

Metaphors University Instructional Coaches Use to Frame Their Coach-Coachee Relationships with Secondary Classroom Teachers

Jioanna Carjuzaa

Sevda Budak

&

Enkhchimeg Sharav

Montana State University
The Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Education
U.S.A.

Abstract

In instructional coaching, the successful collaboration of the coach-coachee dyad is critical for a fruitful relationship. In this study, we focused on what metaphors university faculty who served as coaches working with secondary classroom teachers used to describe their lived experiences. By illuminating their metaphors, it made it possible to bring their unconscious thoughts to the surface. Survey methodology was used to collect data and a reflexive iterative approach, along with a consensus coding strategy was used to analyze the data. Although the instructional coaches used different metaphors to characterize their coach-coachee relationships, they all identified and credited three salient characteristics to the success of their relationships: respect, trust, and reciprocity. The richness the findings reveal suggest value in collecting and interpreting metaphors coaches use to describe their experiences. By highlighting the inner-thoughts expressed through metaphorical language, it may help in decisions on pairing and practice of meaningful coach-coachee relationships.

Keywords: Instructional coaching, metaphors, professional development, sheltered instruction, relationality, collaboration, secondary education.

1. Introduction

In Montana, American Indians make up 7% of the population consisting mostly of the twelve Montana tribal nations (OPI, 2018). During the 2017-18 academic year, 14% of the K-12 students identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), many of whom are English Language Learners (ELLs) (OPI, 2018). These students whose academic English proficiency affects their opportunity to obtain content mastery do not necessarily speak their tribal language but grow up in households and communities where an Indigenous language is the language of impact and Standard English is not the dominant mode of communication (Author 1, 2016). When analyzing a series of Montana American Indian Student Achievement Data Reports from 2010-2020 a persistent gap in achievement between AI/AN students and their white counterparts has been reported (OPI, 2018). This achievement gap highlights AI/AN students' failed experience as reflected in several areas: lower attendance rates, higher dropout rates, curtailed graduation rates, extreme suspension and expulsion rates, inflated identification for special education, novice reading proficiency and diminished academic success (Center for Public Education, 2015).

A significant endeavor to address this disparity includes the unprecedented reform effort known as IEFA that is 49+ years in the making. Back in 1972 the Montana State Constitution was amended pledging, “The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity” (Mont. Code, 1999). To date, Montana remains the only state with this constitutional mandate. The expectation is that all educators know the intention and goals of IEFA, which stated simply are to: 1) reduce bias against Indigenous peoples, 2) enrich instruction by enhancing cultural relevance, and 3) re-instill pride in cultural identity. The importance of building and nurturing relationships has been emphasized as the praises of IEFA have reverberated around the globe (Author1 *et al.*, 2010).

Since the integration of IEFA across the curriculum at all grade levels, we have collected anecdotal evidence that AI students’ self-esteem has risen, but sadly, their level of academic achievement still lags significantly behind that of their non-Indian counterparts. The AI/AN students who are classified as ELLs qualify for English as a second language (ESL) services since their academic English literacy skills are inadequate for them to successfully access the curriculum (Author 1, 2016). So, the Teachers of English Language Learners (TELLs) grant project was designed for AI students and other ELLs, who score poorly on reading assessments, to benefit from additional services. In addition to the culturally responsive pedagogy promoted by IEFA, these students need to have comprehensible input with scaffolding and support to broaden their vocabulary and improve their academic literacy skills in English to maximize their reading achievement.

Due to our geographic challenges and the fact that two-thirds of our school districts have fewer than 100 students, it is cost prohibitive to hire ESL specialists (OPI, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to prepare all teachers to integrate content and linguistic objectives so the ELLs in Montana can achieve academically while simultaneously improving their English literacy. To address this quandary, we set out to recruit, train, and support a teaching corps with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet these students’ needs. We designed and implemented the TELLs program targeting secondary regular classroom teachers. This program included graduate coursework towards a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (CLDE) certificate, and an opportunity to work one-on-one with an Instructional Coach (IC) over a two-year period.

