



LITERACY COACHING: RESEARCH & PRACTICE

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Literacy Coaching: Research & Practice

2009 CEDER Yearbook

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ISBN 978-0-9718442-5-4

Printed by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

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We deeply appreciate their efforts.

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Foreword

Jack Cassidy & Sherrye Dee Garrett
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The chapters in this volume are based on presentations from the First National Literacy Coaching Summit held at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on April 3 and 4, 2009. The conference drew more than 400 participants from 21 states, the Virgin Islands, Canada, and Washington, D.C. Keynote speakers included Dr. Nancy Shanklin of the University of Colorado, then-head of the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse; Dr. Rita Bean of the University of Pittsburgh, a longtime researcher on the role of the reading specialist/literacy professional; Dr. MaryEllen Vogt of California State University Long Beach, an expert on teaching English language learners; and Gary Soto, a noted children's author.

Literacy coaching has been a hot topic in the field for most of the past decade (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2009-10). A literacy coach should be a well-qualified and highly-regarded classroom teacher with advanced training in literacy. Ideally, the literacy coach is assigned to one school and primarily works as a staff developer. However, the International Reading Association recognized the "changing roles ... and variety of new titles, such as *reading coach* and *literacy coach*, and ...the variability in the job descriptions for these coaches" (2004, p. 2).

Chapters included in this book represent both research and practice in the field of literacy coaching. The 26 authors hail from 10 different states. These chapter authors are both school-based and university-based professionals. Each of the articles was blindly peer reviewed by at least two literacy professionals. Like the au-

thors, these peer reviewers were both school-based and university based and came from ten different states.

The first chapter introduces the major coaching themes and research presented in this book. The second chapter provides an overview of the history and precursors of current literacy coaching. The next five chapters represent some of the research conducted on literacy coaching. Nancy Shanklin's article begins the research section, and it highlights some of the most significant research on literacy coaching.

The second section of the book focuses on specific practices associated with literacy coaching. This chapter opens with a piece by Rita Bean, delineating five lessons from her years working with and observing literacy coaching in schools. The remaining five chapters address specific programs and strategies that have proven effective.

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Literacy Coaching: Why the Need for Evidence, and Why Now?

Misty Sailors

Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of the issues related to coaching that are addressed in the chapters of this yearbook. Both research and practice are discussed under the themes of the effectiveness of coaching and the nuances of coaching. Concluding thoughts review issues requiring continued consideration and recommendations for the future.

New may not always be right, according to Wilson and Berne (1999, p. 5), but *new* and *right* are both true in the case of coaching. From an historical perspective, the field of reading research has yielded much more information about the professional development of reading teachers than we had a short forty years ago (Borko, 2004). For my friends and colleagues who were involved in the revolutionary-era in research on teaching and learning, that's not too long ago. For those of us who may very well have been subjects in the earliest process-product studies of the 60s and 70s, the field has come a long way in defining what "counts" for quality instruction for the children we worry most about and what "counts" for the professional development of their teachers. It is appropriate to focus on teachers. Time after time, research has indicated that it is the quality of the teacher that makes the difference in student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). It has also been true that the neediest children often get the most inexperienced teachers (Olson, 2003). It is, therefore, imperative that teachers receive the kinds of support they need to teach their students to be critical readers and

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writers—readers and writers who not only can pass an achievement test but also can question the very world in which they live.

Background on Research on Coaching

Research shows that teachers can change their instructional reading practices (NICHD, 2000) and, indeed, are motivated to do so (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000). One way to help teachers become better at what they do is to participate in high-quality professional development. Quality professional development, in turn, can result in significantly higher student achievement (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). This is especially true in the area of reading (Linek, Fleener, Fazio, Raine, & Klakamp, 2003). The majority of U.S. states require professional development activities for their teachers (NCES, 2003), but there still are no clear directives about the content or the context of that professional development (Lipson, Mosenthal, Mekkelsen, & Russ, 2004). Even so, vast amounts of federal, state, and local monies are spent on professional development each year (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Borko, 2004). Professional development is also a major component of the current policy requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is the NCLB policies that have spurred many schools across the country to move toward the "coaching" of reading teachers as a model of professional development (Dole, 2005).

Much of the current research on coaching centers on the *role* of coaching as it relates to a wide range of topics:

- The craft of teachers (Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008)
- The domain knowledge of teachers (Brady et al., 2009)
- Teacher efficacy (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Lovett et al., 2008)
- Improved practices in the areas of special education (Gersten, Morvant, & Brengelman, 1995)
- Writing instruction (Frey & Kelly, 2002)

- Preservice science teacher education (Scantlebury, Gallo-Fox, & Wassell, 2008)

Only recently have studies begun to examine the *effectiveness* of coaching in systematic ways. For example, Van Keer and Verhaeghe (2005) compare a year-round intensive coaching model with a more restrictive model for second- and fifth-grade teachers. The team find that both treatments were equally effective in changing students' reading comprehension, fluency, strategy use, and self-efficacy. Lovett and her colleagues (Lovett et al., 2008) study the effects of coaching on preparing high school teachers to teach students with reading disabilities. Student outcome data indicates that classrooms in which teachers had an extra year of coaching demonstrated greater student gains. Sailors and Price (2010) also explore the role of coaching as a means of professional development in improving comprehension instruction in elementary and middle school classrooms; their findings suggest that coaching may be a model of professional development that can be supportive of teachers in grades two through eight across reading, language arts, science, and social studies.

And, while it has been listed as "hot" in recent years (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2009/2010), coaching is not new, as Cassidy and his colleagues point out in chapter two (Cassidy, Garrett, Maxfield, & Patchett, this volume). Whether a whole generation of teachers and teacher educators are re-discovering coaching, or whether good practices have only now made their way into schools across the country, coaching is here to stay, at least in the minds of those who lead the field (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2009/2010). Although coaching may be described as an effective practice, until recently, there has been scant evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of coaching for improving teacher practices and student learning (Sailors, 2008). What is important about this volume is that the studies in it contribute to the growing argument that coaching is a viable mechanism for the professional development of classroom teachers.

Themes of the Yearbook

That a yearbook would be dedicated to research on coaching is significant. Adding to this significance is the fact that the studies that appear here represent a variety of research methodologies, including surveys, focus groups, observations, logs, discourse analysis, intervention studies, case studies, and descriptive studies. Furthermore, these studies report on practices, perceptions, and achievement, and they reach across grade levels. This section of this chapter is organized around the themes that emerged between and across the studies in this yearbook. They center on the effectiveness of coaching, the more nuanced aspects of coaching, and considerations and recommendations.

The Effectiveness of Coaching

Studies in this yearbook contribute significantly to the emerging body of research on the effectiveness of coaching and its role in teaching and learning. Shanklin (this volume) reports on recent studies that look more closely at the effects of coaching on improving practices and student achievement. Ippolito (this volume) reports on the ability of coaches to recognize when they are engaging in directive and responsive interactions with teachers. Coaches are cognizant of these differences, he reports, and further, the coaches in his study valued both. This is an extremely important finding when we consider that coaches are asked to be both directive and/or responsive, depending on the context in which they find themselves.

Other studies in this volume examine the effects of coaching. The work of Rubin and colleagues (Rubin, Sutterby & Sailors, this volume) demonstrated the importance of critically analyzing the degree of implementing elements of innovation and reasons that teachers may or may not be implementing all aspects of innovation equally. Feighan & Heeren (this volume) report that teachers in their study perceived their coaches positively, even though those coaches spent a large amount of time engaged in administrative work. Interestingly, the study reported changes in the

practices of the intervention teachers, but only small differences in students' scores in the intervention and comparison groups. This issue of the time and effort of coaches and what they do is addressed in the final section. The final study in this section suggested that the more time coaches spend with teachers, the more teachers will engage in changed practices (Heineke, this volume).

The Nuances of Coaching

Studies in this yearbook also contribute significantly to the emerging body of research around the more nuanced aspects of coaching. While her study was listed in the previous section, I will begin this section with Heineke's research (this volume). Analysis of her data illustrates the importance of relationships in coaching/teacher dyads, productive versus unproductive discussions, and the dangers in coaches dominating conversations. This study surely will encourage coaches around the country to re-think the ways in which they "lead" or "follow" during conversations with teachers. More practical advice is offered in Bean's chapter (this volume)—guidelines that are helpful for all coaches, including new ones, experienced ones, and ones that serve in more external, "outsider" roles.

Other authors in this volume offer useful insights as well. For example, Holliman describes a grassroots research-based literacy program, an idea long endorsed by literacy professionals. From my experience working in the field as part of such a program, I know first-hand of the effectiveness of this approach. Swift and her colleagues, Artz and Bickel, also describe coaches' appreciation for the support offered to *them* in this type of program. Rose offers pragmatic advice on alternative interactions between coaches and teacher dyads as they relate to the administrators' and teachers' expectations around demonstration lessons. Finally, and perhaps the most unexplored topic, Blackstone and her colleagues (Blackstone, Antell, Faulkner, Gerhart, Gorski-Ohlfs, Reilly & Sowls) address the pragmatic description of the education of literacy coaches. They offer solid components to

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readers who may consider a coaching program at their institute of higher education.

Considerations and Recommendations

Although there is growing evidence that coaching teachers has the potential to inform instruction and raise the reading achievement of children, especially those from minority groups and backgrounds of poverty (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000), some caveats are in order. First, there are many models of coaching (Bean, 2004; Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Sailors & Price, 2010; Toll, 2005; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). In considering a model of coaching, it is imperative that districts and schools consider the level of resources (human, time, and monetary) that can be committed toward ensuring the success of the coaching model, and, thus, the success of the classroom teacher in improving instructional reading practices. The resources available will influence the model of coaching that a school can offer its teachers. These concerns are addressed in many of the studies in this volume.

Second, this move toward coaching can redefine the role, in some cases, of the reading specialist. A change in that role will require schools to consider carefully the redistribution of the reading specialist's workload. In the past, the reading specialist worked directly with children (Dole & Osborn, 2004); however, with the addition of coaching responsibilities, the reading specialist's role may be changing. In a recent national survey by Roller (2006), 67% of responding coaches reported that they worked primarily with classroom teachers; 25% of responding coaches reported that they worked with both teachers and students; six percent reported that they focused on implementing a core reading program; and less than two percent reported that they focused solely on working with students. Careful attention must be paid to the duties of the reading coach so that he or she is able to support teachers in ways that improve instructional reading practices. Coaches who do not have clear descriptions of their

duties are not able to support teachers in ways that are helpful. Neither are coaches who are overwhelmed with paperwork. Studies in this volume reiterate the need for clearly defined roles of coaches.

