructional coordinators to “go in there and observe and help – not really evaluate.... we’re not there to criticize.” Richardson was always working with teachers “to solve whatever issues it is” that they

need solved.” Richardson gave teachers feedback when she observed in classes, and she knew that “they value my opinion and that means a lot to me.”

Lesson Plans

In addition to planning and documenting staff development for teachers, lesson plans were one of the few tasks that Richardson also noted to be beneficial to teachers. “For the safety of teachers, the lesson plans need to be done correctly,” said Richardson. Richardson “checks their lesson plans and makes sure they are teaching according to our curriculum guide, according to what the state has mandated for them to teach.” As a teacher, she knew that part of the instructional coordinator’s work was “checking lesson plans.” However, it was only when she assumed the instructional coordinator position that she realized how vital they were to a school’s instructional program.

Richardson’s preconceived ideas about the work that the instructional coordinator preformed were quickly dispelled. Initially, Richardson thought she “was just going to be the one like when I was checking lesson plans and I saw they were teaching a unit on money, I was going to go ahead and get them all this stuff.” However, Richardson noted, “Now there’s just not a whole lot of time to do those kinds of things.”

Testing Tasks

As part of her work, Richardson “works with testing from the state and gets it taken care of in our building.” Testing work made Richardson “just a fanatic, and I check and check and check to make sure every thing is done right.” She described this work as “very involved.” Richardson proclaimed, “I panic over all that stuff...and I check it again because I get so worried about doing testing materials right.” Testing also requires that she “meet with them to go over information.” In addition, Richardson “coordinates

all the statewide testing.” Richardson did not believe that teachers truly understood what is involved with testing.

Teachers don’t know how involved the documentation and reports are. They are aware that I am working with testing materials, but they don’t realize what a tremendous job it is. With this last testing, I was working with first through fifth graders, and there was just so much.

Finding monitors or proctors for each classroom was a challenge Richardson faced during each testing session. Richardson noted:

I have to train those proctors or volunteers on how to help give the test appropriately. I ensure that the test is given according to the guidelines that are set forth. I have to make sure that they (the test materials) are kept secure or locked up and all that.

Paperwork such as testing documentation consumed most of Richardson’s time and was a major issue for her. She did not enjoy “the paperwork and all that stuff” and would take this away from her job description if she could. Richardson stated, “Some days are spent where I feel like I am just wasting my whole day doing paperwork.” “Sometimes there are just a lot of activities and paperwork that take away from what I could be doing,” Richardson added, “Paperwork is always an issue.”

Paperwork

In addition to the Dale County Literacy Inventory, testing documentation, purchase orders, and other reports, there are other reports and records that Richardson defined as “paperwork” that account for much of her day. For example, Richardson “checks grade sheets.” Richardson was “in charge of typing up honor roll and honorable mention and getting that to our public relations department so that they can get it in the paper.” The textbook inventory was her responsibility. “The Weekly Reminder” comes from her e-mail. Richardson believes that a full-time secretary would “just free up all the

time I spend doing the paperwork that I have to do.” Richardson does not perceive paperwork to be part of her role. She stated, “Some days are spent where I feel like I’m just wasting my whole day doing paperwork. Paperwork takes away from what I can be doing.”

Without the paperwork part of her job, Richardson knew that “I could spend more time in the classroom and spend more time with the teachers doing things that I feel like would help the students.” Richardson suggested that there be more continuity among elementary schools as to the paperwork that was assigned to instructional coordinators. She reported:

Some instructional coordinators take up report cards every six weeks and read them. Some instructional coordinators don’t handle report cards at all. There needs to be more consistency. A lack of continuity causes teachers to get mad. When they move to another school or talk with one another, they find out that the paperwork is different at every school. Instructional coordinators are also confused because what is their responsibility at one school is not their responsibility at another school.

Richardson believed that it is “all the little things” like paperwork that “took so much time.” “I would rather go help the teachers, so I put all that off,” Richardson stated. However, despite her plans “the reports and things that you have to do, they take a lot of time and sometimes teachers suffer because of it.”

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

Compounding her struggle to find time to work with teachers was the issue that Richardson also “helps with the day-to-day activities of the school.” Discipline “is something that I have to help with right now because we don’t have an assistant principal.” Richardson stated:

Sometimes, I have to be the lunchroom monitor. We have two monitors, but sometimes if they call in sick or if the lunchroom gets noisy, I have to go in there

and just sort of walk around and ask children to talk softer, and I turn their little cups over. It's not very often that I have to do this, but when I do, I feel like I'm wasting my time.

When discussing how her work benefits teachers and how she could provide support to teachers, Richardson considered:

The bus duties and announcements to be the least beneficial duties that I do with regard to teacher support. It's the general housekeeping things that hinder my work with teachers. I just have to do so many things such as monitoring the lunchroom that amount to very little.

On Wednesdays, Richardson took the fifth graders outside after lunch for 20 minutes per her principal's request. Richardson believed it was "things like that...I just don't feel like I'm helping anybody." Every morning "I have duties: front porch duty and bus duty in the afternoon until 4:00 everyday," she lamented. Richardson despised having to perform duties such as:

The principal asking me to stand on the porch each morning. I get here at 7:30AM each day and could be doing productive things, but I have to stand on the porch until 8:15AM each day. A parent called last year, and they were concerned because no one was there to greet her child when she dropped him off in the morning. Therefore, since we are in the parent pleasing business, I started standing out on the front porch. Rain, sleet, snow, or lightning... I'm out there smiling on the front porch each morning. It is a safety concern, and it does need to be taken care of... but I could be helping teachers get things that they need.

Of least importance to her role as instructional coordinator were the "general housekeeping things" of her job that have no impact on teachers. Richardson noted that she "does a lot of things that a principal needs to do" such as the announcements every day. When people asked her to describe her job as an instructional coordinator, she "just goes through all the little duties that I know they can relate to." However, she reinforced that she not consider these duties to be "the biggest part of my job."

Case Summary

In summary, Richardson explained the many duties and responsibilities of her work as an instructional coordinator. Her concept that she was “a wearer of many hats” proved to be true in all research areas. The leadership roles that she assumed such as disciplinarian, building principal, and parent contact impacted her intent of providing instructional leadership first and foremost to the teachers. Richardson supported teachers by encouraging them to share their frustrations and needs with her on a continual basis. Support was given to teachers through Richardson’s efforts to find new ideas and materials needed for classroom instruction and teacher growth. Richardson’s role was shaped by the work she was delegated by her principal and central office staff. In her attempt to “make the teachers’ job a little easier” she took on tasks such as testing documentation and the Dale County Literacy Inventory so that teachers could focus on instructing students. The major findings, such as these, provided an in-depth dissection and description of the role of the instructional coordinator from the perspective of Ms. Richardson.

Tracy Thomas

Tracy Thomas was the instructional coordinator at Hill Elementary School for nine years. Thomas worked as a teacher at two different elementary schools. She had experience as a kindergarten, first grade, and second grade elementary teacher in addition to being an instructional assistant at the elementary school level. Thomas was selected by her principal to receive Teacher Support Specialist Training Certification and to use this certification to mentor new teachers. She earned her bachelor’s degree in early childhood education; her master’s degree in early childhood, and from the University of

Georgia, she received her specialist's degree in educational leadership. The L-6 certification in administration and supervision was her most current certification.

During the three interviews sessions with Ms. Thomas, ten major findings emerged (see Figure 4.8). Three findings addressed the leadership roles that she fulfilled; three major findings addressed her perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator; and five findings addressed the impact of the work of the instructional coordinator on the role of the instructional coordinator.

Research Question	Major Findings
What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?	Leadership Roles, Teacher Leadership, Personal Leadership Style
How do elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role?	Teacher Support, Role Conflict and Ambiguity,
How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?	Work of the IC, Paperwork Issues, Materials and Budgeting, Additional Duties, School Meetings

Figure 4.8. Major Findings: Tracy Thomas

Leadership

"You name it, and I do it," stated Thomas. "I touch every facet of every department of every grade level every single day. Every day," Thomas commented. "I guess I'm the troubleshooter," and in her opinion, this one word "sums it up." Later in the interview, Thomas said, again, "I troubleshoot everything."

Thomas described herself as "the cheerleader for your school." Thomas stated:

I have a teacher right now that I feel like I have encouraged and coached so much to continue her studies in leadership. I have another teacher who decided to get on the bandwagon with her, and I view this as a mentoring relationship.

Thomas contended, "The instructional coordinator position involves doing a job without receiving the credit." "You should put your school out front and you put your teachers out front and you put your principal out front but you're rarely the one that's

ever recognized for all the things that you do,” Thomas noted. “That’s the way it should be,” Thomas indicated. Thomas viewed the instructional coordinator role as one where “we’re not in there to get the credit. We’re here to make sure everybody else gets the credit.” Thomas led by example. To have “the opportunity to talk to teachers” was her main priority. Thomas believed instructional coordinators should serve as a support for teachers both in the classroom as teachers and as leaders in the school building.

Leadership for Thomas was iterative, and she believed that when put in a situation where a teacher asks for advice regarding future leadership opportunities, instructional coordinators “need to go on and encourage them (teachers) to find their place in leadership.”

Teacher Leadership

Thomas empowered her teachers not only through encouragement but also by being the person who “boosts teachers to go further.” Thomas pointed out that “I have mentored many people through my instructional coordinator role.” According to Thomas “the example that I portray as a school leader spurs them on to do greater things or to see that they can achieve greater things.” Thomas elaborated:

With any faculty, you just have people that naturally rise as leaders. They may not necessarily be team leaders or grade chairmen. We just have some teachers who take the initiative. When something needs to get done, you know those are the people you can just go to and say, ‘I need help with this.’ You have those people who rise to the top. You have teachers who rise, as leaders to get things done that may not necessarily be in a position of chairperson or site-based decision-making team member. There are certainly other leaders beside myself.

“Seeing teachers blossom under my direction” was the most rewarding aspect of Thomas’ job. Teacher empowerment was promoted through Thomas’ relationship with her teachers. “It’s a different relationship,” Thomas indicated, and “It’s much more than

a professional relationship.” Thomas established a means of empowering teachers by making sure she and the teachers are “working as a team.”

According to Thomas, “empowerment for teachers requires “working together for the same goal without the worry that...it’s going to show up in my (teacher’s) evaluation” As Thomas spends more time with teachers, she said, “relationships are closer and bonds are closer.” “I’m right in the middle of the pot,” Thomas contended. Thomas was confident that “teachers come to me because they know I’m not their evaluator, and they know I’m not their judger.” According to Thomas “the relationships and bonds that you build with teachers” was a factor in teacher success.

When discussing her interactions with teachers, Thomas stated, “I certainly respect their opinions, and I will listen to their ideas, and I will go with them on their ideas and allow them to explore all the possibilities that they want for their classroom.” In every situation, Thomas “respects the fact that they are individuals, and they are unique.” When discussing the teachers’ perspective of her leadership, Thomas contended, “I think they know that I’ll stand beside them when sometimes it’s difficult to stand beside them.” In conclusion, she added, “I think they know we’re in this together.”

Personal Leadership Style

When asked about her leadership style, Thomas replied, “I hope people would say I am a compassionate leader.” Thomas believed that she “is an open leader,” and she pointed out, “I’m a team leader in every sense of the word with a great deal of compassion for the people that work with me.” Thomas was frustrated when the people she works with “do not carry their load,” and she asserted:

I want people to do their best, and when an individual is not doing her best, my job is very difficult. It’s difficult to deal with people who are consistently late

with deadlines or who turn in poor quality work. I always counsel that person, and talk to him, and lift him up. I always want people to go the extra mile, like I do for them.