In this article, we delve into one aspect of this five-year longitudinal study. We focused on the perceptions of the university faculty who served as Instructional Coaches (ICs) with their coachees, secondary teachers participating in the TELLs grant project, as shared in response to question prompts; we also provided our interpretations of their use of metaphors to describe their coach-coachee relationships. We analyzed how the ICs saw their roles in improving their coachees’ instructional practices in order to reach the common goal of improving the academic achievement of K-12 ELLs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Coaching Versus Mentoring

The concepts of ‘coaching’ and ‘mentoring’ can be blurry. The fundamental difference lies in the disproportionate hierarchical roles, status, and perceived power. In the mentor-mentee combination, the mentor is seen as the experienced and knowledgeable individual, whereas the mentee is considered to be the novice, recipient of new knowledge. The mentor is the decision-maker deciding the steps to be taken in modifying instructional practices, and the mentee is expected to follow the mentor’s suggestions. Coaching, that supports teachers’ professional learning, on the other hand, is constructed around the premise that both the coach and the coachee have equal authority in decision making, since they both possess a wealth of knowledge as well as abundant practical teaching-learning experience (Ives, 2008; van Nieuwerburgh, Knight, & Campbell, 2019).

The vast literature on coaching shows us that coaching in all fields is effective and beneficial in various ways to both coaches and coachees, (Creasy & Patterson, 2005; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Knight, 2009). While different approaches to coaching exist, it is apparent that all approaches have one common goal, to accomplish pre-determined targets.

In the educational context, coaching is understood and implemented with three distinct approaches: the facilitative, the direct, and the dialogical approach. In a facilitative approach, the coaches respect the knowledge their coachees possess, and work towards bringing it to the surface while helping their coachees recognize and display knowledge and skills in efficient and effective ways. The primary goal of the coach using a facilitative approach replicates a *laissez-faire* attitude designed to assist, support, and complement the knowledge and

experience the coachees already have acquired. In a direct approach, the coachees are like blank slates to be stamped with target teaching strategies to be implemented in every classroom setting. In a dialogical approach, while the coaches acknowledge the knowledge their coachees have, they deliberately introduce research-proven strategies from their perspectives as experts with the expectation that their coachees implement specific structured procedures according to their teaching environment (van Nieuwerburgh, Knight, & Campbell, 2019).

2.2 Instructional Coaching

Besides the aforementioned approaches used in education, the concept of ‘instructional coaching’, which has gained popularity over the last two decades in North America, embraces a partnership approach to improve instruction (Knight, 2007). In fact, “Instructional coaching has been adopted in schools across the country to facilitate an increase in student achievement by providing high-quality professional learning experiences for teachers” (Heineke, 2013, p.409). Instructional Coaching, coalescing with the partnership framework promoted by Knight, typically includes seven principles: equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity (Knight, 2007). In the TELLs project, the ICs have embraced all but the *choice* element as Knight describes it, since we had the expectation that the coachees would learn the intricacies of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and integrate its components and features into their teaching. The following description summarizes the expectations of the ICs’ role in the TELLs grant project, “A coach can be broadly defined as a person who works collaboratively with a teacher to improve that teacher’s practice and content knowledge, with the ultimate goal of affecting student achievement” (Yopp *et al.*, 2011, p.50).

2.3 Metaphors

To explore how the ICs in the TELLs program were addressing the intent of IEFA and leveraging the relationality professed to be essential when working in Indian country, we decided on an innovative approach to capture their thoughts. We asked our ICs to conceptualize their coaching practice by using metaphors to describe the interactions they had with their coachees. Why metaphor? Following the research of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the leading scholars in shaping the concept of ‘metaphors’ and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, we expected that the metaphors our ICs chose would reveal and solidify their actual thoughts, which otherwise appeared to be difficult to succinctly verbalize. Therefore, we concluded that identifying the ICs’ use of metaphors would be a powerful way to delve into their coaching practice.

Metaphors are value-laden figures of speech, which are representative or symbolic of something else. They bring our deep beliefs, meanings, and thoughts into the spotlight to project our authentic experiences. We use metaphors frequently in our daily lives and we do not even realize it, which confirms that most thoughts that we have, and metaphors that we use project our unconscious mind, along with our understanding of abstract realities (Kövecses, 2010), and reflect our ‘embodied experiences’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For instance, people describe *LOVE using expressions related to the concept of a JOURNEY*, such as ‘We’re at a crossroads; We’ll have to go our separate ways’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.44), while others may prefer the concept of *WAR* to express their feelings such as, ‘She eventually surrendered’ (Kövecses, 2010, p.339), She is besieged by suitors’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.49).

Metaphors are everywhere if we pay close attention; metaphors not only give way to our deeper thoughts and beliefs shaped by our experiences, but our thoughts and beliefs also shape the metaphors we use. Metaphors are often deep and reach beneath the surface to reveal what is below, as is the case with Edward T. Hall’s (1976) cultural iceberg metaphor which is often used to distinguish between the visible and explicit aspects of one’s cultural identity which appears above the surface and those aspects of one’s culture which are below the surface, hidden and unseen.