Third, all stakeholders need to understand the investment of time required for coaches and teachers to find ways to work collaboratively and for the support process to take effect. In many cases, teachers and coaches need time for their relationship to grow into one built on trust, so that both parties will become risk-takers. It also takes time for teachers and coaches to fully implement innovative practices. A study by Joyce and Showers (1995) found that it took between 20 and 25 trials in classrooms before new instructional activities became part of a teacher's repertoire. Similarly, coaches need to recognize the role that risk-taking and gradual approximation play as teachers learn new instructional methods (Shanklin, 2006, p. 3).

Fourth, coaches must be seen as professionals with their own sets of professional development needs (Sturtevant, 2003). Coaches, too, must have follow-up and support; we can not afford simply to remove a classroom teacher from her teaching duties and expect her to "coach" others (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2006). There is still much research to be conducted about the quantity and quality of ongoing support that coaches need as they learn to support the instruction of teachers (IRA, 2004).

And, finally, care must be taken to not sacrifice the quality required in a coach in the rush to fill a position. A coach must have a strong knowledge base in literacy and instructional reading strategies to serve as a model and facilitator of teacher knowledge and practice. (Sturtevant, 2003, p. 17). Interestingly, in her national survey, Roller (2006) found that 99% of the coaches surveyed held only a BA and that an advanced degree in reading was not a necessary requirement for a coaching position. In a world where the complexities of the processes of reading are only beginning to be understood, schools, districts, states, and policy makers must consider what it means to have "highly qualified" reading

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coaches, especially when those coaches are placed in schools with the children who most need expertise in the teaching of reading.

Where Do We Go from Here?

While we have recognized in other places the contributions made to the embryonic field of coaching (Sailors & Shanklin, in press), the reality is that we still have a long way to go. Unanswered questions abound: What makes for effective coaching? What types of qualities must coaches possess to be effective? What is the role of leadership in building school level support for the work that coaches do? How do we deal with the many responsibilities of coaches? How do we ensure they spend the vast amount of their time with teachers and students? What is the role of universities in supporting ongoing coaching efforts at both state and local levels?

There are methodological questions, too. Do we as researchers, both university- and field-based, have the tools at our disposal to capture and describe the nuances of coaching? Are traditional tools enough? Do we need more? Under what conditions will they be developed? The list goes on and on.

And, finally, there are many uncertainties around policies that govern the place of coaching (or not) in the plans of the current administration. As Shanklin points out in her chapter (Shanklin, this volume), there are many unanswered questions regarding coaching as national reform efforts are examined and revised. In the midst of this, we still must ask, what is the role of research in policy? How do we, as a pragmatic and research community, capture the attention of the policy makers to ensure that these questions are answered and that coaching remains an option for school districts? The good news is that Texas A&M Corpus Christi is committed to the second annual National Literacy Coaching Summit in 2010. If the studies that appear in this volume are any indication, there will surely be answers to these and many other questions presented and pondered then.

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Introduction

Literacy Coaching: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the evolution of the literacy coach. Many educators assume the term “literacy coach” refers to a new and different literacy position. Actually, the position, with its attendant responsibilities, has been around for many decades. Previous labels for what we now call literacy coaches include learning specialists, literacy facilitators, language arts specialists, instructional specialists, and many more. The peer-coaching model became popular in the 1980s; it was followed by a technical coaching model. Reading First, a part of the No Child Left Behind legislation of the early 2000s, required that districts use reading coaches. Most literacy professionals, however, preferred the more inclusive term “literacy coach.” All of these terms described a position with the same goal: improving the academic success of students, particularly in the areas of reading and writing. Revisions to No Child Left Behind may bring yet another change in literacy coaching. The future of literacy coaching is a story waiting to be told.

The term “literacy coach” is a relatively new addition to the educational lexicon. Essentially, the term refers to a professional educator who collaborates with classroom teachers to provide individualized staff development. Ultimately, this collaboration aims to to improve the reading and writing skills of students.

Undoubtedly, the Reading First Initiative of the No Child Left Behind legislation (2001) had much to do with the popularity of this position. This legislation provided funding for the hiring of a full-time reading coach to provide mentoring, coaching, training, and demonstration lessons for the classroom teacher. The term was first used in the *Standards for Reading Professionals 2003* (International Reading Association, 2004). By the end of 2004, the term had appeared in *Reading Today's* "What's Hot, What's Not for 2005" list (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2004/2005). At that time, the term was considered to be "very hot" by the 25 literacy professionals interviewed, and it has continued to be "very hot."

Further evidence of the growing popularity of the term was demonstrated by its growing presence on the Internet. On September 17, 2003 a Google search for "literacy coach" resulted in 5,100 hits. Less than six months later, on February 9, 2004, the same search produced 124,000 hits (Cassidy, 2007). The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse web site was founded in 2006 and was jointly sponsored by the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA). However, in 2009, the International Reading Association withdrew its support for the Clearinghouse, and NCTE significantly cut its support. This decline in interest is reflected in a March 11, 2010 Google search, which yielded only 81,100 hits.

Early history

Despite the apparently recent appearance and subsequent popularity of the term "literacy coach," the position has roots dating as far back as the 1930s (Bean & Wilson, 1981; Bean, 2004). Previous forms of the title include "learning specialist," "literacy facilitator," "language arts specialist," "language arts coach," "curriculum specialist," "instructional specialist," "instructional coach," and "academic facilitator" (Mraz, Algozzine & Kissel, 2009). All of these terms have described a position with the same goal: improving the academic success of students, particularly in the areas of reading and writing. The 1965 federal initiative,

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), provided funding under Title I for reading improvement in US public schools. Title I teachers worked with at-risk students in “pull-out programs” (Dole, 2004). Reading specialists did not work directly with the classroom teacher, but pulled children out of the regular classroom for supplemental instruction. This model of teaching persisted well into the new millennium, although its actual effectiveness was arguable (Allington & Walmsley, 1995; Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton & Wallis, 2002; Niles, 1981).

In 1967 a second model for reading specialists emerged. The new model expanded the role of the reading specialist to include work with teachers and administrators alike in order to develop effective classroom reading programs (Barclay & Thistlewaite, 1992). The 1968 *Guidelines for Reading Instruction in the Secondary Schools* show multiple expectations for reading specialists: “The reading specialist may be designated as that person who works directly or indirectly with students and who works with teachers and administrators to improve and coordinate the total reading program of the school” (Debrick, et al., 1968, p. 8). Thus, the reading specialist became both a supplementary teacher working directly with students, and one who was responsible for the professional development of teachers and the improvement of their classroom teaching skills.

The Eighties—Joyce and Showers

In the 1980s Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers became the gurus of peer coaching as a means of staff development (1982). They contended that assisting another teacher to overcome the hurdle of a new and difficult teaching process was foremost in the coaching process. This experience developed in teachers the trust and reassurance they needed to leave previous methods and adopt new ones. The isolation that individual teachers felt was often a factor in their failure to implement new strategies.

During the 1980s, Joyce and Showers (1982) argued that the way teachers learn and implement new knowledge and skills is

equally important as the content of their learning. They pioneered “peer-coaching” strategies that aided the transfer of newly learned workshop skills, and they asserted that “successful transfer requires a period of practice of the skill in context until it is tuned to the same level of fluidity as elements of the previous elements of the repertoire” (p. 5).

Showers (1984) emphasized the importance of following training with individual coaching. Later research by Showers and Joyce (1996), found that only about 10% of teachers actually implemented what they had learned without coaching. Joyce and Showers (1996) outlined four principles of peer coaching:

1. All teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching study teams.
2. It is necessary to omit verbal feedback as a coaching component.
3. In defining “coach,” when pairs of teachers observe each other, the one who is teaching is the coach, and the one who observes is being coached.
4. The collaborative work of peer coaching teams is much broader than observations and conferences.

They envisioned the role of peer coaching as supportive rather than evaluative, egalitarian rather than hierarchical, and collaborative rather than supervisory. They believed that “the formation of peer coaching teams produces greater faculty cohesion and, in turn, facilitates more skillful shared decision making” (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 16).

Other researchers distinguished coaching from conventional forms of professional development because, “unlike more traditional models of professional development, coaching is embedded within schools and classrooms and is responsive to the specific challenges faced by teachers in their daily work with students” (Steckel, 2009, p. 14). Servatius (1985) stated that the role of the coach was to facilitate credibility, collegiality, and companionship.

Brandt (1989) wrote that for some advocates, coaching was equivalent to “teacher empowerment.” Furthermore, “coaching can help educators continue to enhance their expertise, produce more successful teachers, and increase job satisfaction” (p. 2).

Bean & Wilson (1981) saw coaching in a description of the reading specialist continuum:

Remedial reading teachers at one end of the continuum have little opportunity to interact with teachers; generally they spend most of their time instructing students who have difficulty with reading. Conversely, resource reading specialists may never work with children. These specialists spend much of their time on both informal and formal staff development. (p. 1)

Niles (1981) proposed that “while no one denies the need for remedial instruction, the idea persists that improved initial instruction can spare many children the experience of remedial instruction (p. v).”

Garmston (1987) reported varying philosophies related to coaching. Some administrators modified the role of coaches by adding “technical coaching” as an accompaniment to “peer-coaching.” Other administrators eliminated peer-coaching altogether and used only technical coaching. Technical coaches focused on having teachers:

- Practice new strategies more frequently to develop greater skills
- Use the new strategies more appropriately
- Retain knowledge about new strategies for longer periods of time
- Teach the strategies to their students
- Understand the purposes and implementation of strategies more clearly (Garmston, 1987; Showers, 1985)

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Advocates of technical coaching alone supported their position by referencing Joyce and Showers' 1982 work. However, Garmston (1987) cautioned that, in some cases, technical coaching was seen to be prohibitive because of the many hours necessary to train teachers and coaches, along with teacher inhibition due to the evaluative nature of the coaching experience. According to Garmston (1987), one of Joyce and Showers' (1982) five best practices, the provision of companionship, was absent from the technical coach's duties. Garmston argued, "certain technical coaching practices tend to inhibit collegiality and professional dialogue" (p. 19). This was a pivotal moment in coaching. Rather than being viewed as non-threatening, the teacher-coach relationship was seen as undermining teachers' senses of equality and trust.