Thomas explained that she “nurtures” her teachers as they grow into school leaders and assists them with difficulties.

Thomas saw specific leadership traits in terms of “service to people” and “others within her peer group.” From her viewpoint, “people who aspire to be instructional coordinator’s are special.” The service characteristics that Thomas notated are in relationship to putting “people first...and putting kids first.” Most importantly, she believed instructional coordinators “want to put our ‘help skills’ out there.”

Role Perspective

Thomas viewed her role to be one of making sure that “teachers and children succeed and achieve.” Thomas found success in the “success of the teachers, children, and parents with whom she works to resolve issues. She viewed her role as “taking a problem with a parent or teacher or student, listening to all parties, and arriving at a solution with all participants.” Whether it was “listening to or supporting teachers,” Thomas viewed these to be her main priorities as an instructional coordinator.

Teacher Support

Thomas perspective of her role was vast and complex. First, Thomas viewed herself as the staff member that “everyone comes to with problems or concerns, and I’m the ear that everybody bends.” In every situation, Thomas encouraged her teachers to “tell me and let me worry about it.” She viewed herself as “the one that wears the monkeys for the teachers.” Teachers experience situations when “sometimes you don’t want to go to your principal, and you don’t want your principal to know how you truly

feel, but you have to go somewhere” according to Thomas. Thomas was the “somewhere” that teachers go to for assistance.

Thomas’ perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator when she was a teacher differed vastly from her perspective after nine years as an instructional coordinator. Before her instructional coordinator experience, her perspective was “it’s easy.” She now realized “we do a lot more than stand around and drink coffee.” “It’s a very humbling experience to be an instructional coordinator,” Thomas stated in hindsight. After several years of instructional coordinator experience, Thomas indicated, “My job is to support teachers and to lift them up.” Thomas believed:

Supporting teachers is an innate skill for me. It’s something that I have as a part of me. I have empathy for teachers, and I feel for teachers. I’m a very honest and open person. I have a healthy respect for teachers, what they do, and the support that their job requires. Recognizing teacher strengths is part of the way I support them in the classroom. I draw on their strengths and provide support where there are weaknesses.

She believed “the one thing you have to make sure you do is let the teacher know they’re not forgotten.”

Supporting teachers was a role that Thomas viewed to be hers every day. Thomas stated, “I just perceive my job as taking care of the people around me first and the other things can wait.” She viewed herself as “a teacher person.” Thomas considered herself “the motivator” for teachers because “it was extremely difficult for teachers to maintain their energy,” Thomas claimed. In “trying” situations Thomas believed she was “the one that comes behind, the one that says, ‘You can do this.’” The focal point of her role as instructional coordinator was, according to Thomas, “providing support for teachers.”

Providing teacher support was an ongoing responsibility, and Thomas reported she was always “out and doing and getting things done for the kids and the teachers.”

She was always asking teachers, “How can I help you? What can I do to make your day better?” In Thomas’ opinion, “You have to be there for that person.” “Most important for teachers is knowing that I’m there, and I’m there to help,” indicated Thomas. Each day she portrayed in her actions and her attitude that she “is willing to go the extra mile” for teachers, and “her teachers” know that “whatever they need, they know it’s going to be taken care of.” Thomas reiterated, “The door is open” to teachers at any time of the day, “no matter what I am working on at the moment.”

Thomas made sure her teachers were not “forgotten,” and she indicated, “Teachers view me as a comrade, as a support person. ... Teachers know that I can help them...and not judge them.” Thomas concluded that instructional coordinators were “the teachers’ ears and eyes and extra pair of hands.”

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Thomas displayed her frustration with her role when she said, “I wish someone would recognize that the balance needs to be shifted in terms of the importance of our job.” She was addressing her belief that her role was more vital than the assistant principal’s role. This belief was based on the fact that instructional coordinator’s “have a hand in everything including discipline because instruction directly relates to discipline, and discipline relates to instruction.”

Thomas stated that during her first year with her current principal, “he did not understand the role of the instructional coordinator in an elementary school.” Thomas elaborated this point:

In terms of the instructional program, he’ll be the first one to tell you that he didn’t know the instructional program of an elementary school. So the first year he was here, he didn’t know how to utilize an instructional coordinator. We had a long talk recently, and he said, ‘Why didn’t you come to me?’ I told him that I

was still trying to understand how he saw his role as a principal in our building. Until he felt comfortable being a principal, there was no way he could understand my role as instructional coordinator. If I had talked with him about the conflict then, he wouldn't have listened. I waited until he came to me, and we've had a wonderful working relationship ever since.

Thomas then added:

I work very hard to understand the role of my principal in the building. I try not to ever lose sight that he is in charge, and it's not up to me to make all the decisions. I take my direction from him. It was difficult when I worked with a veteran principal who was then replaced with a first year principal. Now I do not experience any significant conflict in relationship to my role as an instructional coordinator. I seldom feel conflicted in my belief or philosophy. Because of my efforts to understand and support his role as principal, I believe that he, in turn, supports my role as an instructional coordinator.

Working to alleviate role conflict and ambiguity was a "team effort" for Thomas and her principal.

Work Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

Thomas discussed her work as an instructional coordinator in great detail and insisted, "I do everything." When Thomas took the position of instructional coordinator, she had no idea what the workload entailed. She expounded:

I had all these dreams and aspirations of things that I was going to do for my school. Another instructional coordinator warned me by saying, 'You're ideas are great, but once you get into the job, day in and day out, and you're consumed with the work, you're going to find that those wonderful ideas and things that you have or want to do sometimes fall by the wayside because you are so consumed with what needs to take place that day for your school. She was absolutely right.

It is the workload and "everything" that shaped her role as an instructional coordinator. Thomas expanded on her statement by categorizing the work that she did (see Figure 4.9).

Work Areas	Number of Times Referenced in Relationship to Work of the IC by Thomas
Paperwork	21
Materials	14
Duties	11
Meetings	5

Figure 4.9. Work Areas: Tracy Thomas

Purchasing of Instructional Materials

When discussing her day-to-day activities, Thomas indicated that “ordering materials for teachers” was a top priority for her. First and foremost, she “makes sure that teachers have what they need,” and Thomas maintained that “spending time with teachers” to better know what programs to implement and what materials to order is “of the utmost importance to being a successful instructional coordinator.” Thomas tried to plan her day and set her weekly schedule according to what teachers “need for the day.”

Paperwork

The paperwork that was required by central office, the building principal, and the daily operations of the elementary school consumed the majority of Thomas’ time in spite of her commitment to meet the needs of teachers. She noted that the “paperwork issues” directly influenced her role as an instructional coordinator. For example, Thomas indicated that “finding the time in the day to get the paperwork done” was a hindrance to her effectiveness as an instructional coordinator. Thomas added:

I think that the paperwork and reports that I do help teachers the least. It doesn’t impact them at all in terms of improvement or quality or giving kids the things that we want to give them. Being bent over a desk working on paperwork is not helping teachers.

According to her statements, the amount of paperwork that an instructional coordinator was required to generate, maintain, and submit, was the leading influence on her role as an instructional coordinator.

In spite of the “mountain of paperwork,” Thomas remained committed to supporting the teachers and students in her building. Often, she stayed after school to complete paperwork. Thomas continued to stress, “Her job is to support the teachers and lift them up.” She adamantly stated, “Paperwork can come later.”

The majority of the paperwork Thomas completed was given to her by the building principal, and “Most of the communication that goes out of the building and home to parents might have the principal’s signature” but was written by Thomas. The amount of time needed and timeframe for completion of this type of paperwork was unpredictable. Thomas reported, “never knowing when I would come to work and find a note in my office mailbox requesting me to write a letter. If there was a report to be done “usually the principal doesn’t do it, the instructional coordinator does.” Thomas lamented the paperwork issue because she indicated that it is “what takes her out of the classroom.”

In addition to correspondence with parents, teachers, and the community, Thomas was also asked to complete additional paperwork within her building. “The grant writer and the author of the school handbook,” were the responsibilities given to Thomas by the principal. Despite these additional responsibilities, Thomas still maintained that even with the principal’s directive to complete the paperwork, she endeavored to make sure “it stays on her desk until after school.”

Not only was Thomas responsible for internal paperwork, but also she was also required to complete “many reports generated from central office personnel.” In light of the amount of paperwork that Thomas must complete, “she spends time away from her teachers” due to the fact that she must fulfill the responsibilities given to her by the board office. The fact that “every coordinator at the board office has a report that’s due at the end of the year” was an issue for Thomas. Her example detailed the situation in which several central office personnel made their required reports due on the last day the students were in the building. Thomas viewed this as a “hindrance” to her effectiveness with teachers and students during the last week of school. She reiterated the need to “focus on teachers and students before they leave,” and Thomas reported:

The paperwork generated or required by the central office staff takes up a large portion of my time. Everybody at the board office has his or her own red wagon to pull. There are some people that prefer to come to the instructional coordinator rather than the principal. A lot of people, in fact, would rather go through the instructional coordinator than the principal. I understand that in some places when it’s given to the principal, the instructional coordinator doesn’t see it, and then it doesn’t get done. We generate reports for central office.

Thomas’ words brought to light the fact that the paperwork that she was responsible for from the central office departments was the least beneficial part of the work that she does with regard to her role as she perceives it as instructional coordinator.

While Thomas’ paperwork primarily stemmed from her principal and central office personnel, a portion of the paperwork she completed was necessary to “track students’ growth and academic development.” Thomas worked “hand-in-hand” with the special education department when “placing children in special education programs.” She assisted teachers in completing the paperwork for the special education referral process. During a six week grading period, Thomas “reads every report card of every

student” and “checks grades.” Corresponding with teachers “about student deficiencies and student progress,” occupied Thomas’ time. Thomas determined which students were eligible for Early Intervention services and also determined Title I criteria for her Title I Target Assistance School. Each of these programs required yearlong documentation of test data and student growth. Thomas viewed herself as “the person who places children in all support programs” such as Title I and Early Intervention Programs.

When Thomas describes her initial impressions of the work of the instructional coordinator, she surmised, “the job itself wasn’t a surprise, and the tasks weren’t a surprise.” However, she was quick to add “the fact that there was so much paperwork to be done before I could even think about doing anything extra, before I could even think about implementing a new program or before I could even think about making a change.” The realization that “there’s just so much paperwork to be done” and that “sometimes things have to wait” initially impacted her role as an instructional coordinator and continued to shape her role.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

When discussing the work of the instructional coordinator and how it shapes this role, another facet that emerged was the additional duties she has been assigned by the building principal. The teachers at Hill Elementary did not have any additional duties. Thomas’ principal promoted the philosophy that they should do everything possible to assist teachers. Thomas stated:

The list just goes on and on. Everything from coordinating field trips to counting the lunches for field trips to making sure our parent volunteers are cleared are part of my additional responsibilities. So much is going on right now that I am barely able to keep ahead of the deadlines.

The principal and Thomas handled many of the duties. Thomas had bus duty everyday, and she had breakfast duty when assistance was needed. If the principal was absent, “it all fell” to her, including discipline. The “discipline issues” that arise in the principal’s absence occupied her entire day.

School Meetings

Thomas viewed meetings, another part of her daily work, as both negative and positive contributors to her role as an instructional coordinator. From a positive perspective, she viewed her attendance of all special education placement meetings and serving as the administrative representative as an opportunity to voice her opinion with reference to academic placement. She also attended all Student Support Team meetings. She attended the majority of the parent-teacher conferences because “teachers feel more secure and supported when I am present.”

Thomas met with the majority of the parents who registered students throughout the school year. She gave them a tour of the building and explained the various academic programs that are offered. In addition, Thomas was a member of the Site Based Decision Making Team. Thomas expressed frustration when she stated:

Perhaps the biggest realization was that you weren’t going to go in there and just make those big, old wonderful changes that you thought were a great idea. There’s just too much to be done and too many meetings to attend, and sometimes things have to wait.