In education, exploration of teaching metaphors is an effective way to uncover and reflect upon tacit beliefs and concepts about teaching (Munby & Russell, 1990). Common metaphors used to describe teachers include: coach, gardener, juggler, firefighter, dictator, lifeline, compass, captain, actor, and superhero (Badley & Hollabaugh, 2012). Whichever metaphor is chosen, the use of a specific metaphor reveals what one thinks about what transpires in classroom interactions. If we go back to our initial questioning as to ‘why the use of metaphor analysis’, this is the reason why. While metaphors affect thoughts, thoughts also affect metaphors. Accordingly, by eliciting the metaphors the ICs used to describe their interactions with their coachees in the TELLs grant project, we could interpret the coaches’ actual thoughts regarding their roles and experiences. Moreover, the

perspectives and practices of ICs as communicated through metaphors have rarely been studied and interpreted in the field of Instructional Coaching.

3. Methodology

3.1 Building Collaborative Partnerships

For the TELLS, it was important to select ICs who could be attentive to the secondary teachers in our grant project, who were familiar with the public school education system, and who were aware of the participants' specific teaching context challenges, and could identify how their thoughts and actions aligned with their core values and beliefs. It was also important for the ICs to build collaborative partnerships with their coachees and listen, ask good questions, provide encouragement, and feedback, and help their coachees view the situation from a different perspective.

The ICs in the TELLS were prompted to choose a metaphor for coaching that reflects their personal philosophy of the coaching process. The ICs' metaphors provide insights into their beliefs and attitudes. As Yopp *et al.* (2011) shared, there are a variety of coaching models, and even though the ICs in our project each used a different coaching metaphor to describe their approach, they all highlighted how important it is to create a collaborative exchange with the ultimate goal being that the coachees improve their instructional practices. Consequently, of all the aspects that support relationships: trust, respect, and reciprocal responsibility were consistently referenced in the coaches' metaphor descriptions as well as in their other survey response data.

In coaching situations, some K-12 teachers have been classified as coaching resistant (Jacobs *et al.*, 2018). To ensure that teachers are receptive to coaching, it is important to value differing skill sets and view teachers as expert practitioners in their own right. This is the first step in interacting in a respectful manner. In addition, trust is foundational in instructional coaching. The importance of trust as a primary characteristic in the coaching process is evident from the initial contact as the coaches purposefully and immediately start building trust with their coachees. Trust, being a crucial part of the coaching and learning process, is an essential, continuous element, which supports 'emotional scaffolding' (Gardiner, 2012). Creating an environment in which everybody's input is welcomed and valued, which qualifies as reciprocity, is also crucial in nurturing the coach-coachee relationship. In fact, the acknowledgement of reciprocity, when both parties approach each other with the understanding of mutual learning, is considered critical and may hinder or strengthen the start and duration of the teaching-learning environment (Knight, 2007).

3.2 Our Context

In 2016, the Multicultural Education Centre (MEC) at a land grant institution in the western United States was awarded an Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA, 2015) grant to recruit and educate secondary teachers from schools across the state with significant proportions of American Indian and other ELLs in hopes of raising the academic achievement of those students. The professional development initiative designed for those in-service teachers consisted of 12 credits of graduate study coursework towards a CLDE certificate offered over two summers with one-on-one coaching provided during the academic semesters.

3.3 Inviting the Coachees to Participate and Selecting the ICs

We focused on inviting core curriculum (English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies/History) secondary teachers from school districts on or near reservations with high percentages of American Indian and other ELLs to participate in the TELLS. Although we recruited nearly 100 participants, there were 48 completers of the CLDE certificate program in three cohorts. Approximately half (51%) of the teachers held a bachelor's degree and 49% had completed their master's. The teachers ranged in age from 25-60+ and they had a vast array of teaching experience, which ranged from 3 to 37 years with an average teaching experience of 8 years. Most of the teachers were high school English/Language Arts Teachers (21). Eight teachers taught Social Studies/History, five taught Math, and 3 were Science teachers. The other 4 participants were Indigenous Language and Culture Teachers.

We were selective in choosing our ICs since so few teachers in our state had had the opportunity to learn about identifying and supporting ELLs in general and even fewer teachers had an understanding of how American Indians qualify as ELLs. All eight of our ICs were SIOP certified, had coaching experience, and had completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program's Research Ethics and Compliance Training on

Human Subjects Social and Behavioral Research. Half of the ICs were non-native speakers of English. Six of the ICs had earned a K-12 ESL Endorsement. All had K-12 teaching experience, and five of them had experience teaching at the college level. Having obtained SIOP and/or ESL certification, they not only had the knowledge of second language acquisition theories and sheltered instructional strategies, but also had bilingual/multilingual life experiences and/or immersion in language contexts other than English.