Modern times

As research on the resource role of reading specialists continued to develop throughout the 1990s, reading specialists continued to perform a variety of tasks, including administering reading assessments, conducting pull-out remedial reading instruction, and providing support to classroom teachers. Barclay and Thistlewaite (1992) reported that although the IRA had delineated the roles of four types of reading specialists, many school districts had more restricted views of the roles. Many districts' expectations for reading specialists still primarily focused on student-directed activities, ignoring coaching activities that focused on teachers and coordinating the reading program. However, the increasing complexity and diversity of roles required most reading specialists to be adaptable and to make concessions to the differing perspectives of administrators and classroom teachers (Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001).

In 2000, Congress revised ESEA. Although public schools' reading improvement goals remained the same, a greater focus was placed on improving classroom teacher performance (Dole, 2004). This reflected Garmston's description of a shift from

reading specialists who worked directly with struggling students, to reading or literacy coaches who were expected to improve the quality of classroom reading instruction. In addition, the need for effective literacy instruction spilled over from language and reading classrooms to content areas (Phillips, Bardsley, Bach, & Gibb-Brown, 2009).

The role of literacy coaches in education gained prominence as state and national policies were implemented to improve teacher effectiveness. At the same time, schools were also challenged with “insufficient resources, an unwilling workforce, and lack of knowledge, skill, or understanding” (Mangin, 2009, p. 760). Many also felt that under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the focus of literacy coaches shifted even further—from improving classroom literacy instruction to improving student test scores (Shaw, 2009).

Today, the role of literacy specialist can seem ambiguous, with coaches expected to work with principals, teachers and students; develop effective instructional strategies; assist in grant writing; conduct research; and continually keep up with emerging research in literacy (Walpole & Blamey, 2008). As a result, “educators mostly have uneven and varied understandings of literacy coaching,” (Toll, 2009, p. 57). Rainville & Jones (2008) describe the complexity of literacy coaching in that “literacy coaches enact various identities based upon the situations in which they find themselves” (p. 440). However, when the literacy coach’s role matches the perceptions of teachers and administrators, implementation is more “successfully adopted” (Rubin, Sutterby, & Sailors, 2010).

The growing popularity of coaching and the explosion of discussions on coaches’ efficacy lead to a desire within the profession for agreement on the definition of the term “literacy coach.”

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A report prepared for the US Department of Education (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007) identified five different types of coaches:

- Data-oriented
- Student-oriented
- Managerial
- Teacher-oriented: working with individual teachers
- Teacher-oriented: working with groups of teachers

Walpole & McKenna (2009) observed, “The multiplicity of definitions complicates the examination of evidence and qualifies generalizing from that evidence” (p. 4). Without understanding precisely what literacy coaches are, how will we ever know what to do with them? To further complicate the situation, there is the expansion of the very concept of reading and literacy itself, which can include a number of subfields that are constantly coming and going in and out of vogue (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2004/2005; 2009/2010).

The International Reading Association (IRA, 2004) supplied the following definition of the role of reading specialist/literacy coach:

- Provides specialized reading and writing instruction, assessment in cooperation with other professionals (special educators, speech and language teachers, school psychologists, etc.), and diagnoses to students at one or more of the following levels: early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary, or adult
- May include the following activities:
 - Serves as a resource in the area of reading for paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and the community
 - Works cooperatively and collaboratively with other professionals in planning programs to meet the needs

- of diverse populations of learners
- Provides professional development opportunities at the local and state levels
- Provides leadership in student advocacy
- Has previous teaching experience
- Has a master's degree with concentration in reading education
- Degree includes a minimum of 24 graduate credit hours in reading and language arts and related courses
- Education includes a 6-credit-hour supervised practicum experience (p. 7)

Unfortunately, this definition does not go far enough to eliminate the confusion about the expectations of literacy coaches (Bean, 2010; Heineke, 2010). It does not distinguish between literacy coaches and reading specialists. Thus, it seems that literacy professionals fall in the middle of Bean & Wilson's continuum (1981): expected to remediate students and to supply resources for classroom teachers. Essentially, the 1968 description from the Oregon school board (Debrick et al., 1968) remains prevalent more than 30 years later.

An initial step in the right direction may be, as many have noted, distinguishing a literacy coach from a reading specialist. Dole & Donaldson (2006) state that "reading coaches are different from reading specialists in that coaches spend their entire time with teachers, not students. Reading specialists, on the other hand, spend some of their time working with teachers and some time working directly with students" (p. 486). They further explain the roles of the reading coach, stating:

Although reading coaches may wear many hats, their primary and most important activity is working directly with teachers in their classrooms. They model how to teach reading and writing lessons for teachers. They observe teachers teaching

reading and writing and provide feedback on their lessons. They assist and support teachers as they learn new reading instruction skills and techniques (p. 486).

The paradigm shift from specialist to coach was also noted in an article by Shaw, Smith, Chesler, & Romeo (2005), which pointed out that the 2003 IRA standards “now require that graduate candidates preparing to be reading specialists must actually demonstrate their ability to assist and support classroom teachers and paraprofessionals through pre-professional experiences in literacy coaching” (p. 6).

Tomorrow

In 2007, Cassidy observed that under the Clinton administration, “volunteer tutoring” had been a very hot topic in his annual *What’s Hot* column. When Bush took office in 2000, however, volunteer tutoring very quickly cooled and vanished from the list. In examining the sudden rise in prominence of literacy coaching, Cassidy mused, “So, will the literacy coach fade into obscurity in 2009 with the departure of the Bush administration?” (Cassidy, 2007). According to the latest *What’s Hot* column, the answer is a firm “no,” with more than 75% of respondents indicating that over a year into the current administration, the topic of literacy coaching continues to be very ‘hot’ (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2009/2010). However, with the elimination of Reading First funding to elementary schools, many of the literacy coaching positions have vanished. So, what is the future?

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Literacy Coaching Research

Literacy Coaching: What Are We Learning?

Nancy Shanklin

Abstract

Reviewed in this chapter are six recent studies, three elementary and three secondary, that acquaint readers with emerging studies on literacy coaching. These specific studies are not part of the proceedings from the First National Literacy Coaching Summit, but they illustrate ways in which the field is developing. This growing body of research has allowed NCTE and IRA to advocate for job-embedded professional development and implementation of coaches as part of Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act (H.B. 4037). If LEARN does not pass through Congress separately, NCTE and IRA hope that it will become part of the reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), formerly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The First National Literacy Coaching Summit provided an opportunity for the gathering of a rich mix of researchers, university faculty, policymakers, school leaders, literacy coaches, reading specialists, and classroom teachers to discuss new knowledge and findings about literacy coaching as a means for providing job-embedded professional development. Conference sessions permitted audiences to hear studies or other practical work on coaching and to uncover important patterns. Foremost in people's minds were questions such as:

- Can coaching improve teacher instruction and subsequent student achievement?
- What seems to be working across programs?

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- What are common problems?
- What solutions are people trying?

The sessions encouraged deep discussion and problem solving in a positive, hopeful atmosphere. Conference attendees were able to network and plan future endeavors to move this new field forward. Publication of these proceedings allows information shared at the conference to be distributed to even wider audiences.

Reviewed in this chapter are six recent studies—three based in elementary schools and three in secondary education—that acquaint readers with emerging studies on literacy coaching. These specific studies were not part of the proceedings of the conference, but they help to illustrate ways in which the field of literacy coaching is growing. They suggest threads that are extended by the pieces in the rest of this volume.

Recent Studies of Literacy Coaching at the Elementary Level

Recently one of most rigorous studies of literacy coaching to date was completed by Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter on the Literacy Collaborative (2008). The Literacy Collaborative is a school-wide literacy reform program developed by Irene Fontas and Gay Su Pinnell as an outgrowth of their work to bring Reading Recovery to the United States. While Reading Recovery has proven to be a successful intervention, questions remained as to whether students maintained gains in regular classroom settings. In response to this challenge, Fontas and Pinnell designed the Literacy Collaborative as a school-wide literacy program. One condition for becoming a Literacy Collaborative school is that a building already has had a Reading Recovery program in place. The Institute for Educational Studies (IES) funded a five-year study of 18 Literacy Collaborative schools. The research employed both rigorous quantitative and qualitative measures to address complex questions about whether Literacy Collaborative coaches could assist teachers to improve instruction, and whether subsequent gains in student achievement occurred.

In this study, all students (K-3) attending 18 public schools across eight states in the Eastern United States were assessed using part of DIBELS in the fall and spring for grades K-2, and the fall of the 3rd grade. Students also took the *Terra Nova* assessment in the spring of grades 1-3. The study took place over a period of four years. Results from the first year of the study served as a baseline while the coaches were trained. Coaches began working with teachers in the second year. At that time coaches were asked to keep monthly logs including how they carried out their roles, with whom, and what they did. The researchers also engaged in systematic observation of teachers' instructional practices in years two through four to document the changes they made. Teacher surveys in years one and four assessed individual agency properties, school organizational properties, and possible changes.

Value-added analyses of the schools and the teachers revealed an overall positive effect on children's literacy learning across all schools involved in the study. However, there was considerable variability between schools. Some showed 50% additional learning over usual student growth. Others showed substantial increments to average growth only after two years. Effect sizes increased for each year of the study: .25 in Year 2; .37 in Year 3; and .44 in Year 4. By the final year, there was a 33.4 % increase in learning across children, grades, teachers and schools over the baseline year. From this study it would seem that when coaches are carefully selected and trained to implement a research-based program, positive results can occur. It is important to note that results may not be seen in the first year of implementation; making changes to instructional practices takes time for teachers to implement well, and therefore additional years may be needed. While there may be more positive results with time, variability among teachers may also increase rather than decrease. With coaches helping teachers learn to make changes in their instructional practices, less effective teachers will make increases, but at the same time, more effective teachers make even greater increases. Besides this particular report, other reports exist concerning many other aspects of this

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large-scale study. (Atteberry, Walker, Fountas, & Scharer, 2008; Bryk, Biancarosa, Atteberry, Hough, & Dexter, 2008; Hough, Bryk, Atteberry, & Pinnell, 2008).