From a negative perspective, Thomas had no one to substitute “for her” should a situation arise when a teacher needed her guidance or support, and she was “at a meeting.” She most often must choose to attend a meeting over working with a teacher due to the logistics of finding a replacement for her.

Case Summary

Being a teacher supporter was a role that Thomas stated was a priority to an instructional coordinator's job. Paperwork, additional duties, and school meetings shaped Thomas' role on a daily basis. The relationship that Thomas had with her building principal grew to be one that was void of role conflict or ambiguity.

In closing, Thomas reminded the researcher:

There's a time and a place for everything. I have a 'next year's folder.' When I have an idea or when I think this might be something that our school wants to try, and it's not the appropriate time to try it, I'll drop it in that folder. I revisit that folder about every six weeks. When the opportunity arises, it's amazing the way those ideas are realized. You do get to accomplish what you want to do or see the dreams that you have for your teachers and school fulfilled. They just may not come as quickly as you wanted them to come. But it does happen. It when this occurs that I believe I am fulfilling my role as an instructional coordinator.

Diana Goodman

Diana Goodman had been the instructional coordinator at Evans Elementary School for three years. Goodman worked as a teacher at two different elementary schools in Dale County. Her teaching experience ranged from the second grade to the fourth grade classroom. One summer, Ms. Goodman was the principal of the elementary summer school program. She was selected as the teacher of the year at one of the elementary schools where she worked. Goodman earned her bachelor's degree in early childhood education; her master's degree in early childhood, and from the University of Georgia, she received her specialist's degree in educational leadership. Goodman holds an L-6 certification in administration and supervision.

When interviewing Goodman, it was apparent that a belief in the importance of her job was at the center of her motivation to be an instructional coordinator. Goodman stated that the instructional coordinator position was "essential in our schools."

Goodman offered that having instructional coordinators at every campus site was “a benefit that Dale County has over other school systems.” Goodman made the transition from teacher to instructional coordinator because she contended, “I could reach more people and help more children by being an instructional coordinator.” “Helping teachers which, in turn, helps children” was her goal. By assuming this leadership role, Goodman surmised that she could “make a bigger difference in our school system.”

When assessing Goodman’s responses to the questions broached during the three interviews, twelve major findings emerged. Of the findings related to the leadership roles that Goodman fulfilled, Goodman’s personal leadership style contributed to her role as a leader as did her understanding and implementation of strategies that guided teachers toward leadership. The instructional coordinator’s perspective of her role produced three major findings. The final research question: How does the work of the instructional coordinator shape their role? Brought to light six major findings. The major findings from all three research questions are highlighted in Figure 4.10.

Research Question	Major Findings
What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?	Leadership Roles, Personal Leadership Style, Teacher Leadership
How do elementary instructional coordinators perceive their role?	Teacher Support, Role Conflict and Ambiguity, Administrative Hierarchy,
How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?	Work of the IC, Paperwork Issues, Additional Duties, Staff Development, Budget Items, Curriculum Responsibility

Figure 4.10. Major Findings: Diana Goodman

Leadership

When discussing the leadership roles that Goodman portrayed in the building, she replied, “I am here to support the instructional program and to support those who implement the instructional programs.” “Teachers need to feel like they’ve got someone

in their corner in the office when they mess up or when they need help,” stated Goodman. Goodman credited past experience as a teacher leader for her interest in administrative leadership. Aside from the principal, Goodman considered herself to be “the instructional leader.”

Leadership Responsibilities

Goodman expressed that her leadership role was constantly changing. “Being a teacher-leader” was something that Goodman enjoyed as a teacher. Based on the “different times of the year or times of the day” Goodman adjusted her leadership role to meet the needs of those around her. Her principal and she “work together as a team to help plan and implement programs as the instructional leaders in the building. There were a variety of needs that had to be addressed with each leadership role that was tackled. Meeting these needs required that Goodman assume the role of other administrators in the building.

When discussing leadership, “The principal is truly our instructional leader,” thought Goodman. Sometimes, the principal had to be out of the building for an extended period of time due to conferences or other commitments. When the principal was absent, Goodman was “in charge of the building and in charge of helping to make schoolwide decisions.” Leadership for Goodman involved a discussion of her leadership roles, her personal leadership style, and teacher leadership.

Personal Leadership Style

Goodman described herself as “a goal setter.” Each year Goodman “wants to see how we can make this year a little better than the last year.” Each year as it comes to an end, Goodman “looks to see where we are now and where we need to be next year.”

Reflected in her conversations was that she is the type of leader who is “always looking to improve.” The type of leader that Goodman portrayed was one who:

Tries to find a common ground with people to kind of help our relationship be one where it’s not always a teacher thing. I feel like if I have some common interest or something to fall back on with a person that when we disagree about something or they are frustrated because I’ve given them something to do that I can always go back to an interest that we share. We can have a pleasant conversation in the midst of controversy or frustration.

Goodman patterned her leadership style after the instructional coordinators that she worked with when she was a teacher. Both “weak and strong” instructional coordinators influenced her concept of instructional leadership. Goodman considered her strengths to be “organizational skills, specifically, being able to prioritize and multi-task.” If an instructional coordinator was not organized, then Goodman believed, “you cannot handle this type of leadership position; the pressure will get to you.” Goodman continued, “I really had a good understanding of the type of leadership required to be an instructional coordinator because I feel like I had excellent role models the majority of my teaching career.” In addition, “always making sure that people feel that they are contributing,” was how Goodman summarized her leadership style. “A lot of input,” was how Goodman described her interaction with teachers, and she indicated:

Getting input from the people I’m leading is very important. I think teachers are more willing to follow if they know they have input into what decisions are being made. Of course, I know that the decision is ultimately mine at times, and that’s fine. I don’t mind making the decision if I have to, but I, personally, like to get to know people and know them as individuals. I am not just a ‘blanket person’ that throws out blanket orders or answers. I like to get to know people and work with their strengths.

Teacher Leadership

“The school is full of adults with different personalities,” was how Goodman portrayed her school. Goodman was always “searching for ways” to encourage the

leadership skills of her teachers. Goodman did this because “I think it’s more effective when people feel a part of a team, and I want to promote teacher leadership through a team concept.”

Listening “to teacher ideas to see if we can work their ideas in to making what we’re doing more effective” built teacher leaders at Goodman’s school. The majority of the teachers at Goodman’s school could “see that I’m trying to do everything that I can to help them.” Goodman established a relationship with teachers that allowed teachers to:

Feel free to come to me with the things that they don’t like. They tell me why they don’t like certain programs or requirements. I’m very willing to listen to their ideas to see if we can work it in to make what we’re doing more effective for them and easier for them, too.

Teachers were treated as leaders and had a “voice in the decisions that were made in the building.” Goodman wanted her teachers to remain “one step ahead of where they need to be.” Keeping teachers informed and “really trying to keep them stay ahead of the game” were ways how Goodman promoted teacher leaders.

Role Perspective

When questioned about her perspective of the instructional coordinator’s role, Goodman replied, “My job entails assuming a lot of different roles.” While Goodman contended that the principal was “ultimately responsible for everything that goes on in the building,” her statements clarified that “I’m the one that helps her complete her instructional goals.” Goodman viewed her role as “vital because instruction is so important to the school.” Goodman noted that her role with teachers was one of the “most important” roles in her job.

Established by Goodman, upfront, was that her “relationship with teachers” was vital to fulfilling her role as an instructional coordinator because:

They'll go to me to ask what I think about a situation and how I think the principal would react. They ask if they should approach the principal with a concern or if I think that they should let me handle the situation. I'm not quite sure why they come to me in situations such as these. I think it has a lot to do with our relationship. They know that I don't have the final word; but they know that I will provide the final sounding board for them before they have to take a concern or situation to another step,

Being an "advocate for teachers" and "providing support to teachers" was how Goodman primarily characterized her role.

Goodman's perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator changed drastically once she "worked as an instructional coordinator. You go beyond the duties and responsibilities of your job description because you are now taking a broader look at your school from the viewpoint of instructional coordinator." Taking on "everybody's role" was part of Goodman's routine. Goodman explained:

As a teacher you have a very narrow perspective. It's just your classroom. When you become an instructional coordinator, you've got to get more of a wide lens approach, and you've got to look at what is best for the entire school. This is the biggest difference... perceiving things from a different angle.

As a teacher, Goodman "knew what would work for me." However, now Goodman must "realize that not every teacher is like she was, not every teacher has high expectations, not everything will be turned in will be perfect." As instructional coordinator, "trying to help teachers bring up their standards" was considered by Goodman to be one of her primary roles.

Teacher Support

Goodman explained that for her, teacher support was "the top priority" for her work as an instructional coordinator and elaborated:

I consider myself a supporter. I am here to support the instructional program and to support those who implement the instructional programs. I am always trying to

look to see what our teachers need and what our students need, and I plan my day to meet their needs and support them.

“Teachers are very open; they come to me and share,” reported Goodman. Teachers told Goodman “what is working and what is not” so that she could better support them in the classroom. Goodman noted that her support “makes their (teachers) job easier.”

As a teacher, Goodman remembered:

If I were going to go to somebody and tell him or her something, I would go to the instructional coordinator before I’d go to the principal. I felt that way as a teacher, and I think most teachers still feel that way.

Establishing the appropriate type of relationship with teachers meant, “teachers still see you being on their level,” according to Goodman. While difficult for Goodman to explain, she stated, “I still feel like I’m their advocate in the office. Why exactly, I do not know. I think a lot of it has to do with that relationship.”

Teachers expressed to Goodman that they noticed, “She is doing everything that she can to help them,” and Goodman strived to:

Keep a good working relationship with all the teachers and their different personalities. I try to let them see that I’m really supporting them and not just handing out another report for them to fill in. I try to help them see that the reason I do the things that I do is to make their job easier.

Goodman considered “supporting teachers” one of the most rewarding aspects of her job.

“Regardless of what I do, if I can feel that what I’m doing is helping to support teachers, then I’m doing something worthwhile,” she concluded. Goodman disagreed with central office’s plans to include evaluation as part of the instructional coordinator’s job description. “You’re not an evaluator,” said Goodman. In support, Goodman offered:

I really don’t think that the instructional coordinator should take on the evaluation duties because I think the teacher needs to feel like they’ve got someone in their corner in the office when they mess up or when they need help. They need to be

able to go to the instructional coordinator and not feel like they have to admit all their faults.

As instructional coordinator, Goodman was “still on the side of the teacher” in most circumstances, and this was how Goodman thought, “things should really be.”

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Goodman described herself as “just a different part of the faculty.” Role conflict emerged in Goodman’s assessment of the relationship with teachers, and that “Maintaining a positive relationship with teachers is probably one of the hardest things because they see me as a person who is always giving them additional work. It’s really difficult.” Role conflict and ambiguity were found in Goodman’s relationships with teachers, community members, and parents. Lack of communication and a clear hierarchy within the administrative team were some of mitigating factors in relationship to role conflict and ambiguity that Goodman observed.

Role conflict was encountered during Goodman’s interaction with teachers.

When discussing her relationship with teachers, Goodman declared:

I guess they do see me in an administrative capacity now that I am an instructional coordinator. Whereas, I guess before as a teacher I was considered a part of the team. When you get moved up into this position, sometimes you end up having to tell a teacher ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ and teachers resent this. It is during times such as these that the teachers put you in the ‘administrator’ category instead of the ‘teacher’ category. You are not seen as a peer anymore. My role to them depends on which category they have put me in that day.

