

PERCEPTIONS AND ENACTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING  
IN NORTH CAROLINA

A Dissertation  
by  
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## **Abstract**

### PERCEPTIONS AND ENACTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IN NORTH CAROLINA

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The instructional coaching role has become a source of support for teacher professional development in districts across the United States, yet there is little agreement among researchers regarding the particular structure of this role. I conducted this portraiture study in three districts in North Carolina and used interviews, observations, and document review to determine how coaches, teachers, and principals understand the role of the instructional coach. The research questions used to guide this study were (a) how do instructional coaches understand their roles, (b) how do other education professionals understand the instructional coaching role, and (c) how does context impact understanding of the instructional coaching role. The portraiture methodology intentionally shifts from pathology to focus on “what is good here” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9). I used the goodness criterion to recruit coaches identified as good by others in the educational community. I analyzed data first through open coding and then for repetitive refrains (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 193) to create descriptive portraits of individual coaches. Finally, I created one, synthesized portrait of instructional coaching. Major findings from the study suggest that contextual factors

influence role enactment for an instructional coach. Results of the study imply that principals should bring clarity to the purpose of the instructional coach within a school setting. For a coach to feel successful, the coach needs a role description that is both focused and flexible. Results stop short of articulating a coaching role description; therefore, more research is needed to support how to describe the role in order to achieve both focus and flexibility.