Another important project that implemented the use of coaches was undertaken by Chicago Public Schools, six universities, and the Chicago Community Trust in 2002. Given that the current Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, was superintendent during this time period, it seems an important study for educators interested in coaching to know. Working together, the three participating entities developed the Advanced Reading Development Demonstration Project (ARDDP, 2009). The project targeted K–8 schools that were at low levels of reading achievement, but not necessarily the very lowest. Each university partnered with as many as 10 schools. Professional development focused on increasing teachers' knowledge, assessments to inform instruction, improving infrastructure for teacher leaders, and creating teacher teams to work on building K–8 coherence. Chicago Public Schools committed resources for coaches, called "lead literacy teachers" in the project, and for the professional development in the form of coursework for coaches that led to the Illinois Reading Endorsement. By the end of the fifth year, the schools showed improvement, student performance was higher, and a cadre of new school literacy leaders/coaches was created. This project demonstrates that successful results can be achieved in improving teacher instruction and student learning when school districts, university teaching and research faculties, and foundations work together over significant periods of time.

A third study of coaching at the elementary level was conducted in New Zealand (Timperley, Parr, & Hulsbosch, 2008) using a program that has shown very positive student achievement results reported in effect sizes. The assumption in this particular study was that the purpose of one-to-one coaching conferences is to improve teachers' practices. Coaches were provided with training in the principles and practices of effective feedback processes using protocols of learning conversations. The researchers collected data

as coaches engaged in three phases of giving feedback to teachers. Based on the results of each phase, the researchers made changes to learn whether coaches' conversations with teachers could be enhanced.

In Phase 1 of the study, the researchers found that coaches provided teachers with many indirect suggestions that were very practical, often focused on the students or particular points of the specific lesson, and made no reference to wider principles of effective teaching. In turn, the teachers themselves reported that they did not intend to enact coaches' suggestions. Based upon these results and employing iterative research cycles, the researchers taught coaches to provide feedback based upon theories of learning.

In Phase 2 and subsequent data gathering, the coaches were asked to provide teachers with reasons for any questions that they asked so that teachers did not feel interrogated, and understood why the questions were important to consider. The idea was to uncover theories underpinning teachers' current practices. Through discussion, coaches were to begin to shape teachers' views of effective instruction. Additionally, they were instructed to gather feedback on students' responses to lessons. The coaches asked questions of students that were consistent with developing meta-cognitive awareness.

Results from 22 of the 50 episodes in Phase 2 showed coaches engaging teachers in discussions of current theories of effective practice and probing teachers' reasons for particular teaching practices. Coaches and teachers would deconstruct the lesson and co-construct, but not at the level of theory engagement. Suggestions from coaches to teachers once again remained at the practical level. Coaches referred teachers to concepts learned in workshops where theory was also introduced, but only infrequently. In contrast with Phase 1, results from 42 of 50 episodes gathered during Phase 2 showed that coaches and teachers spent time discussing the links between teaching practices, students' understanding of the learning goals of a lesson, and associated success criteria.

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Student responses provided strong motivation for teachers to discuss changes in their individual practices. However, the researchers found that the coaches did not work with teachers to promote self-regulated learning wherein teachers set specific goals for themselves and their students and articulated monitoring strategies to determine if their new practices were more effective. All of these results from Phase 2 led the researchers to contemplate the potential value of configuration maps or levels-of-use instruments in Phase 3.

This study is one of a very few that has examined conversations between teachers and coaches in one-to-one coaching sessions. The study employed a potentially fruitful research strategy of iterative cycles that could lead to improvements in the quality of teacher-coach conversations. Additionally, it has the potential to provide meaningful content and practice for coaches' professional development.

Recent Studies of Literacy/Instructional Coaching at the Middle and High School Levels

Besides these studies of literacy coaching at the elementary level, there have been new studies of literacy/instructional coaching at the middle and high school level. A study of middle school reading coaches from eight Florida districts over the 2006–07 school year was completed by Marsh, McCombs, & Lockwood (2008). The researchers found that whereas coaches were asked to work with all teachers in their buildings, they worked most extensively with reading teachers. Surveys of reading coaches indicated that they desired more professional development training on working with adult learners, special education students and English Language Learners, as well as literacy across content areas. The use of coaches was associated with a small, but significant, improvement in average annual gains in reading for two of the four cohorts of students that were analyzed. It is curious that the coaches chose to work most with reading teachers. There are at least two possible explanations for this phenomenon. The middle

schools selected for the study were large, with only one coach per building. Although coaches could work with all teachers, they chose to work with the reading teachers who were most receptive and wanted to tap into the coaches' expertise. It could also be that coaches felt more comfortable working with reading teachers than with content teachers because they did not feel confident about their abilities to blend literacy and content learning in meaningful ways. Further research could be conducted to explore this question.

During the 2006–07 school year, Elizabeth Boatright (2007) documented the work of an external coach with the English/Language Arts teachers of one high school in an urban area of the Northwest. This large high school had just divided into three smaller schools. Boatright observed three coaching cycles by the external coach at each school for a total of eighteen days. She found that the external coach worked with teachers to examine student data and to model lessons in classrooms. For an additional six days, while the external coach was not present, Boatright observed the teachers for changes in their practices. She found that through demonstration teaching and modeling, the coach was able to change teachers' views about students' intellectual abilities. While working with the coach, teachers observed their students doing tasks that they had not believed the students could accomplish. Additionally, Boatright found that veteran teachers were hesitant to coach beginning teachers even when they knew information that would help them. Instead, all of the teachers were more receptive to critical comments from the external coach. This study suggests that through demonstration teaching, coaches can help teachers examine their assumptions about students' abilities and what they are capable of accomplishing. The study calls into question why the more experienced teachers were not willing to share practical teaching knowledge, even when it was apparent that new teachers and their students would benefit from it. It seems to suggest the need for the development of professional

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learning communities in which all teachers examine their instruction in order to increase student learning.

Cantrell & Hughes (2008) studied the teacher efficacy and content literacy implementation of 22 6th and 9th grade content teachers. Quantitative results showed the largest gains occurred in teachers' sense of *personal efficacy*, that each one could, individually, teach students to use literacy strategies helpful in their own specific content area. However, *collective efficacy*, the teachers' sense as a group that they could teach content literacy strategies that would improve students' abilities, was significantly related to the teachers' continued implementation of new strategies in the spring semester. The primary barrier to teachers' senses of efficacy in using the new instructional methods to increase students' learning was time. Teachers wanted more time to develop their skills, to implement strategies, and to collaborate with colleagues. Teachers affirmed that feedback and support from coaches was essential to their success. This is one of the few studies that offers insights into teachers' views of the coaching experience. It is very interesting that the teachers continued to try new strategies in the spring semester, even though finding time was difficult. Due to their collective efficacy, they maintained the belief that they could, as a group, improve students' learning.

New Learnings

A careful reading of these six studies seems to suggest that districts and schools would be well advised to consider the following points when attempting to design or improve their literacy coaching programs.

- Principals need to set the stage for literacy coaches by working with them to present clear descriptions of coaches' roles to faculty.
- The formation of professional learning communities and school literacy teams that support analysis of data and critical talks about instruction add to coaches' successes.

- Coaches need to document how they spend their time and share these logs with school literacy teams and principals to determine if their time is spent in ways that are most conducive to impacting teachers' instruction and students' learning.
- Coaches should consider use of feedback or classroom observation forms that are developed and shared with teachers as part of coaching conferences.
- Coaches and teachers need to believe that they can impact students' learning.
- Positive results are not always found after the first year of a coaching program; shifting teacher instruction in ways that show positive increases in student achievement takes time.
- Coaches benefit from ongoing professional learning to increase their abilities to do their jobs well.

Held in early April 2009, the National Literacy Coaching Summit occurred shortly after the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (2009) had been passed by Congress. District leaders stated growing concerns that there would not be moneys to hire new coaches or even retain current coaches. In addition, many worried that districts did not have strong program evaluation designs in place that would demonstrate the benefits of coaching for both teachers and students. Others wondered, if they used stimulus moneys to hire coaches, whether they would be able to continue to fund those positions once ARRA moneys ended.

The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (LCC) has been concerned about issues around the funding of coaches' positions since its inception. It became the reason that the LCC Advisory Board decided to use the verb form "coaching" rather than the noun form "coaches" in its title. Although the Advisory Board hopes that funding for coaching will increase, it concedes that the official job or role of "coach" may disappear in some school districts

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during the economic downturn. However, the benefits of coaching as a verb have the potential to survive and to prove themselves.

School districts recognize that old forms of one-time sessions have not worked in terms of raising test scores or closing achievement gaps. They can see it is imperative to experiment with new ideas—sometimes even ahead of helpful information from research on effective coaching programs. The following forms of “coaching” seem to be most prevalent in books and research written by coaches as practitioners:

- Planning, facilitating, or leading professional development sessions
- Leading data analysis sessions
- Leading study groups
- Finding resources
- Holding conversations with teachers “on the fly”
- Organizing peer coaching
- Assisting with action research
- Doing modeling and demonstration teaching
- Leading teaching labs or lesson study
- Doing coaching cycles of pre, during, and post

All of these actions represent types of job-embedded professional development. It is possible for these actions to occur even if the job or role of coach itself disappears. It may be the case that forms of “coaching” could be distributed to various teacher leaders within schools. If these actions prove useful, then perhaps over time, when funding once again stabilizes or increases, actual coach positions may come to exist again.

Educators are under increasing pressure to improve student test scores because of No Child Left Behind (2002) and data showing that US students are not competing as well as they might on international tests. Educators are under increasing pressure as states are starting to develop even higher standards for students. In addition, voluntary national standards may be forthcoming.

There is also growing public will to put more emphasis on early childhood education. Educators in this area are often paraprofessionals who require further education to enhance student learning. At the other end of the spectrum, parents and business leaders are placing increasing emphasis on adolescent literacy and workforce readiness. In addition to the need to increase the quality of instruction at all levels, teachers will also need to be able to develop, administer, and analyze data from new assessments that will guide their instructional efforts. Therefore, job-embedded professional development will not go away, and the actions of instructional coaching will continue in spite of economic challenges. If such actions are successful, schools may decide that they need more coaches, not fewer. Two recent books that provide comprehensive ways that literacy coaches, knowledgeable administrators, and school literacy teams can lead to school improvements are: *The Literacy Coaching Challenge: Models and Methods for Grades K–8* (McKenna & Walpole, 2008) and *The Literacy Leadership Team: Sustaining and Expanding Success* (Froelich & Puig, 2009).