Goodman stated, “Personnel issues are the most difficult part of my job.” When her job requires that she ask teachers to do something rather than ask them for input, she experienced conflict. “The central office staff asks the schools to do something, and I am the one who is the bearer of the bad news,” explained Goodman:

When I have to say, ‘You have to do this or I need this from you,’ teachers change the relationship that they have with me. They decide what the rules to the game are going to be. It affects my role in the building and my relationship with them,

While Goodman believed she “really understood the dynamics between the teachers and the instructional coordinator,” she had not felt as effective “fulfilling her role,” as she would have liked to due to the role conflict brought about by teachers not having a complete understanding of her role. “Seeing both sides of the coin,” was her suggestion for getting teachers to better understand her role as instructional coordinator.

The community of Goodman’s school population did not understand the role of the instructional coordinator. “I just think my position is not valued by people out in the community,” stated Goodman. According to Goodman, “people do not understand what an instructional coordinator does, but they do understand what the assistant principal does.” Wanting the parents and others in the community to understand “the vital role of the instructional coordinator,” Goodman expanded:

The parents in my ‘little’ school don’t even understand what I do, and the students don’t really understand what I do, sometimes. They’ll call me the assistant principal, or they’ll call me the ‘principal’s helper’ because they really don’t understand that I’m an administrator in the building.

“Lack of communication about my role,” was how Goodman described how this “problem is perpetuated among” parents, students, central office staff, and community.

“People who do not work directly with instructional coordinators do not understand the importance of what we do, and the different roles we portray,” concluded Goodman. “Telling parents that the assistant principal handles the discipline aspects of the school and the instructional coordinator handles all of the instructional aspects of the building” did little to clarify Goodman’s role. Even after being in a community and

county that has “had instructional coordinators for years,” Goodman reported that she is still asked the questions, “What is that? What do you really do? And is that like an assistant principal?”

Goodman’s role occasionally overlapped or conflicted with the counselor and assistant principal’s roles. Goodman offered:

Sometimes there are academic issues going on, and the counselor is asked to answer those types of questions because people think that is her role. So she’ll try to answer their questions, and I’ll have to follow up with the parent because the information given was incorrect or not complete. I experience the same scenario when I have to handle behavioral issues. I don’t know what to do, and I feel uncomfortable saying, ‘Let’s go get the counselor’ when I really don’t have the authority to tell her what to do.

In addition, Goodman experienced role conflict with regard to the assistant principal’s position and her perspective of her position. “Sometimes there’s a conflict with me being in the building all day and knowing what needs to be done,” stated Goodman. She related that when a situation arises:

I can step in and do it, but because he’s the assistant principal, the parent or child that we are dealing with thinks that he should be the one to handle the situation when, in reality, he doesn’t know what to do. The title of assistant principal gives him the power to make the decision even if I could handle the situation.

Having a part-time assistant principal caused more difficulties for Goodman than good. “When the assistant principal is part-time, I have to take on more of her role, and if the assistant principal position was full time, that person could be more involved,” explained Goodman. “I feel that my role is more important because I’m there all the time, and I’m more involved in what is going on in the building all the time,” Goodman stated. In addition, Goodman remarked, “If the assistant principal is out, I can step in and take of her job. However, no one can step in and take care of my job when I’m not there.” Goodman attributed this to the fact that “so much is involved in instruction, and

there are a lot of things that you have to have expertise or knowledge about before you can complete them.” The conflict and ambiguity Goodman encountered in her role contributed to Goodman’s belief that the administrative roles, particularly the instructional coordinator position, were not clearly or commonly defined.

Administrative Hierarchy

The role of the instructional coordinator from Goodman’s perspective was strongly influenced by the administrative hierarchy in her building. Goodman’s school employed a principal, a part-time assisting principal, and an instructional coordinator, in order of superiority, as the administrative team. “Principal, instructional coordinator, and assistant principal” should be the ranking order of administrators according to Goodman. “I do things that are just as vital and just as important, if not more so, than the assistant principal,” Goodman challenged.

When describing how she would rank her position, Goodman had a definite opinion. “The second administrator in the building” was how Goodman described her position. However, the status of Goodman’s job was not considered to be in the same category as the assistant principal’s job. There was a “difference in the status” of the assistant principal and the instructional coordinator positions. Changing the title of the instructional coordinator to assistant principal for instructional was the one thing that Goodman would change about her job if she was allowed. “This would change the perspective of the instructional coordinator’s role,” Goodman argued.

Goodman admittedly struggled to understand the importance placed on the assistant principal position. According to Goodman, the elementary assistant principals in Dale County “do not even meet on a regular basis. What does this say about their

responsibility and role with instruction?” Goodman resented the fact that she was “the administrator who’s there all the time other than the principal,” but yet her role was “often misunderstood or overlooked.” The assistant principal, by virtue of his title, “was the in authority,” not the instructional coordinator. However, Goodman noted that the assistant principal was “only in the building on a part-time basis.” When Goodman had a district level, instructional coordinator meeting, she would return to her building and “sit down with the administrative team and go over everything so that the assistant principal would know what was going on instructionally.” However, she added:

They’re not really in there working with it (instruction). It’s just kind of surface knowledge just to keep them abreast so that when they are evaluating, they know a little bit about the changes and what’s going on. They don’t really get in there and really understand exactly what changes are being made, how they’re being made, how they’re being implemented as much as I do.

In Goodman’s opinion, the assistant principal’s role did not contribute significantly to the instructional success in the building nor should it be viewed as more important than her role as instructional coordinator.

Work Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

The work of the instructional coordinator shaped the role Goodman played in her building. “You have to be so organized to deal with all the duties and responsibilities,” Goodman offered. According to Goodman, “if an instructional coordinator struggled in this area, you make the school look bad or make the principal look bad, and all that reflects back on the school.” Goodman responded to various questions designed to elicit responses regarding various work areas with relationship to her role as instructional coordinator. However, Goodman spent little time discussing this issue and chose to, instead, reflect on her perspective of the instructional coordinator role or the leadership

roles that she fulfilled. When prodded, Goodman discussed the following work areas with limited detail (see Figure 4.11).

Work Areas	Number of Times Referenced in Relationship to Work of the IC by Goodman
Staff Development	8
Budgeting and Materials	8
Duties	5
Meetings	3
Lesson Plans	3
Testing	3
Paperwork	1

Figure 4.11. Work Areas: Diana Goodman

Staff Development

When discussing the duties and responsibilities that were required of an instructional coordinator, Goodman stated, “I do a lot of staff development training.” According to Goodman, she was always searching for some type of training for teachers to match specific needs that they expressed to her. Goodman “finds ways to give them additional planning time so that they can have an opportunity to read material or view videos that provide staff development training.” Goodman explained that teachers were in different stages of their teaching career, so it was her responsibility to provide extensive staff development and training for new teachers. “Ensuring that they understand how this schools runs and the programs of the school” were her top priorities when working with new teachers.

Goodman's prior experience as a teacher working with an instructional coordinator taught her how to provide continual "mini-staff development training" for teachers. Goodman discussed her method of training teachers to use the web-based curriculum guide:

We've struggled with that this year. We're going to do some in-service training here for our teachers to help them feel more comfortable with this new document. I want them to begin really using this technology, and I want them to start using technology to teach in their classroom. I've gotten to the point now where, if I know that a new tool is needed and useful in the classroom, I say, 'This is what we've got to do.' My goal for this year is to provide as the staff development training and support that teachers need to successfully use their electronic curriculum guides.

As reinforcement, Goodman provided the teachers with articles or books or examples that reinforced what she was trying to teach them.

Budgeting for and Purchasing of Instructional Materials

In contrast to the responsibilities undertaken with new teachers, Goodman found that veteran teachers needed her to provide them with additional resources and materials in a timely manner so that they could "do their job." Trying to make sure that, specifically, veteran teachers but also beginning teachers had the resources that they needed was another responsibility for Goodman. "Helping with the budget and sitting down with the principal to go over budget concerns" were additional areas of responsibility in relationship to teacher resources related to staff development.

Testing Coordinator

Serving as the testing coordinator was another one of the work areas Goodman considered being her responsibility. Grade chairs and other administration figures assisted with this task, but Goodman noted, "You are ultimately responsible for the security of things and accounting for everything. Grade chairs and other administrators

do not have this responsibility. They are not in charge of coordinating the entire testing situation.”

Lesson Plans and Classroom Observations

Having to check lesson plans and conduct classroom observations were viewed as “beneficial to instruction” by Goodman. However, the teachers in her building “do not like having their lesson plans checked, and they do not like people doing ‘walk-throughs’ in their rooms.” Being held accountable for the curriculum was the reason that Goodman monitored lesson plans and conducted classroom observations. Goodman stated:

I think that lesson plans and classroom observations are essential in my job because I need to make sure that the instructional curriculum objectives are being taught correctly. They may not like it, but it is an essential part to our school, and it’s my job.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

While assigned additional duties and responsibilities that interfered or took her away from her work with teachers, Goodman accepted this as part of her job as an administrator and stated, “In administration, you just take on everybody’s role.” In retrospect Goodman added, “It seems like every year, there is something else added to your plate.” Goodman noted that part of her job description included the phrase, “All other duties assigned by the principal.” Goodman elaborated, “There’s a lot of things that I handle that they don’t realize that I handle because it’s not in my job description.” For Goodman this meant, “painting rooms, putting up wallpaper border, making curtains, and putting out pine straw.” Goodman explained:

You go beyond what you are required to do because, again, you’re taking a broader look. You want the whole school, whether it’s the physical aspects of the school or your school’s reputation and test scores, the caliber of teaching, all of that... you take on all of that. You finally just accept the fact that you do

whatever you have to do. It may not fall under your description, but you just do it because you do whatever you have to do to make your school better.

Paperwork

Although mentioned sparingly, Goodman's comments about paperwork carried much weight. Goodman stated:

There is so much paperwork and reports and all that kind of stuff that you've got to stay on top of it each and every day. You've got to be very organized. You cannot be consumed with one little project and try to work it out to perfection without being able to keep up with the rest of the paperwork and reports.

Case Summary

Goodman's belief in the importance of her job and its relationship to instructional gains were apparent in her interview responses. Her view of the instructional coordinator position as one that was designed to "support those who implement the instructional programs" influences everything Goodman does, including additional tasks and responsibilities. Promoting teacher leadership "through a team concept" was the basis of Goodman's interaction with teachers. Role conflict and ambiguity was present in Goodman's interaction and conversation with community, central office, and administrative personnel. While the work of the instructional coordinator shaped Goodman's role in her building, it did not distract her from her original intent of promoting teacher leadership, teacher growth and development, and instructional gains.

Common Themes

Thus far, data from each of the four participants have been presented as individual cases. From these individual perspectives of the instructional coordinators, the researcher examined what type of leadership roles these instructional coordinators fulfilled, the instructional coordinators' perspective of their role, and how the work of these

instructional coordinators shaped their role. The researcher examined the data across cases to find the common themes to further delimit the participants' perspectives.

Overall, the examination yielded four major areas in which the findings are framed and then analyzed. The major areas in which the themes emerged included: 1) the participants' leadership role in promoting teacher leadership, 2) role conflict and ambiguity, 3) the need to provide support for teachers, 4) administrative hierarchy 5) how work shapes the role of the instructional coordinator.

The Participants' Leadership Role in Promoting Teacher Leadership

Each of the four participants provided evidence that supported that one of their leadership roles, as an instructional leader, was to promote teacher leadership at the elementary school level. While their methods were not all the same, each participant had similar ideas as to the necessity of teacher leadership as well as what teacher leadership required for implementation in her respective school. Embedded in each respondent's description of teacher leadership was the need to empower teachers as leaders, whether it was through reassuring teachers, establishing relationships with teachers, encouraging teachers, or mentoring them.