Our ICs were paired with their coachees; consideration for geographical locales was taken when pairing dyads, since coachees were teaching in classrooms across the state on and near all seven reservations. The ICs served between 2-14 coachees, with the average number of coachees being 8. The coach and coachee dyads worked together for two years, the four academic semesters the coachees participated in the TELLs grant project. The coaching cycle consisted of three important steps: the pre-lesson discussion, the recording-viewing-editing of a lesson, and the post-lesson conference.

4. Data Collection

We used survey research to collect data from the ICs in the TELLs (Converse, 1987; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). We created a Qualtrics survey to provide ample time for reflection and obtain self-reports from the ICs on their own thoughts and feelings about their roles as ICs and their use of metaphor to describe their coaching relationship with their coachees (Check & Schutt, 2012).

We designed our questionnaire, obtained IRB approval, and programmed our approved survey instrument into our internet-based system. Our online questionnaire consisted of demographic short answers including the following information: gender, age, years involved in the TELLs, number of coachees who have completed the two-year coaching cycle, and the type of school the coachees taught at. We also designed and collected data from open-ended questions. When we created those questions, we considered the focus and content of the wording, the placement and sequence of the questions along with the response format. We refined what we asked the ICs on our survey to address the following research questions:

- How do ICs perceive their relationships with their coachees?
- What conscious, reflective metaphors do ICs use to describe their work with their coachees?
- What are the key components/characteristics of an effective coach/coachee relationship according to the ICs?

To start, the ICs were asked to describe the span of their relationships from the initial contact with their coachees through the end of their coaching experiences. They were to include a description of the factors which played a key role in the dyad getting to know each other as coach and coachee as well as share their reflections on their own motivation and their coachees' motivation. The ICs were asked to describe a memorable session, discussion or exchange they had with one of their coachees and share the observations they made on the changing teaching practices of their participants.

In addition, the ICs were prompted to list and describe three key terms, i.e., words/phrases/expressions, to best describe their coaching experiences. These questions were framed in a logical progression to lead the ICs to the final question where they were asked to use a metaphor to describe their relationships and their entire TELLs coaching experience. Using the forced metaphor-elicitation technique we asked ICs to describe their coaching using a metaphor (Tracy, 2010). They were prompted to answer this question by using the following simile sentence stem: To me, my coaching experience is like...

Each of the ICs elicited a different metaphor. Some shared common metaphors used to describe the broader field of teaching, some used common metaphors used to describe coach-coachee relationships, while others used unique metaphors. Some provided a detailed explanation of their metaphor while others used concise, figurative language in their descriptions.

4.1 Data Analysis

We used a 'reflexive iterative framework' to analyze our data (Srivastava and Hopwood 2009). Initially, we approached the data with these broad questions in mind: How do our ICs describe their roles and responsibilities? and What do the ICs' choice of metaphors reveal about their conceptions of the coach-coachee relationship? These two questions guided our analysis process, where we interacted with the data continuously by visiting the essential questions of the Reflexive Iterative Framework (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009), which include: Q1: What are the data telling us? Q2: What is it we want to know? Q3: What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling and what we want to know?

To address the first question, we looked at the variety of metaphors that the ICs used to define their unique way of coaching as well as the explanation they provided to support their specific use of metaphor. For the second question, we wanted to know the ICs' unconscious approach and what they really valued regarding the coach-coachee partnership. Lastly, we looked at the other formal and informal data collected throughout the years coach-coachee dyads participated in the TELLS grant project, to crosscheck our interpretations, and examined the existing literature repeatedly.

In addition, we used a manual 'consensus coding' strategy (Creswell, 2012). We met regularly over several months to share and discuss the codes and interpretations. We repeated this process each time by reflecting on the relationship between the data and what we wanted to know. In weaving our analysis, we continuously focused on the links among the ICs' preferred metaphors, their descriptions of their experiences with their coachees, and the current literature on grounded themes in educational metaphors (Badley & Hollabaugh, 2012; Dooley, 2017), until we refined the recurring themes (See table 1). The entire analysis process and belonging to the same coaching culture increased the credibility, and the trustworthiness of our analysis (Malvini Redden, 2017). We used *in vivo* codes (Cornelissen *et al.*, 2008) as created and described by the ICs to strengthen our interpretations.