There are additional areas in which coaching may prove helpful. Currently 50% of new teachers drop out of the profession within the first five years. Coaching could help novice teachers become more successful in the classroom and increase their job satisfaction. The mindset across all educators' careers must be to plan for reflection, growth, and change as students and community environments change. For example, more schools are becoming settings where intergenerational learning takes place between students, teacher candidates, teachers, specialists, and administrators, who vary in age by up to two generations. Coaching can help prepare educators to work with a broad spectrum of age groups and learning styles. Job-embedded professional learning that is organized and delivered through coaching can help educators continue to enhance their expertise. Several of these ideas are discussed in the book *Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools*, based on the research of S. M. Johnson (2004) in conjunction with the Project on the Next

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Generation of Teachers.

In part, through the efforts of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA), the phrase “job-embedded professional development” has been written into the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act (2009). With other professional associations, NCTE and IRA have advocated for specific wording around the role and funding of coaches. They anticipate that criteria coaches will need to meet will be written in. If LEARN does not pass, the professional associations are hopeful that job-embedded professional development and the role of coaches will become part of the reauthorization of the *Elementary Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), more recently referred to as NCLB.

In the United States, as well as in other countries, there is a clear need to develop ways in which to help teachers improve the quality of their teaching throughout their careers and to help students keep pace in an ever-changing, challenging world environment. Coaching has emerged as a sensible means to increase teacher quality and subsequent student learning. The real question becomes this: Is coaching merely a nice but *unnecessary* strategy, or is coaching crucial to improving teacher quality and student achievement, working best when schools have well-qualified educators in the role? This volume provides lenses on the state of our current knowledge and offers suggestions as to ways this new field may proceed.

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Investigating How Literacy Coaches Understand and Balance Responsive and Directive Relationships with Teachers

Jacy Ippolito

Abstract

Theoretical distinctions have been made between “responsive” literacy coaching, where coaches focus on teacher self-reflection and let teachers’ and students’ needs guide the work, and “directive” literacy coaching, which occurs when coaches play the role of expert and are more assertive about instructional moves teachers must make. Given the limited empirical data supporting such distinctions, a recent study sought to explore whether and how literacy coaches working across grade levels (K–12) in a single, urban East Coast school district understood and described responsive and directive coaching. Data was collected from 57 literacy coaches (73% of those working in the district during 2007–2008) through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. This paper introduces the larger study and briefly reports key findings, including which behaviors coaches believed were most responsive or most directive, and how coaches attempted to balance the relational stances to spur instructional change.

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In recent years, literacy coaching¹ has become one of the most visible and widely-funded forms of school-based professional development in the United States (Hall, 2004; International Reading Association [IRA], 2004, 2007; Moran, 2007). Strict No Child Left Behind standards for literacy achievement and highly-qualified teachers, in addition to stagnant student literacy achievement scores on both national and international assessments (Baer, Baldi, Ayotte, & Green, 2007; Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005), have prompted great interest and investment in literacy coaching as a method for improving teaching and learning. Excitement about coaching comes from its promise as a mechanism to increase teachers' knowledge and skills, improve instructional practices, and consequently raise student achievement. If one assumes that teachers' knowledge, skills, and practices influence student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005) and that ongoing, onsite professional development is a core component in changing teachers' practices and beliefs (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Guskey, 2000; Huberman, 1995; Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, & Grogan, 2006), then literacy coaching holds a great deal of potential to strengthen students' reading and writing skills.

Despite the recent and widespread enthusiasm for coaching (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2008; 2009), literacy coaches in the United States face a daunting challenge—changing teachers' practices and improving student achievement without holding official supervisory or evaluative powers. Being neither classroom teachers nor administrators, coaches fit somewhat awkwardly into traditional

1 While acknowledging the wide array of roles and responsibilities currently assumed by professionals holding the title of "literacy coach," for the purposes of this paper, a "literacy coach" is defined as a professional hired specifically to deliver ongoing, school-based literacy professional development to teachers. Although the currently accepted "gold standard" for coaches includes certification as a reading specialist (Frost & Bean, 2006; IRA, 2004), this paper does not define coaches as certified reading specialists, reflecting the reality that many literacy coaches nationwide do not currently hold degrees or certifications in reading.

school cultures where “the norms of egalitarianism and autonomy suppress roles that identify teachers as instructional experts and charge them with changing their colleagues’ practice” (Donaldson et al., 2008, p. 1106). Coaches operate within a murky interstitial space, pushing and pulling, prodding and coaxing, steadily working to improve teachers’ instructional practices without drawing attention to the fact that they have very little formal power with which to compel change. Thus, coaches must strategically build relationships with teachers to facilitate the success of their professional development work.

Acknowledging that coaches face unique professional challenges, a subset of the emerging literature on coaching has focused on defining coaches’ roles and responsibilities, specifically their relationships with teachers (Borman & Feger, 2006; Costa & Garmston, 1994; Dozier, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007; Moran, 2007; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Smith, 2007; Toll, 2005; 2007; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). In describing coach-teacher relationships, a number of researchers and professional developers have gone so far as to suggest that it may be best for coaches to operate primarily from a responsive position (Costa & Garmston, 1994; 2002; Dozier, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Steiner & Kowal, 2007), focusing on coaching for teacher self-reflection, “. . . respect[ing] teachers’ knowledge, expertise, and understandings and seek[ing] to affirm, extend, and refine teachers’ instructional practices” (Dozier, 2006, p. 13). This approach, which seems sensible for promoting individual cognitive development and perhaps building a broader “knowledge base” for professional teachers (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002), is often in direct competition with the immediate goal of many coaching initiatives—changing teachers’ practices quickly in order to see an increase in student achievement. Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, and Autio (2007) describe this second mode of coaching as “directive,” a mode in which the “coach plays the role of an expert, identifying a teacher’s specific area of weakness or helping teachers implement a program with specific practices” (p. 5). Although the tension between responsive

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and directive coaching has been acknowledged across a number of recent publications (Borman & Feger, 2006; Deussen et al., 2007; Egawa, 2006; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007; Killion, 2008; Knight, 2008; Steiner & Kowal, 2007; Toll, 2005; 2007), little research has been conducted to confirm that coaches themselves distinguish between responsive and directive coaching or to investigate how coaches understand the relation of responsive and directive interactions to coaching efficacy.

To begin addressing this gap, researchers designed a recent study to explore how 57 coaches across elementary, middle, and high school grade levels in a mid-sized, urban, East Coast public school district understood and described responsive and directive relationships with teachers (Ippolito, 2008; 2009; 2009b). Research questions included: (1) "Do literacy coaches working in a single, urban East Coast school district across grade levels (K–12) differentiate between responsive and directive coaching work?" and (2) "If coaches differentiate between responsive and directive coaching, how do they relate responsive and directive work to overall coaching efficacy (i.e., influencing teachers' instructional practice and improving student achievement)?"

Initial data for the study was collected from 57 coaches (73% of those employed in the district during 2007–2008) who completed surveys about their coaching roles and relationships (see Table 1 for coach demographics). The survey instrument contained three sections of five-point Likert-type items asking coaches to rate coaching behaviors and scenarios on three separate scales ranging from "not at all" to "very" responsive, directive, and effective. The survey also contained four open response sections asking about coaches' roles and responsibilities, understandings of responsive and directive coaching, estimates of time spent on particular coaching activities, and past coaching and teaching experiences. Based on contrasting demographic characteristics and survey responses, a purposeful sample of 24 coaches was identified; coaches were invited to participate in follow-up focus groups, interviews, and observations, with 17 coaches ultimately

agreeing to participate (five elementary, six middle school, and six high school coaches). The purpose of the focus groups, interviews, and observations was to collect rich qualitative data on how coaches made sense of responsive, directive, and balanced coaching stances with teachers. Semi-structured focus groups were held once each for the elementary, middle, and high school coaches. Based on contrasting focus group descriptions of coaching relationships, nine coaches were identified and invited to participate in semi-structured 90-minute individual interviews, followed by two observations of coaching sessions with teachers. Eight of the nine coaches agreed to participate (three elementary, three middle, and two high school coaches) and were interviewed and observed during the spring of 2008. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, paired t-tests, and chi-square tests were used to analyze quantitative survey data, whereas qualitative analyses included open and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) with categories, codes, and themes derived primarily from Costa and Garmston (2002), Deussen et al. (2007), and Toll (2007).

Summary of Key Findings

Coaches Are Able to Distinguish Between Responsive and Directive Coaching Activities

Support for the claim that coaches distinguished between responsive and directive coaching work comes from two corresponding sections of the survey asking participants to rate statements about a coach's behavior and attitudes alternately on five-point Likert-type responsive and directive scales. A plot of participants' mean responses for each of the thirteen items on both responsive and directive five-point scales demonstrates the emergence of two distinct groups: items that were "quite responsive" and "slightly directive," and items that were "quite directive" and "slightly responsive." For only two items were the differences in ratings of responsiveness and directiveness smaller than 1 point on the five-point scale (see Figure 1). Using paired-means t-tests, significant differences in mean responses were found for all but

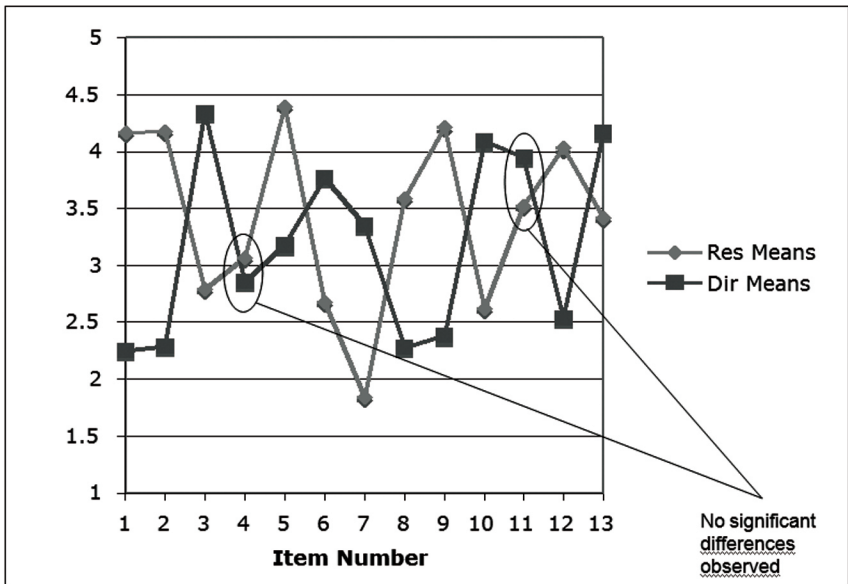
Table 1
Participant Demographics by Grade Level
(n=57)

	Coaches	Years Coaching Experience	Years Teaching Experience	Full-time	Part-time	Masters in Reading	Masters in Other
Elementary (PreK-5)	35	1 – 10	2 – 37	22 (62.86%)	13 (37.14%)	18 (51.43%)	21 (60%)
Middle (6-8)	9	1 – 6	4 – 33	5 (55.56%)	4 (44.44%)	6 (66.67%)	4 (44.44%)
High (9-12)	8	1 – 14	4 – 19	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)
Cross-grade	5	1 – 8	3 – 25	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)

those two items (Items 4 and 11) (see Table 2 for paired difference results).