Guiding Teachers to Leadership

These instructional coordinators demonstrated leadership qualities that encompassed what Sergiovanni (1996) considered to be traits of effective leaders. All four participants discussed teacher leadership as one of the focal points of an instructional leader in that leadership is iterative. The participants embraced the view that effective leaders replace the top-down style of administration with collaboration. Sergiovanni (1996) proposed that leaders "give high priority to conversation among

teachers, provide collaborative learning among teachers, and emphasize caring relationships” (p. 20).

When discussing teacher leadership, Stinchcum knew “teachers need reassurance” to be successful. Promoting teachers as leaders was one of Stinchcum’s priorities as an instructional leader. Stinchcum led teachers by “modeling for them, guiding them along.” Giving ownership to teachers instead of administrators was Stinchcum’s focus.

According to Stinchcum, the traits necessary to fulfill this leadership role included “being a role model,” “a flexible leader,” “an organizer,” “a decision-maker,” and “a good listener.” Stinchcum saw that talking to teachers, asking them questions, and getting them to figure out what the problem was and how to solve it were keys to teacher leadership. A combination of listening, supporting, and reassuring teachers were key elements of guiding teachers to leadership, according to Stinchcum.

Richardson believed that her role as a leader directly supported the development of teacher leaders. Making sure teachers knew that Richardson was “here to help” was how she guided teachers to leadership. As with Stinchcum, fostering strong relationships with teachers was a priority for Richardson. Including teachers in the decision-making process was a method Richardson used to promote teacher leadership as well. A leadership team was established to give teachers an opportunity to provide input and direction into the instructional program at Richardson’s school.

Richardson’s dedication and determination as an instructional leader assisted her as she promoted teacher leadership. “Authoritarian, I am not” is how Richardson described her leadership style. Richardson vowed to “never forget what it’s like to be a teacher,” and her leadership style reflected this statement. Building a strong relationship

with the teachers in her building provided the foundation for Richardson to encourage and promote teacher leadership.

Thomas empowered her teachers not only through encouragement but also by being the person who “boosts teachers to go further.” Talking with teachers on a regular basis was an objective Thomas considered “a daily responsibility.” Encouraging teachers to find “their place as a leader” was important to Thomas. Thomas mentors her teachers through the leadership process and models leadership behaviors for her teachers. All four instructional coordinators in this study used the word “modeling,” and such phrases as “setting the stage for leadership,” “developing leadership by actions, not words,” and “providing the forum for teachers to practice and exercise leadership.” Thomas also established close relationships with teachers so that she could know their strengths and promote them as future leaders. Each instructional coordinator spoke of the “power” of building relationships, and they believed that this “power” was the “driving force” behind building teacher leaders.

Thomas offered encouragement to teachers as they assumed leadership. “Mentoring others to do great things,” was Thomas’ vision for promoting leadership. Thomas “respected teachers’ opinions,” treated people as “unique individuals,” and stood “beside teachers through difficult circumstances” in her efforts to guide and encourage them to assume leadership roles beyond the confines of their classrooms.

Noting, “The school is full of adults with different personalities,” Goodman portrayed teacher leadership as a necessary component of an educational team. Her personal leadership style incorporated “a lot of input from teachers” when making decisions. Promoting teacher leadership through the team concept was Goodman’s

means of fostering teacher leadership. Goodman also included “listening to teachers...being a role model...treating teachers as leaders...and making sure that people feel that they are contributing” as ways to promote teacher leadership.

All four participants took advantage of teacher leadership opportunities. When they were classroom teachers, each participant spent time with her instructional coordinator. They observed both positive and negative models of leadership. “Always willing to listen, supportive, resourceful, non-confrontational, nonevaluative, and a model leader” were how the participants described these instructional coordinators. The data suggested that the situations the instructional coordinators in this study observed and their own interactions as teachers with an instructional coordinator formed the baseline for the development of their leadership perspective.

As instructional coordinators, the four participants had the opportunity to promote teacher leadership. Each considered this an imperative part of their job. The four instructional coordinators drew on past experiences and present resources. They each had an individual leadership style that enabled them to establish a positive environment and to form trusting relationships with teachers.

As instructional coordinators, each participant referenced situations when they were not treated as an instructional leader. Stinchcum had to assist with bus duty and file interview information for the principal. Richardson was assigned arbitrary responsibilities such as monitoring the lunchroom or taking kids out on the playground. Thomas wrote parent letters for the principal to sign, and Goodman hung up wallpaper and put out pine straw. Data suggested that the instructional coordinators were not considered credible leaders by central office and building-level administrators. Despite

the lack of support from the central office staff or building-level administrators these instructional coordinators sought to promote teacher leaders at the elementary level. The participants revealed that “at all costs,” they treated teachers with the respect, professionalism, and courtesy that they, themselves, desired and deserved as instructional teacher leaders. These four instructional coordinators served as role models and catalysts for teacher leadership at the elementary level.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Each of the four participants described in detail the role conflict and ambiguity that they experienced while they were fulfilling the duties of being an instructional coordinator in Dale County. Although instances of role conflict and ambiguity varied for each participant, data suggested that while the instructional coordinators were fulfilling the work assigned to them by their site-level administrator, they also had to “walk the talk” of their teaching colleagues while simultaneously answering to central office directors. This conflict often resulted in a three-way split of the attention of the instructional coordinators. Thomas summarized the split as a “three-way tug-of-war.”

Each participant had a specific perspective of her role as an instructional coordinator. Stinchcum defined her role as “in charge of instruction.” Multi-faceted and teacher-centered was how Richardson viewed her role. Ensuring that “teachers and children succeed” was Thomas’ priority. Being an advocate for teachers and providing teacher support were Goodman’s perspectives of her role. The instructional coordinators’ jobs regularly included additional work as assigned by the central office or building-level principal. Data suggested that, on a regular basis, this work conflicted with the instructional coordinators being able to support the work of teachers.

Central Office

Central office personnel had one definition or perspective of the instructional coordinator's role, while the four participants had a different perspective of their role. Central office assigned additional duties, reports, and "any other new program" to the instructional coordinator. Central office was not accountable for the work that they assigned to the instructional coordinators nor did they offer support or guidance for the instructional coordinators, who were expected to "do, do, and do" whatever was assigned to them. The need for the instructional coordinators to complete paperwork for central office and to provide resources and support to teachers simultaneously were reflective of the role conflict that central office personnel created by adding demands on the instructional coordinators' already "full plate."

The memos sent, the meetings she was required to attend, and the underlying philosophy of the central office staff that "the instructional coordinators can handle that" demonstrated the ambiguous design of the instructional coordinator position. Goodman explained that central office staff passed their directives or expectations for teachers on to the instructional coordinators and expected these directives to be carried out and these expectations to be met by the instructional coordinators. Making instructional coordinators "the messenger" for central office directives harmed the relationship that instructional coordinators sought with teachers. Assigning additional paperwork and job responsibilities to the instructional coordinators caused the instructional coordinators to spend less time with teachers instead of more, was reflective of the differences between central office and the instructional coordinators' perspectives of the role of this position.

Building-Level Administration

All four participants mentioned role conflict and ambiguity with relationship to their building administrative team. Stinchcum encountered role conflict and ambiguity within her school as well as when working with central office staff. The building principal was continually changing the design of the instructional coordinator's work while also continuing to shift the job responsibilities or shortening deadlines to complete the work assigned.

Richardson considered her position to be "the woman behind the man." Richardson admitted that she and her principal often argued about her position and what it was that she was expected to do. Thomas' first year with her current principal was "a very frustrating one" for her. The principal did not understand the role of the instructional coordinator at the elementary school, and therefore, he did not know how to support or to use Thomas to assist teachers. It took a team effort on the part of the principal and Thomas to overcome the effects of role ambiguity from the standpoint of the principal's understanding of the role of the instructional coordinator.

Goodman cited "lack of communication" as a reason for role conflict within the administrative team. The conflict between her role as instructional coordinator, the counselor's role, and the role of the assistant principal was experienced by Goodman on a regular basis. Goodman "felt that my role is more important because I'm more involved in what is going on in the building all of the time." A clearer, more accurate description of the role of the instructional coordinator was Goodman's suggested solution to this problem.

Each participant agreed that “providing support for teachers, modeling teacher leadership, and advocating teacher needs” were the focal points of their work. Because their administrators did not share this viewpoint, all four participants experienced role conflict with regard to their work as instructional coordinator and their principal’s perspective or lack of perspective to the work of the instructional coordinator.

Teachers

While all participants cited the building administration as a contributor to role conflict and ambiguity, only one subject mentioned teachers in relationship to this factor. Interacting with teachers brought to light the presence of role conflict with regard to the instructional coordinator’s role for Goodman. Teachers viewed Goodman’s role differently depending on the circumstances and the way these circumstances would affect them. While Goodman sought to define her role as providing teacher support, teachers choose to put Goodman’s role into a category that was dependent on the action required of teachers or the evaluative nature of her work.

The Need to Provide Support for Teachers

The four participants reported that providing support to teachers was one of the most crucial roles of an elementary instructional coordinator. Each participant provided support for teachers in her own, unique manner, but the intent of the support was similar in design. All instructional coordinators wanted to assist teachers in their growth and development as a professional.

Stinchcum

Stinchcum considered supporting teachers to be a vital component of her role as instructional coordinator. Stinchcum indicated that her teachers “know that I am going to

help them.” Supporting teachers means, “telling them or showing them new ideas,” according to Stinchcum.

Fostering a positive relationship was Stinchcum’s initial means of providing teacher support. Eventually, she expanded the level of trust between herself and the teachers that, in turn, caused teachers to open up and share more of their needs with her. Stinchcum “wants them to do the best job that they can, and that’s why I want to help them.”

Richardson

Richardson maintained that it was her responsibility to ensure that teachers “know they have someone in the building that they can come to for help.” The relationship that Richardson established with teachers was a priority for her.

Providing teachers with constant support and encouragement was what Richardson viewed to be her role as an instructional coordinator. Richardson “focuses her day on teachers and making sure they’re getting the most out of their teaching day.” Richardson was not judgmental in her analysis of teachers, but instead was the “kind of person that will work with teachers and help them with their curriculum and make sure that they have materials that they need in their classrooms.”

Thomas

Thomas was the “someone” that teachers went to when they needed support and reassurance. Thomas emphasized:

Supporting teachers is an innate skill for me. I have empathy for teachers. I have a healthy respect for teachers, what they do, and the support that their job requires. I draw on their strengths and provide support where there are weaknesses.

Supporting teachers was a role that Thomas viewed to be hers “on a daily basis.” This ongoing responsibility meant that Thomas had to be available to teachers whenever and however they needed her.

Whether it was giving them feedback, listening to their problems, motivating a new teacher, or assisting a teacher with a classroom lesson, Thomas considered supporting teachers to be her focal point. “One thing you have to make sure you do is let the teachers know they’re not forgotten,” stated Thomas. Taking care of the people around her took precedence over any other duty or responsibility for her.

Goodman

Goodman’s rationale for working “intently” with teachers was that because her job *was* to support the instructional programs and to increase student achievement. Her direct link to programs and students was through teachers. Continually asking teachers what they need and how she could assist them with implementing programs were Goodman’s means of supporting teachers. Goodman believed that her support made “teachers’ jobs easier” and more focused on the product of student achievement than the process of gathering materials and planning activities.

Goodman considered supporting teachers as to one of the “most rewarding” aspects of her job. “Regardless of what I do, if I feel that what I’m doing is helping to support teachers, then I’m doing something worthwhile,” reported Goodman. As an instructional coordinator, Goodman viewed her role to be “always on the side of the teacher” in whatever circumstances that occurred.