5. Findings

The metaphors provided insights into how the ICs provided one-on-one professional development opportunities for their coachees to help them integrate the SIOP model into their lessons. ICs used metaphors that mediate their insights, to illustrate the challenges and opportunities they encountered while coaching. The created metaphors along with the rest of the data and the current literature on 'grounded themes' regarding coach-coachee relationships in education settings pointed to three overarching themes under the umbrella theme of relationships. The emergent themes regarding how the ICs see their roles in their relationships with their coachees are: a) Manifesting Respect, b) Warranting Trust, and c) Valuing Reciprocity. All three themes were present in at least two coachees' metaphoric expressions. We delineate each theme. (Insert Table 1)

These characteristics of a successful coaching partnership emphasize that "... respecting the vast knowledge from the experience that teachers bring to their learning is one way to equalize relations" (LePage, 2001, p. 201).

5.1 Manifesting Respect

To ensure coach-coachee success, establishing, protecting, and nurturing relationships is an integral ingredient in instructional coaching and the concept of respect is a cornerstone of a successful coaching partnership. As Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) explain in their seminal article, there is a great need for the higher educational system to create an environment of respect and rapport. When coaching takes place between university and K-12 faculty dyads for school improvement efforts, if we expect K-12 faculty to respect their ICs, then the university faculty need to appreciate the knowledge and skills the K-12 teachers have acquired and practice daily.

Moreover, ICs need to respect their coachees so they feel valued and safe and; therefore, are willing to vocalize their concerns and fears. By modeling kindness, sensitivity, and empathy, coaches can introduce and share with their coachees how best to implement innovative instructional strategies they may be unfamiliar with and/or have had limited opportunity to attempt in their classrooms. Improved communication where coaches practice active listening, give honest, constructive feedback, eliminate judgment, encourage the sharing of ideas and thoughts, and honor different perspectives, reduces stress and the apprehension of being observed, while stimulating respect. Following are categories that demonstrate respectful behavior. ICs should:

5.1.1 Recognize the professional knowledge and experience their coachees possess

Jenny referred to the relationship she established with her coachees as a *partnership*, but she emphasized the different essential roles the coach and the coachee played. She used a metaphor describing a relationship between *a tour guide and a trail blazer*. Nonetheless, she emphasized the respect she felt for her coachees as courageous *trail blazers*:

... I see myself as a tour guide because I have already travelled this road as a teacher ...

Coachees are seasoned professionals who have just been introduced to sheltered instruction and are trying to implement a teaching approach that is not common in their schools and/or across the state, so they are leading the way for their colleagues.

Jenny went on to explain the importance she puts on the reciprocal nature of respect in the partnership by explaining, 'I sometimes have doubts about metaphors describing coaching relationships as scaffolding, walking through a maze, or building a house because I worry that they place too much of the action/responsibility of coaching on the coach. To me coaching is a partnership that only works if both parties are equally engaged.'

Collaborators who form partnerships between higher education departments and local, public schools come to view the coaching experience as an on-going opportunity for professional exchange where the participants develop ideas and support each other's growth and in turn the academic achievement of K-12 pupils. To shape classroom practices, everyone's voices have to be heard and coaches must recognize that they are trained experts working with experts and, coaches and coachees alike, can learn from each other; i.e., both K-12 and university faculty must have a willingness to grow professionally.

5.1.2 Share innovative instructional strategies with their coachees that support the academic achievement of their K-12 pupils

Ella used the metaphor of *driving in the rain*. She talked about guiding her coachees to use new instructional strategies by modelling SIOP components for them so they could decide to make the choice on how and when to implement the instructional strategies in their teaching. She shared how she respects that her coachees know their students best and that respecting coachees' decisions is critical:

I think sometimes more than giving feedback, showing different ways of engaging students can be powerful and teachers get a break.... The focus on the SIOP way to creating lessons especially on the idea of creating language objectives has been something teachers had never thought about before.

Sarah used the *gardening* metaphor to describe her work with her coachees. She shared: "Two of my coachees especially take the time to intentionally put into practice the instructional strategies related to the SIOP components and talk through their experiences with me about the implementation and the results". By practicing patience, she respects her coachees' decision-making ability to implement the SIOP approach and solicit feedback as they deem necessary.

Jenny, who sees herself as a *tour guide* carving out the way for her brave coachees to attempt something new had this to say about the success her coachees experience explained, 'I think the coachees are feeling confident and proud to be learning and implementing valuable SIOP techniques to clarify expectations for their students and themselves.'