On average, coaches rated six statements as “quite responsive” on the five-point responsive scale (Items 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, and 12). Moreover, the same six items were each rated, on average, between 2.25 and 3.18, or between “slightly directive” and “somewhat directive,” on the directive scale. An analysis of the results of paired-means t-tests for these items (a test of the difference between how individual participants rated the same statement on the responsive and directive scales) found significant differences between high-responsive and low-directive ratings for these six items (see shaded items in Table 2). For example, Item 2, “Sara begins coaching conversations by asking teachers what she can do to help them,” was rated on average as “quite responsive” ($M=4.18$, $SD=.94$) and “slightly directive” ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.22$). This evidence

Figure 1
Comparing Differences in Responsive and Directive Mean Ratings



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supports the view that participants in this study tended to believe that coaching behaviors such as asking teachers what can be done to help them, working mostly with those teachers who want to be coached, and encouraging teachers to adopt instructional practices that work for them are quite responsive and not very directive.

Alternately, five coaching statements were rated, on average, as between “somewhat” and “quite directive” on the directive scale (Items 3, 6, 7, 10, and 13). While earning high average ratings on the directive scale, each of these items was rated, on average, as only between 1.84 and 3.42, or between “slightly” and “somewhat responsive” on the responsive scale (see Table 2). By rating these items as “quite directive” and “slightly responsive,” participants signaled that coaching behaviors such as asking teachers to make significant changes in their practice, making sure that teachers are following district and programmatic guidelines, and insisting that teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction were among the most directive coaching behaviors listed.

Finally, two statements (Items 4 and 11) were rated similarly on the responsive and directive scales, with most of the scores falling toward the middle or higher end of the scales — “somewhat” or “quite” responsive/directive. It is unclear whether participants understood these statements about storytelling and providing clear information to teachers as neutral with regard to the responsive/directive framework, or whether participants believed that these activities could be equally responsive *and* directive at the same time. Some support for the latter perspective was found in interview data where several coaches described using storytelling and questioning in both responsive and directive manners within individual coach-teacher conversations; however, further investigation is needed to clarify these distinctions.

These findings are important for two reasons. First, it is useful to confirm that coaches across elementary, middle, and high school levels in a single district are able to distinguish between coaching activities that they see as opportunities for adopting predominantly responsive or directive stances. Until now, it was

Table 2
Responsive and Directive Coaching Statement Mean Ratings

Survey Item	Coaching Statements	Responsive Scale Likert Items	Directive Scale Likert Items	Mean Difference
1	Sara makes sure that all teachers feel cared for and supported in their instruction.	M=4.17 SD=.99	M=2.25 SD=1.16	df=55 t=11.175 p=.00 d=1.49
2	Sara begins coaching conversations by asking teachers what she can do to help them.	M=4.18 SD=.94	M=2.29 SD=1.22	df=55 t=8.79 p=.00 d=1.17
3	Sara makes sure that teachers are following district and programmatic literacy guidelines.	M=2.79 SD=1.12	M=4.34 SD=.79	df=54 t=-8.04 p=.00 d=1.08
4	Sara tells stories about her own teaching when giving advice to teachers about their instruction.	M=3.07 SD=1.04	M=2.86 SD=1.09	df=55 t=1.27 p=.21 d=.17
5	Sara collaboratively designs instruction with teachers.	M=4.39 SD=.73	M=3.18 SD=1.11	df=55 t=6.97 p=.00 d=.93
6	Sara points out less-effective practices to teachers so that they can improve their instruction.	M=2.68 SD=1.28	M=3.77 SD=1.06	df=55 t=-5.14 p=.00 d=.69
7	Sara is frustrated when teachers don't follow her suggestions.	M=1.84 SD=1.03	M=3.35 SD=1.36	df=51 t=-6.15 p=.00 d=.85

(continued)

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Table 2, continued

Survey Item	Coaching Statements	Responsive Scale Likert Items	Directive Scale Likert Items	Mean Difference
8	Sara spends most of her time working with those teachers who want to be coached.	<i>M</i> =3.59 <i>SD</i> =1.04	<i>M</i> =2.28 <i>SD</i> =1.11	<i>df</i> =51 <i>t</i> =1.805 <i>p</i> =.00 <i>d</i> =.92
9	Sara meets as many teachers' requests as possible.	<i>M</i> =4.21 <i>SD</i> =.73	<i>M</i> =2.38 <i>SD</i> =1.19	<i>df</i> =54 <i>t</i> =9.52 <i>p</i> =.00 <i>d</i> =1.28
10	Sara expects teachers to make significant changes in their instructional practices every year.	<i>M</i> =2.62 <i>SD</i> =1.01	<i>M</i> =4.09 <i>SD</i> =.92	<i>df</i> =54 <i>t</i> =-8.04 <i>p</i> =.00 <i>d</i> =1.08
11	Sara provides clear information about how to teach reading and writing.	<i>M</i> =3.52 <i>SD</i> =1.11	<i>M</i> =3.95 <i>SD</i> =.87	<i>df</i> =52, <i>t</i> =-2.50 <i>p</i> =.02 <i>d</i> =.34
12	Sara encourages teachers to find what instructional practices work best for them.	<i>M</i> =4.03 <i>SD</i> =.84	<i>M</i> =2.54 <i>SD</i> =1.17	<i>df</i> =55, <i>t</i> =8.98 <i>p</i> =.00 <i>d</i> =1.20
13	Sara is clear with teachers that they need to use assessment data to inform their instruction.	<i>M</i> =3.42 <i>SD</i> =1.24	<i>M</i> =4.17 <i>SD</i> =.81	<i>df</i> =54, <i>t</i> =-3.67 <i>p</i> =.00 <i>d</i> =.49

Note. Shaded cells indicate distinctions between responsive and directive stances.

not clear that these distinctions made sense to working coaches. Even though this study's sample is limited both in number and scope, survey and interview data demonstrate that responsive and directive distinctions in coach interaction styles make sense to coaches in the field. Second, it is helpful for policymakers and administrators to know that coaches across grade levels view ac-

tions such as coaching only those teachers who want support, or beginning coaching conversations with offers of help, as acting in a responsive manner, whereas asking teachers to analyze assessment data, or change practices significantly are viewed as acting in a directive manner. If the majority of coaches in the U.S. believe that they should work primarily as responsive “cognitive coaches” (Costa & Garmston, 2002), following teachers’ leads and focusing on increasing teachers’ self-reflection, then policymakers and administrators should not be surprised when activities considered more directive—asking teachers to analyze assessment data and follow district/programmatic guidelines—might produce anxiety or perhaps be avoided by coaches and teachers altogether.

Coaches Strategically Choose Between Responsive and Directive Coaching Moves

Survey, focus group, interview, and observation data demonstrated that coaches selected and engaged in particular activities partially based on the perceived responsive or directive nature of those activities. For example, on a subsequent section of the survey, 44 coaches identified meeting with individual teachers in brief pre- or post-observation meetings as an activity in which they could be most responsive to teachers’ needs. These one-on-one meetings were identified as opportunities to listen to teachers’ concerns, help teachers be more reflective, and reassure teachers that they were on the right track. Other behaviors identified by coaches as “most responsive” included meeting with small groups of teachers (30 coaches), co-teaching lessons (29 coaches), and supporting and caring for teachers’ needs beyond conversations about instruction (33 coaches). At the same time, a majority of coaches in the study identified behaviors such as leading professional development workshops, modeling lessons for groups of teachers, and working with student assessment data as opportunities to be directive and to teach specific instructional practices (see Table 3 for chi-square statistics).

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Table 3
Activities Coaches Rated as “Most Responsive”
and “Most Directive”

Coaching Activities	Most Responsive (n=56)	Most Directive (n=55)	X ² (df=1, N=55)
1. Observing individual teachers in their classrooms	31 (55.4%)	8 (14.5%)	X ² =15.61 p<.0001
2. Modeling instruction for individual teachers	21 (37.5%)	25 (45.5%)	X ² =.237 p=.627
3. Meeting with individual teachers (e.g., pre-/post-modeling, etc.)	44 (78.6%)	12 (21.4%)	X ² =24.03 p<.0001
4. Modeling lessons for groups of teachers	11 (19.6%)	25 (45.5%)	X ² =5.63 p=.018
5. Meeting with groups of teachers (e.g., pre-/post-modeling, etc.)	30 (53.6%)	14 (25.5%)	X ² =8.04 p=.005
6. Leading professional development workshops	9 (16.1%)	39 (70.9%)	X ² =21.03 p<.0001
7. Working with student assessment data (MCAS data, district assessment data, etc.)	4 (7.1%)	28 (50.9%)	X ² =19.86 p<.0001
8. Helping teachers work with student assessment data	19 (33.9%)	19 (34.5%)	X ² =.00 p=1.0

(continued)

Table 3, continued

9. Managing literacy resource materials (ordering books, arranging materials, etc.)	10 (17.9%)	16 (29.1%)	$X^2=1.90$ $p=.169$
10. Co-teaching lessons with teachers	29 (51.8%)	6 (10.9%)	$X^2=19.36$ $p<.0001$
11. Offering to substitute for an absent teacher	4 (7.1%)	2 (3.6%)	$X^2=.167$ $p=.683$
12. Supporting and caring for teachers' needs beyond conversations about instruction	33 (58.9%)	1 (1.8%)	$X^2=30.03$ $p<.0001$

Reflecting on these distinctions, coaches were quite clear in focus groups and interviews that they tried to shift strategically between responsive and directive activities in order to achieve particular social and pedagogical goals. For example, one experienced coach described meeting individually with teachers and co-teaching lessons as opportunities to “build trusting relationships,” whereas she described leading professional development workshops and modeling lessons for groups of teachers as “venue[s] for . . . demonstrat[ing] best practices in teaching.” Although coaches were quick to clarify in focus groups and interviews that no single coaching activity could be considered entirely responsive or directive, a majority of coaches in the study were able to distinguish between activities that they viewed as predominantly responsive or directive.