Supporting teachers was a priority for all four participants. They viewed this role to be the backbone of their work as an instructional coordinator.

The Administrative Hierarchy

The administrative team at each school was similar in design. Three of the four instructional coordinators worked with a principal, a part-time assistant principal, and a counselor. One of the participants worked with a principal and part-time counselor only. Using the definition of Huse (1980) that a role is “the set activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization” (p. 53), interview questions were designed to illicit information relative to the instructional coordinators’ role. Considering that the social system of a school was part of its members’ shared world, the researcher sought to gain insight into the instructional coordinators’ perspective of their role within the construct of the administrative hierarchy at each particular school.

Three of the four participants’ perspectives of their role included discussions of the administrative hierarchy in their building as it related to their role as an instructional coordinator as leader. The administrative tier established by the Dale County Board of Education was principal, assistant principal, instructional coordinator, and counselor. The three participants elaborated on their reasons for disputing the effectiveness and existence of this tiered model.

Stinchcum disputed the administrative hierarchy established in Dale County. “I see the assistant principal and myself on the same plane,” Stinchcum offered. “My job is more important than his, and I feel like we need to reserve the progression so that the progression would be principal, instructional coordinator, assistant principal,” Stinchcum reported.

While the assistant principal's duties and responsibilities do contribute to the "running of the school," Stinchcum did not see a direct correlation between the job of the assistant principal and teacher success. Stinchcum viewed the assistant principal's role to be "functional" in design, whereas her role was critical to all aspects of the school: teachers, parents, and students.

Richardson viewed her role to be "pivotal in relationship to teacher effectiveness." Richardson found fault with the fact that she had to assume the role of either the principal or the assistant principal in their absence. With more frequency than she preferred, Richardson had to spend her day acting as the disciplinary figure at the cost of the instructional program for teachers and students.

The fact that Richardson's role was the one set aside to assume other roles made her believe that she was marginalized: "the instructional coordinator position was not a very important position to people outside or within the school system." Richardson felt that her work, role, and status was even further marginalized when the teachers did not include Richardson in the category of "administrator" when they recognized only the principal, the assistant principal, and the counselor at Honor's Day and at Parent-Teacher Organization meetings.

The additional duties and responsibilities that Richardson's principal assigned to her and not to the assistant principal reflected, in Richardson's opinion, the principal's perspective that the assistant principal's role could not be altered because of importance whereas her role could be altered or negated when necessary. When asked to rank order the administrative hierarchy, according to Richardson:

I think that the principal should be first. If there are to be two pedestals under the principal then it should be the assistant principal and the instructional coordinator

on the same level. I certainly wouldn't put myself above the assistant principal, but I think we should be treated equally. Then the counselor... I don't know where they should fit in. I don't think that they should even be considered an administrator.

Goodman's perspective of her leadership team's administrative hierarchy coincided with Stinchcum and Richardson's perspectives. "I do things that are just as vital and just as important, if not more so, than the assistant principal," Goodman challenged. "The second administrator in the building," was how Goodman viewed her position should rank.

The "difference in status" as the instructional coordinator position was presently configured contributed to the frustration and lack of understanding that Goodman encountered when trying to support teachers. Because the assistant principal was, technically, the person "in authority," Goodman was limited as to the decisions she was able to make without getting approval from the assistant principal or principal. In Goodman's opinion, the assistant principal's role did not contribute significantly to the instructional success in the building nor did she perceive it as more important or vital than her role as instructional coordinator.

How Work Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

In defining the work that the instructional coordinator does and if this work shaped their role, each participant mentioned specific tasks or work areas. All participants went into the position with an understanding that this position required a tremendous amount of paperwork. Stinchcum, Richardson, Thomas, and Goodman expressed that paperwork was one of the foremost work areas that shaped their role as an instructional coordinator. According to Stinchcum, "paperwork takes up the majority of my day. Richardson noted that "without the paperwork part of my job, I could spend

more time in the classroom and spend more time with teachers doing the things that I feel like would help the students.” Thomas added, “finding the time in the day to get the paperwork done” was a hindrance to her effectiveness as an instructional coordinator. Goodman offered, “You can’t be consumed” by paperwork responsibilities.

Central Office Paperwork

Paperwork was an issue for all four participants. Each participant referenced specific departments or reports that were the catalyst of the paperwork the instructional coordinator was required to complete. The central office staff members were referenced with more frequency than any other personnel. The required paperwork to be generated by the instructional coordinator negatively impacted all four participants role of providing instructional leadership and support to teachers. Three of the four participants specifically mentioned the central office paperwork requirements as a negative contributor to their role as instructional coordinator.

Stinchcum sat at her desk for extended periods of time “checking E-mails and opening Pony envelopes” which contain directives from central office staff to “do something or pass something out.” Stinchcum was responsible for completing paperwork that corresponded with the Dale County Literacy Inventory, the Early Intervention Program, staff development requirements, textbook inventories, and school improvement plans as directed by central office personnel “To complete and submit in an accurate and timely manner.”

Richardson also made mention of the Dale County Literacy Inventory, the grading documentation, and the textbook inventory when discussing central office and paperwork

issues. “Some days are spent where I feel like I am just wasting my whole day doing paperwork,” Richardson remarked.

The paperwork required by the central office consumed the majority of Thomas’ time as well, in spite of her commitment to meet the needs of teachers. Thomas noted that “paperwork issues” directly shaped her role as an instructional coordinator. “Every coordinator at the board office has a report due at the end of the year,” explained Thomas. “Everyone at the board office has his or her red wagon to pull,” she continued. Central office staff members established the last day that students were in the building as the deadline for many of their reports, according to Thomas. This deadline made Thomas unable to “meet the needs of teachers and students” and to assist with the critical work of “winding down” the school year.

Building-level Paperwork

In addition to the reports required by central office personnel, participants referenced that they were responsible for a large percentage of the paperwork collected or distributed within their individual schools. Richardson, for example, was in charge of typing honor roll and honorable mention lists, proofing report cards, and completing the weekly information sheet.” Richardson offered, “Paperwork takes me away from what I can be doing with teachers in their classrooms.”

The paperwork part of her job was what Stinchcum considered to be the least beneficial to teachers as well. This responsibility was referenced more than any other task that Stinchcum was assigned. “The paperwork end of my job doesn’t allow as much of that (classroom observations) as I would like.” Stinchcum went on to say that she

considered completing paperwork to be “time-off task” from her primary role of supporting teachers.

Richardson did not enjoy “the paperwork and all that stuff” as a part of her work at her elementary school. The need for more consistency or supervision with regard to the paperwork assigned by the principals was a concern Richardson expressed. This lack of accountability contributed to her principal being able to assign additional paperwork responsibilities that few other instructional coordinators had to complete. “I would rather go help the teachers, so I put all that off,” Richardson remarked. However, ultimately Richardson must find time to complete her building level paperwork. She concluded, “The reports and things that you have to do, they take a lot of time and sometimes teachers suffer because of it.”

The paperwork required for the daily operation of an elementary school consumed the majority of Thomas’ time in spite of her commitment to meet the needs of teachers. “Finding the time to get the paperwork done” was a hindrance to her effectiveness as an instructional coordinator. However, even with the “mountain of paperwork,” Thomas remained committed to supporting the teachers and students in her school.

From a building level perspective, the majority of the paperwork Thomas completed was given to her by her principal. The letters home to parents, letters to teachers, grant applications, the teacher handbook, and the student handbook were all Thomas’ responsibility. Thomas never could predict when she would find a note in her mailbox from her principal requesting that she write a letter to a parent or teacher. If

there was a report to be done, “usually the principal doesn’t do it. The instructional coordinator does,” Thomas indicated.

Adjusting her schedule so that she could still meet the needs of teachers was a challenge for Thomas. If necessary, Thomas worked on reports at home so that “the majority of my time could be spent with teachers and kids and not with paperwork.”

Paperwork Shapes the Role of the Instructional Coordinator

All four participants agreed that paperwork shaped their role as an instructional coordinator. Goodman’s brief statement regarding paperwork summarized the perspective of all four participants when she stated, “There is so much paperwork and reports and all that kind of stuff that you’ve got to stay on top of it each and every day.”

The commitment to providing teacher support amidst the paperwork responsibilities was expressed by all four participants as well. Each participant developed unique and separate means of completing the paperwork while spending the least amount of time away from teachers. In analysis of the three interviews sessions, completing paperwork for central office personnel and building level administrators shaped the role of the instructional coordinator to a greater extent than any other duty or responsibility held by the four participants in this study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the role of the instructional coordinators at four elementary schools in one county in Georgia. The perspectives of instructional coordinators were solicited to describe their role through the work they do in the elementary school. Data were examined and analyzed to ascertain specific practices and issues relating to the role of the instructional coordinator. The following questions were used to direct this study:

1. What leadership roles do elementary instructional coordinators fulfill?
2. How do elementary school instructional coordinators perceive their role?
3. How does the work of the instructional coordinators shape their role?

This chapter presents a summary of the study, why this study differs from previous studies, the research design, the major findings from the study, and implications and recommendations offered for school systems that include instructional coordinators. The chapter ends with recommendations for further research and for school systems that promote teacher leadership through formalized positions such as the instructional coordinator.

Summary of the Study

A case study design was used to examine the perspectives of four instructional coordinators in one county in Georgia. Through the process of purposeful sampling, a school district, which included four elementary instructional coordinators, was selected. Permission was obtained from the school district, and the participants signed consent forms. Three semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted. Interview

questions for the instructional coordinators were developed and used. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with each participant, as well as a review of available artifacts.

Each interview with the participants was audiotaped and transcribed. Fieldnotes were made during the interviews. Following each interview, transcribed data were read to gain insight to the content of the interviews. Analysis of the data revealed major findings and overall themes were formulated that related to the role of the elementary instructional coordinator from the perspective of the participants in this study.

For purposeful sampling to be effective, a pool of participants were identified based on qualifications or characteristics they possessed relative to the study. The instructional coordinators were a homogeneous group within a single school system. The four participants for this study: Nancy Stinchcum, Renae Richardson, Tracy Thomas, and Diana Goodman each had at least five years of elementary teaching experience. Each was an instructional coordinator at an elementary school in Dale County for a minimum of two years prior to this study.

Research Design

Because this study sought to capture the perspectives of the role and work of as an elementary instructional coordinator, a qualitative research design and methods were used to collect and to analyze data. The qualitative case study sought “to capture what people have to say in their own words” (Patton, 1990, p. 22).

The unit of analysis was the constant comparative method in which the researcher compared data across interviews, reduced data according to themes, and then developed perspectives based on the analysis of data. In addition, the researcher offered the

participants the opportunity to examine transcripts and to add additional information to extend or to complete an idea expressed in previous interviews.

Symbolic interactionism guided the development of the study, including data collection and analysis. The term “symbolic interactionism” was first used by Blumer (1969) as a label for a particular brand of sociological thought that drew from the work of George Herbert Mead. Meaning and perspective are central to symbolic interactionism. Based on Blumer’s belief that “we jointly create meanings, and these meanings are ultimately responsive to contexts outside ourselves,” (1969, p. 2) symbolic interactionism served as the theoretical framework to guide the researcher in data collection and analysis of the perspectives of the four (N=4) instructional coordinators.

According to Blumer (1969) the meaning “of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which the other person acts toward the person with regard to the thing” (p. 4). The meaning of a thing then becomes that person’s perspective. Words make up perspectives, and the observer uses words to make sense out of situations. Using this method to examine the perspectives of the four (N=4) instructional coordinators, understanding of the role of the instructional coordinator in the elementary school emerged over the course of three interviews with each of the participants.