5.1.3 Acknowledge their coachees' ownership of their individual educational journey, their unique motivation for growth, and their insights into their students' needs

Sarah focused on an activity in nature, *gardening*, as a metaphor to describe the coach-coachee relationships she developed. This gardening metaphor was exemplified in *Being There* a film starring Peter Sellers who played a mentally challenged gardener whose gardening advice was misinterpreted as metaphor by his listeners. His message was simple, if all you do is plant seeds but neglect them, you cannot expect a great harvest. Gardeners need to deal with numerous factors, many of which are out of their control including climate and temperature changes, other plants and animals in the environment, and disease and bug infestations. The same applies to classroom teachers who deal with numerous students' challenges. Waiting for your plants to grow, or your students to thrive, without tending to your plants' or your students' needs, most likely, will not produce great results. The gardener must address the unique needs of each plant just as a teacher must differentiate instruction and be sure to practice 'Maslow before Bloom', the phrase which refers to the importance of meeting the basic needs of your students before worrying about academic learning. Being a successful gardener or teacher requires planning, flexibility, consistency, patience, and hard work. Just like Sarah described, '...a garden that has endured some frost and some drought and is all the more beautiful for it.' She also emphasized that, 'My teachers share their explanations of what their students go through... These teachers are dealing with students who are, and a community that is, constantly in crisis.' She mentioned the proverb *you reap what you sow* to emphasize how actions have consequences.

Terry used the metaphor *a long hike in the mountains*, to share how the relationship she had with one of her coachees blossomed over time as she provided her coachee with the confidence to take ownership for her own professional development,

Over our two years together, we developed a great relationship and she was very willing to try new things. In our last semester, I asked her in what areas she had grown the most and what areas she would like to continue to improve.

It was also important for the ICs to be aware of the factors that motivated their coachees. Sarah, who used *the gardening* metaphor, talked about personalizing her interactions with each of her unique coachees:

What motivates my coachees varies from teacher to teacher; some are motivated by the opportunity to learn and offer their students an enhanced teaching/learning environment; others are motivated by the professional development opportunities provided by the project that has the potential to give them higher status as teachers; and others, I believe, may be motivated by the potential of earning more money...

5.2 Warranting Trust

Trust is necessary for coaching for many reasons; it eliminates a feeling of intimidation (Walkowiak, 2016), reduces uncertainty (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999), supports successful professional development over time (Slater & Ravid, 2010) and sustains instructional improvements (Finkelstein, 2019). In the absence of trust, teacher development would be hindered, and teachers would become cautious or disengaged (Gardiner, 2012; Finkelstein, 2019).

Our ICs made similar points and emphasized that successfully established and ardently maintained trust is the primary focus in effective coaching. They developed trust by creating a positive relationship from their initial contact with their coachees and maintaining a positive learning environment where the coachees felt confident and motivated and the partners accepted each other on a professional level. Our ICs highlighted trust when they described the relationship and the procedures they established with their coachees and shared their practices using metaphors they created. An instructional coach should:

5.2.1 Get to know the coachees and sustain faith through face-to-face contact

ICs, Charlie and Chelsey, highlighted that in-person visits was of utmost importance to get to know the coachees and build rapport and trust. Chelsey used the *router* metaphor to describe the relationship with her coachees. She related it to face-to-face communication, “the closer you are, the better the connection and the farther away you are, the less connection or even disconnection”. She also added, “unfortunately, I didn’t have a chance to visit with my coachees in person. So, it was a challenge to direct my coachees to succeed in implementing/integrating the SIOP model in their teaching without any face-to-face contact.” Charlie chose the *hourglass* metaphor, where “...single grains of sand are added over time, and nothing happens until the tipping point is reached and then it is all dumped.” She concluded that the relationship deepens over time as the dyads get to know each other and especially as the coachees see the value in the feedback provided, which builds trust. Charlie went on to say, “You have some teachers who consistently get better and are always looking to improve and some teachers that take a long time ...before they finally start to really move forward.”

5.2.2 Establish and nurture ongoing relationships

Terry shared her coaching experience as *a long hike in the mountains*. She implied that building trust is not easy, and there is a long road to develop rapport and nurture trust with her coachees. Establishing and building trust cannot be the result of a one-time effort or a single action. It takes time and effort from both the coach and coachee. She explained her coaching process as, “the hike starting slowly to get into a *rhythm*.” Once she got into a *rhythm* and trust was eventually built, she enjoyed her work as a coach and felt great about what she accomplished. Then she tried to maintain the consistent relationship she built.

This theme was also evident in Ella’s metaphor *driving in the rain*. She shared that her coaching experience was like “trying to get to the end of the street when it’s raining, and you cannot see where you are going”. Trust is a valuable quality that makes the coaching meaningful and creates clear and realistic expectations. She found ways to develop mutual trust with her coachees to make the *road clear*. In the absence of trust, the road remains dark and blocks her direction. Her metaphor reflected teamwork, challenges, and progress, which implied the importance of her establishing a good relationship from the beginning in order to work together to make good progress toward their goals, and ultimately collaborate to complete the project successfully. She also highlighted that coaching effectiveness required sophisticated skills from the coach such as sincere curiosity, consistent support, unbounded trust, and leadership. By leaning on these skills, the coaching becomes meaningful. Another IC, Sammy, used the metaphor *teeter-totter* as she believed both coach and coachee played essential roles in

balancing *shared honest responsibility*, which deepened mutual trust. In other words, the coach and a coachee collaborate based on their mutual responsibility and rapport building.