This finding is important because it suggests that coaches may see various coaching activities as signaling whose goals and needs are being prioritized — is this an activity in which teachers' goals are the priority, or is this an activity in which district or programmatic goals are the priority? If coaches see clear distinctions

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between the trust-building goals of responsive activities and the pedagogical goals of directive activities, then critical next steps include discovering whether the intent and goals of coaching activities are viewed similarly by administrators and teachers, who may not be making these distinctions in the same ways as coaches.

Coaches Indicate that Balancing Responsive and Directive Moves May be Effective

In survey responses, a majority of coaches indicated their belief that assuming a balance of responsive and directive stances might be more effective in influencing teacher practice than operating from a predominantly responsive or directive stance alone. Coaches were asked to read and rate three hypothetical scenarios of coaches working with teachers on separate five-point scales, ranging from “not at all” responsive, directive, effective, to “very” responsive, directive, effective. Significant differences were observed between the efficacy ratings of the scenarios, with the scenario including a mixture of responsive and directive activities being rated as significantly more effective ($M=3.20$, $SD=.88$) than either of the scenarios including mostly responsive ($M=2.07$, $SD=.10$, $t=8.04$, $p=.00$, $d=1.06$) or mostly directive activities ($M=2.11$, $SD=.81$, $t=7.39$, $p=.00$, $d=.98$). Focus group and interview data supported this finding, with coaches frequently reporting a belief that influencing teacher practice depended on a mixture of the two stances. Take, for example, the statement of a veteran elementary coach discussing these two modes of operating: “It’s a definite balance . . . It’s some responsive, and it’s some directive . . . It’s responsive, but not *only* responsive. And it has to be directive, but not *only* directive.”

This finding that coaches valued a balance of responsive and directive behaviors is critical because it contradicts much of the explicit and implicit advice that coaches receive regarding how to form relationships with teachers. A common, but perhaps tacit, assumption in many coaching books, articles, and programs is that coaches can only be successful if they coach for teacher self-

reflection and follow teachers' leads (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Dozier, 2006). However, findings from this study suggest that such proposals of responsive coaching may not be capturing the variety of ways that coaches understand and enact relationships with teachers. Current findings are limited, as they are primarily based on coaches' self-reports and responses to hypothetical scenarios; however, these findings warrant further investigation into whether and how coaches across contexts understand and employ a balance of responsive and directive coaching moves as they seek to influence teacher practice.

Coaches Reported Three Circumstances and Mechanisms that Seem to Support Balance

In survey responses, a majority of coaches identified a balance of responsive and directive coaching moves as being potentially more effective in influencing teacher practice than either stance alone. However, the study design allowed for only a small sample of coaches to be observed achieving balance. Of the nine coaches who participated in interviews, only five coaches were observed engaging in what might be considered "balanced coaching." Of the five identified coaches, two were elementary coaches, two were middle school coaches, and one was a high school coach. Four of the five coaches had been coaching for more than four years, and one was a first-year coach. Moreover, all five coaches worked in schools with supportive administrators who actively participated in coaching efforts by attending coaching meetings and scheduling regular times for coach-teacher interactions. An analysis of the interview and observation data for the five identified coaches identified three specific mechanisms as allowing for a balance of responsive and directive stances:

1. Shifting between responsive and directive moves within a single coaching session
2. Using protocols during both individual and group coaching sessions

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3. Sharing leadership roles in order to align teacher, coach, and administrative goals

Across participants, these mechanisms were described as allowing the coaches to build trusting relationships while also encouraging specific instructional practices. Due to the limitations of the current descriptive study, future research must identify the extent to which these mechanisms are associated with particular coach and school characteristics (e.g., years of coaching experience, administrative support), and whether these mechanisms are related to changes in teacher practice and gains in student achievement.

Discussion

During a follow-up interview with an experienced high school coach, the coach announced that she was cautious about admitting that she works in equally responsive and directive manners with teachers. When asked why she was so cautious with this information, she replied, “I get a little self-conscious, ‘cause I know the right answer, from what all the literature says, what everything says. It’s ‘you’re supposed to be responsive, and that’s how people change, and their expectations change’ . . . I know all that, and I just, for the benefit of time and implementation, I do both.” When asked to explain further, she stated that coaches need to balance responsive and directive work, shifting back and forth, and that coaches who are entirely responsive “get nothing done.” Although this statement was echoed by her colleagues who were interviewed as part of this study, such statements endorsing balance (and the judicious use of directive actions) still run counter to much of the rhetoric in coaching literature and practice.

At a time when theories and practices of cognitive coaching have become the explicit or implicit foundation for countless coaching programs and theories (Borman & Feger, 2006; Dozier, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Steiner & Kowal, 2007; Toll, 2005; 2007), it is the brave coach who admits to strategically balancing both

responsive and directive coaching moves. Directive coaching, or coaching for the implementation of particular instructional practices, may be derided by coaches and teachers who believe that it is always best to work primarily from a responsive position, always coaching for self-reflection and individual growth.

Findings from this study provide initial support for the recently hypothesized but still marginal view that coaches, particularly more-experienced coaches, believe a balance of responsive and directive work is more effective than working predominantly from a responsive stance (Burkins, 2007; Killion, 2008; Toll, 2007). Moreover, these findings support the premise that coaches across grade levels and with a range of coaching experience think it is sometimes necessary to operate from a predominantly directive stance in order to achieve specific goals — a rarely acknowledged position in the coaching literature. The findings of this study are consistent with research on effective professional development and teacher change processes (Guskey, 2000). This study has important implications for how we train and support literacy coaches.

Although literacy coaches need to learn the tenets and practices of cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1985; 1994; 2002) and wider views of responsive coaching (Dozier, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Killion, 2008; Toll, 2007), their training cannot be confined to these areas. Coaches certainly need to learn how to listen carefully to teachers' goals and interests, assess students' needs, help teachers to become more self-reflective, and use questioning as a method for helping teachers understand their own thinking, but these skills do not fill their instructional toolbox. Coaches need to be trained how to facilitate and guide large group meetings. They need training in how to present literacy content information clearly and directly to achieve fidelity of implementation among groups of teachers. Coaches need to be prepared to analyze and report assessment results in response to teachers' inquiries and as mechanisms supporting larger school improvement goals. In other words, coaches need to be trained how and when directive moves

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are needed in order to align practices across classrooms and focus teachers' attention on neglected aspects of instructional work.

A first step toward improving coach training and support efforts might be to work with groups of coaches to identify and role-play shifts between responsive and directive stances, followed by practicing shifts within activities (e.g., within a post-observation conference). Such conversations and role-plays might help coaches grow more confident in their own skills and relationships, as well as help coaches consider how to match coaching stances and behaviors to larger professional development goals.

Beyond training and support implications, this work also has implications for the way we evaluate coaches. District- and school-level administrators are currently asked to evaluate coaching efforts, yet evaluation techniques such as reviewing coach logs of time on task, or looking for short-term gains in student test scores, may not yield the right amount or the right kind of information to help effectively guide coaches' future work. Alternately, observing and interviewing coaches about responsive/directive work, as well as looking for opportunities to help coaches balance responsive/directive coaching moves, may be a more productive focus for formative assessment. If the success of coaching work truly lies in how coaches effectively manage their relationships with teachers, as some researchers have suggested (Deussen et al., 2007; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Toll, 2007), then it seems only appropriate that administrators and coach supervisors might wish to help identify areas where coaches can strengthen their interactions with teachers.

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She Was My Backbone: Measuring Coaching Work and Its Impact

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of literacy coaching by measuring the daily tasks that literacy coaches typically perform, discussing to what extent teachers perceive coaching services to be beneficial, and investigating the effect of coaching on teachers' pedagogy and students' achievement. A quasi-experimental research design was used to examine data collected over a two-year period from six literacy coaches, 64 teachers, and 3,353 students linked either to intervention or comparison teachers. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of coaching logs and surveys, while multivariate analysis was conducted on the teacher survey and student achievement data. The findings reveal significant differences favoring the intervention group with regard to the frequency of teachers using four specific literacy strategies; however, the study did not show a significant intervention impact on student achievement scores. The findings are relevant as educators plan and implement professional development programs based on literacy coaching.

Literacy coaching as a form of professional development has been increasingly extended to secondary schools in recent years in an effort to stem a rising population of struggling adolescent readers (Calo, 2008). While providing coaching support to secondary content area teachers has the potential to improve the reading skills of students lagging behind their peers after the "fourth-grade slump" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003), few published studies have empirically demonstrated the impact of literacy coaching

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on student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2007; Greene, 2004).

This study seeks to enhance the body of research on secondary literacy coaching by measuring the implementation of coaches' work in four middle schools and by exploring the potential impact of their support on teacher practice and student achievement. Study participants were situated in a large, urban, economically disadvantaged school district that was awarded a five-year federal Striving Readers grant in 2006. The six literacy coaches who participated in the study worked in the middle schools for two years, while teachers in four randomly selected comparison schools (matched on population size and demographic characteristics) did not receive coaching support during this time. The coaches' primary role was to assist teachers with implementing literacy strategies learned over four semesters of university-level professional development classes. The combination of providing university teaching and site-based support for instructional strategies over two years created a strong role for the literacy coaches in this study.

At the time the grant was awarded, the school district had minimal structures in place for literacy-based instructional leadership positions at the middle school level. Because literacy coaching was a new concept in the district and no state certifications for literacy coaching existed, standards from institutions such as the International Reading Association (2001) and the National Council for Teachers of English (2006) were used to create a job description for the role. The school district looked specifically for candidates with excellent classroom teaching experience at the middle school level, advanced university work in literacy, and experience with school-level leadership. While first-year formal training was provided (totaling 119 hours), many of the specifics of literacy coaching were learned on the job within the first two years of the project. The coaches' experiences described in this study exemplify the real-world challenges of working in the middle school setting, and findings from their daily work inform educational practice.