Two levels of findings were analyzed in Chapter 4. First, findings from each individual cases were reported and discussed. Second, findings from across cases—the cross-case analysis were discussed and analyzed. Major findings emerged from the analysis of the individual cases, and five prevalent themes emerged from the cross-case analysis. Discussion and implications with regard to further research were determined based on the findings from the cross-case analysis.

Previous Studies

The lead teacher position most closely resembles the instructional coordinator position. One study by Rogers (1988) was found that examined the lead teacher. Rogers (1988) conducted a study designed to research the tasks of elementary lead teachers. Rogers' study broadly examined the supervisory duties of elementary school lead teachers, not the role they assumed in their schools. "This survey was at best a minimum reflection of the elementary lead teacher and the impact of that position at the school level" (Rogers, 1988, p. 11).

Past studies on teacher leadership were beneficial to examine in light of this study. Rhinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley (1998) suggested, that the role of teacher leaders is "neither fish nor foul" and thus becomes even more relevant to education and therein, successful teacher leadership through such emerging positions as the instructional coordinator. Previous research has largely failed to account for the role of teacher leadership vis-à-vis formal positions such as the instructional coordinator within the elementary school setting. This study sought to add in some way to the knowledge about new and emerging leadership roles for teachers at the elementary level.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the major themes in this study in relation to the literature reported in Chapter 2. Each section below includes a prevalent theme and the relationship to the literature as well as analysis of the data across individual cases.

Theme: *These instructional coordinators fulfilled the leadership role of promoting teacher leadership among teachers.*

Short and Greer (2002) stated that in the typical elementary school setting, teachers are often not solicited to participate in the leadership of the school. Only when given professional support and encouragement did teacher leaders emerge (Short & Greer, 2002). Not only did these instructional coordinators solicit teacher leadership, they themselves served as a model for teacher leaders.

The majority of the leadership roles that each instructional coordinator assumed were directly related to the development of teacher leadership. “Mentoring others to do great things,” was Thomas’ contribution to the development of teacher leadership in others. Richardson built strong relationships with her teachers. Stinchcum provided teachers with the reassurance needed to move forward, and Goodman promoted teacher leadership by always being available to listen to teachers. Each teacher leader spoke about promoting a “safe and nurturing” environment to promote “risk-taking” without fear of retribution for trying “something different.”

These instructional coordinators focused on promoting teachers as leaders through a wide range of leadership strategies and methods. Each participant had worked with an instructional coordinator during her teaching experience, and each asserted that they learned “the ropes of teacher leadership” from these professional teacher leaders. Also, the four participants each spoke about “giving back” and “restocking the leadership pool” among teachers. For example, Goodman stated, “I really had a good understanding of the type of leadership required to be an instructional coordinator because I feel like I had excellent role models the majority of my teaching career.” In summary, “working together for the same goal” was the partnership each participant sought to form through “promoting leadership” among the members of the faculty at their respective schools.

Zepeda (2001) believed that an environment that fostered teacher leadership could only occur if it was provided by administrative leaders in the school. Each participant provided an environment that supported the development of teacher leaders. Providing reassurance, serving as a role model, listening, and fostering strong relationships were strategies used in some manner by all four participants to promote leadership among teachers. Short (1994) asserted, “Teachers believe that they are more empowered when the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop professionally” (p. 70).

All of participants were able to effectively use their leadership skills to promote teacher leadership. Each participant discussed her unique, personal leadership style, and its influence on developing leaders at their schools. Stinchcum “expected people to follow her lead.” According to Richardson, her clear understanding of the role of the teacher and her resolve to “never forget what it’s like to be a teacher” contributed to her leadership style. “A compassionate leader” was how Thomas described herself, and Goodman considered “getting a lot of teacher input” to be reflective of her leadership style.

Changes in who leads often occur when shifts are made in the structure of the school (Blase & Blase, 1999a, Lieberman & Miller, 1999, Short, 1994). Data analysis revealed the capability of the instructional coordinator to fulfill leadership roles at the elementary level. The participants discussed specific leadership styles, strategies, and methods that each used to provide an environment that fostered teacher leadership in others. Sufficient research, evidence, and analysis supported the conclusion that the four

participants fulfilled a leadership role that was instrumental in modeling and developing teacher leaders.

Theme: *These instructional coordinators experienced role conflict and ambiguity with relationship to their interactions with central office and building level personnel.*

The construct of role theory provided several insights while framing this study. Specifically, role theory offered a model to understand individual's behaviors within the social system of the elementary schools in which the instructional coordinators worked. It was the role of the elementary instructional coordinator that was examined in this study. Role conflict and ambiguity influenced all of the participants' perspectives of their role as instructional coordinator.

Each participant had a unique and focused perspective of her role as an instructional coordinator. Stinchcum defined her role as "in charge of instruction." Promoting teachers as leaders, from Richardson's perspective, was the primary role of the instructional coordinator. After several years of experience as an instructional coordinator, Thomas surmised, "My job is to support teachers and to lift them up." Goodman echoed Thomas' sentiments with her statement, "If what I'm doing is helping teachers, then I'm doing something worthwhile."

The participants' perspectives were often in contradiction or at odds with the perspectives of central staff, the building principal, and the community. New responsibilities or programs as designed by central office personnel were regularly charged to the instructional coordinator, reinforcing the ambiguous nature of the instructional coordinator's role from the perspective of the central office staff.

Richardson's descriptions of the lack of knowledge regarding her position exhibited by the general public, parents, and educational community brought to light the magnanimous ramifications of role conflict and ambiguity with regard to the role of the instructional coordinator. All participants were unable to successfully complete tasks or make decisions due to lack of direction from the building principal or lack of understanding of the instructional coordinator position by the general population. Richardson was even excluded or left out of instructional situations due to the ambiguous design of her role.

Additional responsibilities continued to overshadow the participants' perspectives of their role. Instead, these new responsibilities produced additional role conflict as administrators and teachers adjusted to the changes in the way this role was addressed by central office staff and other personnel. Role conflict and ambiguity was present although the position of the instructional coordinator was not a new one to Dale County (the position began in the 1970s), and an official job description for this position was adopted in 1982.

Theme: *From the perspective of these instructional coordinators, providing support for teachers was considered their primary role in the elementary school.*

One of the three research questions posed to the participants addressed their perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator. All four participants' perspectives indicated that their foremost role as an instructional coordinator was to provide support for teachers.

Stinchcum, Richardson, Thomas, and Goodman echoed Maruyama and Deno's (1992) sentiment that teachers often feel that they run a juggling act that never ends. When teachers were given the professional support that they needed, teacher leadership transpired (Short & Greer, 2002). Each participant projected herself as teacher supporter at the elementary level.

Analysis of the transcripts provided concrete examples of the who, what, and why of teacher support. Stinchcum linked supporting teachers to student learning. "If I am not supporting teachers, then student learning is not going to go on," Stinchcum contended. Establishing an environment where teachers could come to her at anytime and ask for her "to do things" was Stinchcum's avenue to for providing support for teachers. Stinchcum's teachers expressed a definite need for more support. They considered support from Stinchcum to be defined as "more classroom observations, more help with selecting materials, and more interaction with teachers."

Echoing Stinchcum's description, Richardson maintained, "Teachers need to know that they have someone in the building that they can come to for help and that they can feel safe with." Richardson knew that "teachers are not threatened by me or by what I have to say." Stressing to teachers that her role was nonevaluative in design and that she took a nonpunitive approach to assisting teachers to remediate teaching weaknesses seen through classroom observations, Richardson provided a level of support that went beyond the general encouragement afforded to teachers by administrators. Richardson's main objective "each and every day" was to "support teachers" no matter what the circumstance or nature of the support that was needed.

Thomas' perspective of the role of the instructional coordinator was vast and complex. However, extracted from her perspective was the overriding belief, as Thomas indicated, "My job is to support teachers." Providing the support teachers needed to be successful in the classroom was an ongoing responsibility, in Thomas' opinion. To be perceived as a teacher comrade and support were the underlying schemata of Thomas' concept of her role as instructional coordinator.

Using the rationale that her role was to support teachers in any and all circumstances, Goodman served as an advocate, encourager, and researcher for teachers. Goodman noted that her support "makes their (teachers) jobs easier." Goodman drew from her prior experiences and needs as a teacher when working with teachers.

The participants found that providing support for teachers was often hindered by other duties and responsibilities or issues such as paperwork and hall duty. Role ambiguity often led to role conflict, and each participant spoke of "things" they were requested to do that were, "off the mark" of what a teacher leader in a formal leadership position should be asked to do. For example, Goodman was asked to hang wallpaper and dress the garden beds with pine straw while on contract as an instructional coordinator. However, each individual managed to overcome these obstacles to ensure that teachers received the support necessary to be successful in the classroom. However, the additional workload, central office distractions, and role conflict encountered did minimize the level of support the instructional coordinators were able to afford to teachers.

Theme: *The administrative hierarchy in these four elementary schools did not support the role of the instructional coordinators.*

Three of the four participants were animated in their comments regarding the administrative hierarchy at their respective schools. Considering the teacher support role as the primary responsibility of the instructional coordinator, the participants implicated the administrative tier of principal, assistant principal, instructional coordinator, and counselor as negatively impacting their role. Operating under the assumption that a role was “a set of activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization” (Huse, 1980, p. 3), Stinchcum, Richardson, and Goodman expressed incredulousness, frustration, and animosity toward the delegation and public perception of the administration team’s roles, minus their inclusion as “part of the team.”

Three of the four participants were often misguided or misaligned with regard to the duties and responsibilities that they were expected to perform, their role in the building, and their relationship with other administrative team members due to the lack of clarity as to who should take ownership of a situation or whose role most closely aligned with the issues at hand. Stinchcum struggled to understand the importance of the assistant principal’s position and did not equate his status with teacher success. The administrative tier at Richardson’s school was often clouded by the teachers’ perception of who was or was not an administrator. Goodman supported Stinchcum and Richardson’s perspectives by alluding to the fact that from her perspective, she “was the second administrator in the building,” yet she was often excluded from making key decisions.

Stemming from these administrative issues was the lack of support, respect, or status for the instructional coordinator’s role. Careful analysis of the three participants’

perspectives brought to fruition the conclusion that the administrative hierarchy in each of the three elementary schools did not adequately support the role of the instructional coordinator.

Theme: *Paperwork negatively impacted the role of these instructional coordinators.*

In detailing the work that each instructional coordinator did or did not do, each participant discussed specific tasks or work areas and their contributions to the shaping the role of the instructional coordinator. With limited similarities, a study conducted by Rogers (1988) examined the tasks of the instructional lead teacher and collected data on the frequency of supervision and administrative tasks conducted by elementary lead teachers. Rogers' study indicated that the tasks most often performed by instructional lead teachers included interpreting curriculum to faculty, coordinating a central materials' center, informing teachers of and encouraging participation in staff development activities, assisting teachers in diagnosing and planning instruction for remedial students, and working with classroom teachers for the improvement of the instructional program within the elementary school.

The researcher of this study collected data with respect to the work areas of the instructional coordinator and the impact that these work areas had on the role of the instructional coordinator. Of particular interest was the frequency and particular detail given to the tremendous amount of paperwork responsibilities given to the instructional coordinator by central office personnel and building level administrators. All four participants provided dense description of the negative effects of paperwork on their role as teacher supporter.

The instructional coordinators were limited in their ability to perform their role due to the required reports and other paperwork generated by various departments. Checking e-mails, opening the mail, writing letters, and typing honor roll lists were among the paperwork duties described by the participants. Without the constraints of paperwork, all four indicated that they could more adequately fulfill their role as an instructional coordinator.