5.2.3 Support coachees over time

Jenny, an experienced IC, described her experience as a partnership between *a tour guide and a trail blazer*. She expressed that both the coachee and the coach are educators, but the main difference is that the coach has expertise in integrating research-based sheltered instruction, the SIOP model, whereas it is a new strategy for the coachees. In other words, the coach knew the “direction they will travel,” like a knowledgeable *tour guide*. Encouraging the implementation of the SIOP model for content teachers who teach ELLs was the main objective of this IC. The ICs had knowledge and experience implementing the eight components and thirty features of the SIOP model, which they introduced to their coachees, two SIOP components per semester. Since the ICs knew the *route*, it meant they were reliable and could support their coachees over time. This IC’s metaphor vividly shows us that when a coach and a coachee trust each other, it leads to successful coaching. Jenny also shared, “trying to implement the SIOP method in a culturally responsive manner seems to be a great motivator. As a coach, I want coachees to feel confident and successful.”

Kora, also a seasoned IC, described her coaching approach as a *kaleidoscope*. She believed that mutual support of their roles and sharing of materials has been the key that unites the coach and coachee. She was motivated to help coachees with problems and support them by providing additional and alternative resources and suggestions. The materials and sheltered instruction strategies such as SIOP *form the colorful pieces* and the coachees see the patterns to adjust the kaleidoscope frame.

5.3 Valuing Reciprocity

We have indicated that coaches support teachers to increase student achievement. In addition to this consensus, research shows that certain qualities are expected from the coaches, such as good communication skills (Colbert *et al.*, 2008) or an eagerness to share knowledge (Groves, 2009). Among research that explored the characteristics of an effective coach, the mutual respect of the relationship was emphasized (Whitney, 2009). This coaching skill surfaced in our data as reciprocity. It highlighted the mutual understanding and content of the give-and-take relationship between the coach and the coachee. This shared learning experience was also cherished in the ICs’ expressions. An instructional coach should:

5.3.1 Foster mutuality in a symbiotic relationship

In fact, the value for reciprocity was so strong that the concept of ‘Mutuality’ was very apparent in the data. For instance, Kora defined her experience as ‘adjusting the frames’ in a *kaleidoscope* by *mutual support* and *mutual exchange*. She was referring to the tube-shaped toy, which is rotated to see patterns formed by the reflections of small objects on mirrors. What she pointed out here was that while the coach helped her see the patterns, she and the other teachers adjusted the frames through mutual collaboration and *genuine care*. She magnified her point by saying, “I learned as much from them as they get support from me”.

Sarah understood the mutuality more from the social-emotional perspective with the *gardening* metaphor by explaining her experience as “a garden that has endured some frost and draught,” yet “is all the more beautiful for it.” The communities that Sarah and the other ICs worked with had been through several crises, including losing young people to suicide- which had strained teachers’ emotional resources and coping mechanisms. Therefore, Sarah has also become the coachees’ confidante regarding the challenges at school and home. By quoting Palmer, ‘As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together’, Sarah projected the mutuality as she related to her coachees’ while they navigated the challenges they were facing. Hence, *a garden that has endured frost and draught; yet, is all the more beautiful for it*.

5.3.2 Create balance in the shared relationship

Sammy consciously used a *teeter-totter* metaphor to express her experience. This metaphor helps us visualize a long board that sits on a pivot point in the middle. Since it has two ends, it necessitates two individuals’ harmonious participation to keep the board moving smoothly up and down. “Just like the riders of a teeter-totter, we both help each other elevate and see our perspectives each time going up and down”, she said. “We are equally responsible for keeping the *teaching-and-learning board* in balance”, she emphasized. “The relationship is mutual, and no one is superior to one another... we learn together, evolve together and grow together”, she added.

When examined closely, we see ‘evolve’ and ‘grow’ as subtle terms, but they portray the development and transformation that occur on both sides.

Ella, who specified her experience as *driving in the rain*, celebrated the created reciprocal balance in her relationship by saying that she *let the coachee lead the way*. She denied her *superiority* and cherished the *give-and-take* relationship as *rewarding*. Similar to Sammy, she prioritized the balance in the roles that both the coach and coachee had.