Implications

Implications for School Systems with Teacher Leaders such as the Instructional Coordinator

The instructional coordinators in this study were teacher leaders—they worked on a teacher’s contract, and they received a teacher’s wage, but they were assigned to be instructional leaders by virtue of their job description and the expectations held by both the principals and central office personnel (Appendix D). The work and by extension the role of the instructional coordinator could become a vital link in promoting teacher leadership that can make a difference in the work of teachers. However, for this vital link to be made, school systems need to promote the type of teacher leadership consistently in the job descriptions provided and the type of work assigned to them. This is a basic assumption of role theory and according to Huse (1980), a role is “the set activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization “ (p. 53). Role behavior is caused not only by the characteristics of the individual, but also by the expectations of others within the school system. A role is the sum total of expectations placed on the individual.

For elementary schools that have instructional coordinators as part of their leadership team, it is the duty and responsibility of the system to provide a more precisely written job description for the teacher leaders who hold these positions. Given the mixed messages between what was written in the job description and the expectations of the position at each one of the sites, the participants would have known what was expected of them. The frustration that arises from not knowing what is required or expected in a position causes role confusion due mainly to the ambiguity of the situation. Findings clearly indicated that it is essential to clearly state what the instructional coordinator should not do, and this type of statement is as important as what the instructional coordinator should do. Principals need to be instructed on how to most effectively use the talents and expertise and expertise of the people who assume teacher leadership positions as formal as the positions were in the county in which this study was situated. This finding and recommendation is consistent with the artifacts located at the Dale County central office. One such artifact was the instructional coordinator job description—the first job description was written in 1968 and updated in 1988.

The school district needs to provide training and on-going staff development for instructional coordinators, principals, and teachers similar to the course work designed for the first cadre of instructional coordinators, who assumed these positions in Dale County in 1968. Based on the findings of this study, training regarding teacher leadership, role conflict and ambiguity, role clarity, teacher support, and instructional improvement would be beneficial for both the principals who supervise the work of the instructional coordinators and the instructional coordinators who interact with a broad-

range of constituents—teachers, parents, students, site-level administrators, and central office administrators.

Counties like Dale County must decide what the priorities are for instructional coordinators and then operate in a manner that supports those priorities (offer on-going leadership training, streamline paperwork, clarify job descriptions) instead of delegating such tasks as wall-papering the faculty bathroom and spreading straw in the school garden.

Implications for Leadership Training

More information related to administrative support of teacher leadership might assist future administrators in discovering the value that such a position as the instructional coordinator can bring to assisting school personnel improve instructional practices—the primary function elaborated in the Dale County job description for the Instructional Coordinator. Leadership programs at the university level could include units of study to prepare supervisors for the often complex, conflicting, and ambiguous work of the instructional coordinator and other types of teacher leadership positions, which according to the literature, are proliferating given the need for instructional expertise due mainly to the school as a high-stakes environment.

Programs of study should explore the relationships between administrators and teachers, the role of the central office personnel, and the construct of role theory as it relates to teacher leadership. An awareness of the issues facing instructional coordinators and the role they play in supporting teachers could assist administrators and central office personnel in better supporting the work of the instructional coordinator. Universities

need to keep pace with emerging roles that other school personnel assume—specifically the instructional coordinator and other positions of teacher leadership.

Implications for Further Research on Teacher Leadership

Research on teacher leadership has been slowly evolving and much of this research has been rather general in nature—calling for teacher leadership. Other research has examined the perspectives of administrators on the construct of teacher leadership tied to shared decision-making in a particular context—namely in schools that were restructuring tied to state initiated mandates. Very little research has examined teacher leadership from the perspectives of teachers who assume teacher leadership positions, and a majority of this research centers on the high school department chair. Only one dissertation up to this study could be located at the University of Georgia.

This study was narrow in scope and was conducted in a single school system that had instructional coordinators in every building (33 schools) and only 4 of the 20 elementary school instructional coordinators participated in this research. However, if teacher leadership is truly “iterative,” then research is needed to examine the effects of teacher leadership on other teachers, more teacher leaders, and others such as the principal (Lieberman & Miller, 1999).

Given the scarcity of the research on the role of the instructional coordinator, this study provides a base line of information that can, perhaps, guide future research on the work of the instructional coordinator and the work of others in similar positions (e.g., lead teachers, grade level leaders) in the area of teacher leadership. The findings of this study provided a new opening in the research with regard to leadership roles, the role of the instructional coordinator, and the work areas that shape the role of the instructional

coordinator. What was bore out of this study was a need to examine a larger population of participants—perhaps the 29 instructional coordinators who did not participate in this study. One of the limitations of this study was the fact that each of the four elementary instructional coordinators was in one school district of one county in Georgia. This study needs to be replicated in urban, rural, and suburban school systems using both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine the generalizability of findings related to similar positions (e.g., lead teachers and grade-level leaders).

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the instructional coordinator from the perspectives of the four participants. Although findings from this study provide a more solid base line of information on the role of the instructional coordinator relative to teacher leadership, much more work in this area needs to be done. The role of the instructional coordinator places many demands on these individuals; the job of supporting teachers must be clarified. Therefore, it is necessary to further explore the role of the instructional coordinator for, indeed, it is “neither fish nor foul” as indicated by Rhinehart, Short, Short, and Eckley (1998, p. 640). The instructional coordinator’s role is a role unique unto itself, but one worth understanding given the press for schoolwide and system improvement of the instructional program.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview 1

- 1) Tell me about your job as an instructional coordinator.
- 2) How would you describe your leadership style?
- 3) What different leadership roles do you assume in your building?
- 4) What type of teacher leadership exists in your building?
- 5) How does your job impact teacher leadership?
- 6) Of the work that you do, what do you consider most beneficial to teachers?
- 7) Of the work that you do, what do you consider least beneficial to teachers?
- 8) What would you like to do, that you are not currently doing, to assist teachers?
- 9) What prohibits you from the doing things mentioned in question 8?
- 10) How does your position as instructional coordinator impact teachers within your building?

Interview 2

- 1) Tell me about your reflections, since the last time we talked about your role as an instructional coordinator.
- 2) What are the most difficult aspects of your job?
- 3) What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
- 4) How does the work that you do shape your role?
- 5) What did you perceive to be your role in the elementary school when you applied for the position of instructional coordinator?
- 6) What do you perceive to be your role in the elementary school now that you are an instructional coordinator?
- 7) Describe your leadership style when working with teachers?
- 8) What do you think teachers want and need from an instructional coordinator?
- 9) How do you think teachers perceive your role?
- 10) What gets in the way of you providing for teachers' needs?

Interview 3

- 1) Tell me about your reflections since the last time we talked about your work as an instructional coordinator.
- 2) How do you think teachers would describe the way you work with them?
- 3) What do you think teachers want and need from an instructional coordinator?
- 4) How is your role at the elementary level different than that of an instructional coordinator's role at the middle and high school level?
- 5) What other role in education would you say your job is most similar to? Why?
- 5) How is your role as an instructional coordinator alike and/or different from a department head's role?

- 5)What type of feedback have you received from the teachers in your building in regard to the work that you do?
- 6)How does your principal impact your role in the building?
- 7)How does your principal impact your work?
- 8)From your perspective, what is your role as an elementary school instructional coordinator?
- 9)Is there any other information that you would like to share concerning your perspective of the instructional coordinator position? If so, please share.

APPENDIX B
SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTER

February 1, 2002

Dale County Superintendent
P.O. Box 200
Dale, Georgia 31000

Dear Dale County Superintendent,

I am requesting your permission to carry out my doctoral research proposal in Dale County. The role of the elementary instructional coordinator is a topic from which much can be gained. Research describing the perspectives of elementary instructional coordinators is sparse. The reason for this research is to examine the role of the elementary instructional coordinator.

The researcher will “shadow” the participants (four instructional coordinators) one day and conduct three interviews with the participants during the 2001-2002 school year. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen. Any information the researcher obtains about each participant in this study, including the local school, will be held confidential. The identity of each individual will be coded, and all data will be kept in a secured, limited access location. The identity of each individual and the local system will not be revealed in any publication of the results of this research. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without the system and individual prior consent unless otherwise required by law. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and be reached by telephone. Dr. Sally J. Zepeda, assistant professor of educational leadership is directing this research project and can be reached at 706-613-5245.

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent for this study to be carried out. I have been given a copy of this form. Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the researcher.

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

Signature of Superintendent:

Date:

Note: Research at the University of Georgia that involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. For questions or problems about your rights, please call or write Dr. Christina Joseph, Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, GA, 30602. Telephone (706) 542-6514. E-mail Address: IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research titled The Role of the Elementary Instructional Coordinator, which is being conducted by Kimberly S. Halstead, Educational Leadership Department at The University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Sally Zepeda. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been made to me:

1. The reason for the research is to identify and examine the role of instructional coordinators who work in an elementary school through the perspectives of elementary instructional coordinators. The benefits I may expect from it include knowledge of the role of the elementary instructional coordinator.

2. The procedures are as follows:

In March 2002, or shortly thereafter, I will be interviewed by Kimberly S. Halstead on three separate occasions for a period of one to two hours each session. She will ask me questions about the leadership roles of the elementary instructional coordinator, my perception of the instructional coordinator role, and my work as the instructional coordinator.

3. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.
4. No risks are foreseen.
5. The results of this participation will be confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. I understand that conversations will be audio-taped for transcription purposes and will be destroyed in March of 2003.
6. The researcher will answer further questions about the research, now or during the course of the study, and can be reached by telephone.

I understand the procedures listed above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Researcher Date

Signature of Participant Date

Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the investigator.

Research at the University of Georgia that involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions of problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Chis A. Joseph, Ph. D., Institutional Review Board, Office of the Vice President for Research, ,University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone 706-542-6514; E-mail address CAJ@ovpr.uga.edu.

APPENDIX D

INSTRUCTIONAL COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Description: Instructional Coordinator

Descriptor Code: GBBAD

The primary function of the instructional coordinator shall be to work directly with teachers to improve instruction.

The areas of specific duties for instructional coordinator may include the following:

1. Observe classroom teaching and work with teachers to plan and improve instruction.
2. Supervise and assist teachers in the use of school system curriculum guides.
3. Plan with department chairmen the instructional programs in the school.
4. Assist in evaluation of instructional materials and their use.
5. Assist teachers to know and use wisely instructional materials, supplies, equipment and other aids to learning.
6. Assist in pre-registering and scheduling students.
7. Assist principal in preparing master schedule.
8. Assist teachers in adjusting pupil materials to levels of comprehension, success, and challenge.
9. Maintain a proper balance in the variety of learning experiences, enrichment activities, and course offerings.
10. Help teachers in clarifying and unifying their practices in persistent problems such as grading students' work and promoting pupils, reporting to pupils and parents, assigning homework, etc.
11. Direct studies for the adoption of textbooks and other instructional materials.
12. Assist teachers new to the system in making adjustments which will assure security and confidence in their new assignments.
13. Provide leadership preparation of school system curriculum guides.
14. Serve as a resource person to assist teachers in obtaining instructional materials.
15. Help select materials to be added to the instructional materials center.
16. Prepare local reports and evaluation of instruction.
17. Confer with publishers' representatives.
18. Assist in coordinating the school testing program.
19. Evaluate the results of the school's testing program and assist teachers in utilizing test results to modify instruction.
20. Participate in various educational associations and conferences to keep abreast of the latest innovations in education.
21. Assist substitute teachers with instructional problems.
22. Help plan for and schedule field trips and other special instructional activities in accordance with the school board policies.

23. Call and conduct meetings with department chairmen.
24. Serve as Staff Development representative in the school(s) to which assigned.
25. Work with Student Support Teams.

Assume any other duties assigned by the Principal, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and the Superintendent.