5.3.3 Acknowledge the power of and create the opportunity for dialogue

Kora, using *the hourglass* metaphor, described her collaboration with a coachee as *interactive positive sharing*. She added, “I think having the opportunity to share my teaching experiences and learn about the teachers’ experiences is fun, productive and meaningful.” She found the elements of joy and fertility in reciprocal exchange of lived experiences.

Terry, who described *adding resources to her coachee’s toolbox*, emphasized the existence of quality in a dialogue. She found the value of the reciprocal relationship in *rich dialogue* during which the coach and coachee *bounce off ideas back and forth*. She said she acknowledged what the coachee *brought to teaching*. In her discourse, it was clear that she was aware of the valuable repertoire that the coachee had to offer; and affirmed this by saying, ‘I learned as much from them as they did from me. By using the *hiking* metaphor consciously, she clarified the mutual exchange to be *rewarding*. She said, “I truly enjoyed the quality dialogues I had with teachers and the growth whether a little or substantial that I saw in their lessons.” As she put it, no matter how big or small the change in the teaching approaches, all the ICs were content with their work as they considered themselves to be both *coach* and *learner*.

Chelsey prioritized the strength of dialogue with *the router* metaphor. The power of in-person communication has been evident more than ever since the Covid 19 pandemic. Due to this crisis, the internet has become the main means to carry on coach-coachee communication. Even though the distance gap was addressed with technology, other hurdles surfaced, such as how best to sustain the connection. Chelsey said, “collaboration...matters to engage, achieve, develop...”, as they were dependent on the internet. However, the existence and the continuation of a dialogue between the coach and the coachee was just like *the router* for Chelsey. Just like how the location of our router in our home matters, the ease of dialogue matters in coaching. “The closer you are, the better the connection and the farther away you are, the less connection or even disconnection”, Chelsey said. “It was a challenge... without any face-to-face contact”, she went on, but to endure the relationship, and to sustain the productivity of collaboration, the dialogue had to be maintained.

6. Conclusion

This article focused on the perspectives of ICs who have worked with secondary teachers of AI/AN and other ELLs so that they could master the SIOP strategies. Survey was conducted in which the ICs were asked to use metaphors to describe what worked in their coach-coachee partnerships. Asking for specific metaphors is stimulating because “In all aspects of life, ... we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.158).

Moreover, IC's perspectives through their use of metaphors are neglected in the field. Although the ICs each described unique metaphors in their responses, interestingly, their preferred metaphors, when analyzed, point towards three salient traits: respect, trust, and reciprocity, which characterized the relationships they established and nurtured.

The existing literature highlights the disagreement concerning how best to define the concept of coaching. However, we found the partnership model with the following seven principles equality, choice, dialogue, praxis, voice, reciprocity, and reflection, most attractive and fitting to our context, excepting *choice* (Knight, 2007). Because the ICs in this study, while validating the experiences and knowledge of their coachees, were charged with guiding their coachees to master the SIOP model.

Finally, the three salient traits such as respect, trust, and reciprocity as mentioned above are essential for a fruitful coach-coachee collaboration. We propose and recommend that scholars should take steps to create these elements

initially for an effective partnership program. Future follow-up to this research could include interviewing coachees and asking them to identify the challenges and successes of their coaching experiences using metaphors.

Table 1. ICs' metaphorical conceptualizations of their roles

Participants	Metaphor	Sample Linguistic Expressions	Common Themes
Ella	Driving in the rain	...trying to get to the end of street when it's raining and you can't see where you are going...	*Manifesting Respect *Valuing Reciprocity *Warranting Trust
Sarah	Gardening	...a garden that has endured some frost and some drought and is all the more beautiful for it.	*Manifesting Respect *Valuing reciprocity
Terry	Hiking	...a long hike in the mountains...	*Manifesting Respect *Warranting Trust *Valuing Reciprocity
Charlie	Hourglass	... where single grains of sand or a little water is added over time and nothing happens until the tipping point is reached and then it all gets dumped.	*Warranting Trust *Valuing Reciprocity
Kora	Kaleidoscope	...put some of the colorful pieces in place in such a way that the coachee could better see a pattern...	*Valuing Reciprocity *Warranting Trust
Jenny	Tour guide	... a partnership between a tour guide and a trial blazer.	*Manifesting Respect *Warranting Trust
Sammy	See-Saw	...a 'teeter totter' ... keeping the 'teaching-learning board' in balance.	*Warranting Trust *Valuing Reciprocity
Chelsey	Router	...like a "router". The closer you are, the better the connection ...	*Warranting Trust *Valuing Reciprocity

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