Relevant Literature

Literacy coaches have collaborated with teachers since the 1980s (Joyce & Showers, 1988). The wide breadth of their responsibilities, however, may cloud coaches' understandings of their roles as they become initiated on the job (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003; Brown et. al, 2007). Typical literacy coaching tasks include demonstrating and observing lessons, helping teachers with lesson writing, offering feedback, supporting the use of strategies, and acting as instructional leaders (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Sturtevant, 2005). Some coaches set up model classrooms (Poglinco et al., 2003) or teach reading intervention courses (Calo, 2008), while others review assessment data in addition to other duties (Sturtevant, 2005). Understanding the content of what coaches do is key, because the "functions amount to differences in treatment, and they require nuanced judgments about coaching as a construct..." (Walpole & McKenna, 2008, p. 2).

Few studies have examined the impact of coaching on student achievement (Calo, 2008; Greene, 2004), and results from investigations have varied widely. For example, Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007) found that regular conferences between teachers and coaches contributed to achievement gains among K-3 students in a Reading First district, and Swartz (2005) detected impacts on K-6 student outcomes in a long-term implementation of capacity-building professional development programs. On the other hand, Murray, Ma, & Mazur (2008) found no statistically significant findings in the sixth-month testing outcomes of students taught by control teachers or treatment teachers who had received coaching from peers.

Program Background

Over a two-year period, teachers in the treatment group had access to 140 hours of university-level courses, a school-based literacy coach, and instructional materials that supported the strategies emphasized in the courses. Developers focused on strategies aimed at strengthening vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension,

using a model of instruction characterized by a scaffolded process of guided practice and gradual release. The instructional approach used to train teachers was heavily influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) theory that learning is a social process and is fostered by interactions occurring within the learner's "zone of proximal development." According to the training model, teachers working collaboratively with coaches were expected to introduce, model, and provide opportunities for guided practice and independent use of target strategies in order to support their internalized use and the gradual release of responsibility to students. Developers and grant team leaders provided ongoing guidance and mentoring to coaches who were charged with assisting teachers in their implementation of assigned strategies. The six coaches, each holding at least a master's degree, became certified mentors as part of the grant and worked in four schools (two schools housed one on-site coach each, while two schools had two coaches each to accommodate larger faculty population sizes). Coaches also attended teacher training sessions to experience first-hand what teachers were learning and to support classroom implementation efforts.

The coaching cycle used in the intervention followed six stages: (1) exposure to the strategy in the university class, (2) coach modeling of the strategy at school, (3) team teaching (coach and teacher) in the classroom, (4) coach observation of the strategy being implemented by teacher in the classroom, (5) reflection and feedback shared in a debriefing conference, and (6) competent use of the strategy.

Research Questions

There are two strands to this study. First, researchers examined the implementation of literacy coaching by posing two research questions: Which daily tasks do literacy coaches typically perform at the middle school level, and to what extent do teachers perceive coaching services to be beneficial? The second strand of the study focuses on the effect of literacy coaching on teachers' pedagogy and students' achievement. Here, the authors ask two

key questions: Do teachers who worked with literacy coaches increase the frequency of strategy use over time, and to what extent, if at all, is coaching related to increases in students' academic achievement?

Methods and Sources of Data

Three sources of data were used to address implementation questions: coaches' daily activity logs, teacher surveys, and teacher focus group interviews. The daily activity logs organized work tasks into 12 categories, such as conducting classroom observations, meeting with teachers, or performing administrative tasks. Throughout the second year of the project, coaches submitted the logs to researchers who input and coded the information into a data set.

Anonymous teacher surveys and focus group interviews conducted over the two-year intervention provided further insight into the implementation of literacy coaching from the teachers' perspectives. Participants were asked about their work with coaches, whether they found the assistance helpful, and whether they were comfortable having the coach model strategies in class. Response rates for completing the three surveys were 69.5% of 69 total program participants, 83.7% of 72 participants, and 80.3 % of 66 participants. Focus group response rates ranged from 52.1 to 80.3% of all participants over the four waves of data collection. Groups typically ranged in size from five to eight teachers, and 28 total sessions were conducted. The 50-minute interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for analysis.

To investigate the effects of literacy coaching support on teacher's pedagogy, researchers administered the Teacher Implementation of Strategies Questionnaire (TISQU), which was developed by the researchers with input from the intervention's designer. In fall 2006 the TISQU was used to ask respondents how often in the past school year they had used 24 specific literacy practices and how many hours of professional development in certain topic areas they had received. The response choices for the questions

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about frequency of strategy use were *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *almost always*. The TISQU was administered to teachers in the four intervention schools, as well as in four comparison schools that did not have literacy coaches. An identical follow-up survey was administered to teachers in both research conditions in spring 2008. The item analysis conducted on the frequency of strategy use questions resulted in a raw Cronbach Alpha of .947, which indicated that the instrument was a reliable tool to measure this construct.

Finally, researchers analyzed the individual test scores of students of intervention and comparison teachers to detect whether relationships exist between literacy coaching support and student impact. Two outcome measures were used: (1) baseline and follow-up total scale reading scores from state tests administered in spring 2007 and spring 2008, respectively, and (2) total scale reading scores of the vocabulary and comprehension sections on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) administered in spring 2007 and again in spring 2008. Only students with matched baseline and follow-up scores were included in the analysis.

A sample of two-year intervention completers (N = 46) with baseline and follow-up TISQU data was created from the number of teachers who completed each of the four semesters of professional development; this provided a sample of program completers, or participants who had received the most intensive program “dosage.” Thirty of the 46 completers provided matched baseline and follow-up TISQU surveys that were used for analysis. A total of 34 teachers from comparison schools provided baseline and follow-up surveys. Researchers linked the study participants with students who were registered for their classes for more than half of all instructional days in year two of the project.

Analysis

Researchers analyzed the quantitative survey, coaching log, and student achievement data using SPSS v16 software. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of coaching logs and pre-

focus group surveys, while multivariate analysis was conducted on the TISQU survey and student achievement data (e.g., T-tests, Pearson's r , analysis of variance, and linear regression). Focus group themes were coded and analyzed using the qualitative software program Nvivo v7.

Results

Coaching Tasks

Logs maintained in year two of the intervention accounted for 52% to 86% of days the coaches worked. Table 1 shows that the 847 daily logs, which included 5,791 individual tasks, described tasks that were most often administrative in nature (e.g., scheduling meetings, organizing a curricular resource center, or composing emails) or involved training or meeting with teachers (e.g., debriefings or lesson planning sessions). Approximately 12% of coaching tasks involved participating in coaching professional development, such as mentorship trainings or conferences. Occasionally, coaches performed non-intervention-related tasks (5%), such as assisting staff with state testing or attending school functions. Helping teachers prepare for class (8.8%) often involved gathering curricular materials to be used in a lesson or reviewing test scores with teachers for insights into students' differentiated needs. Coaches sometimes helped teachers during class (3.2%) by addressing technology issues, substitute teaching, or working with small groups of students engaged in projects. Actually modeling a lesson for teachers (1.2%) constituted a relatively small percentage of the overall coaching tasks performed.

Researchers analyzed log entries that included teachers' individual names and found that all (100%) intervention completers in two of the four schools received a high level of coaching support, defined as 10 or more substantive interactions with coaches during the school year. Examples of substantive interactions included lesson planning, modeling, or episodes that led to the implementation of a strategy, rather than tasks that were administrative in nature. Approximately 77% of program completers received

Table 1
Percentage of Coaching Log Entries by Type of Task

Task Type	Frequency	Percent
Administrative	1,569	27.1
Training or Meeting with Teachers	1,272	22
Coach Professional Development	675	11.7
Helping Teachers Prepare for Class	511	8.8
Observing Teachers	472	8.2
Non-Intervention School-Related Tasks	290	5
Evaluation/Grant	277	4.8
Evening Course or University Related	236	4.1
Intervention-Related School Tasks	219	3.8
Assisting Teachers in Other Ways During Class	183	3.2
Lesson Modeling	68	1.2
Videotaping Teachers	19	0.3
Total	5,791	100

Data Source: Daily Activity Log, 2007-2008

high levels of coaching at the third school, whereas only 35.7% of completers received high levels of coaching at the fourth school (where the majority of completers were provided moderate levels of coaching support). The variation in coaching “dosage” provided across schools may have been indicative of the coaches’ record-keeping practices, or a function of actual service delivery.

Teachers corroborated the level of coaching support they received in their survey responses. Only two months into the second year of the intervention, 60% of 62 respondents reported that they had worked with their coaches four or more times. In the spring semester, this percentage increased to 75.9%. In fact, survey results may underestimate the frequency of teacher-coach interactions because many focus group participants described working informally with coaches every day or multiple times each week.

Nearly all teachers responding to surveys agreed that their coaches were willing to help when asked. As Table 2 shows, all (100% of 54) respondents in the third wave (spring 2008) also agreed that the coach had a deep understanding of the professional development material, and the majority agreed that advice given was helpful. Only a minority of respondents agreed that it was hard to find time to work together because of the coach's schedule: 27.1% in the first wave (fall 2006) and 21.3% in the second wave (spring 2007). In spring 2008, however, more than half (59.7%) of teachers found it hard to fit coaching time in due to the demands of their own schedules. This corresponded with mounting pressures related to state test preparation.

Focus group interview results underscore teachers' positive perceptions about coaches' willingness to help and provide much-needed support. Despite some initial growing pains related to scheduling issues in the beginning of the program, teachers in the first wave of focus groups characterized the coaches at their school as informative and knowledgeable; they considered the coach to be a nonjudgmental "confidant."

Although the overwhelming majority of focus group respondents issued strong praise for the literacy coach at the end of the program's first year, few accepted the coach's offer to model lessons in their classroom in year two because they did not feel they needed the support. One science teacher, for example, said that the coach asked to model a lesson but the teacher replied, "No, just go over what I need to do, and I'll take care of it." A few teachers in a mathematics focus group said that although their coach made them feel comfortable, they did not "need" her to model a lesson because "she would explain it so well."

During the program's second year, teachers maintained very positive views about the literacy coaches at their schools, characterizing the coaches as approachable and committed to helping them succeed. Teachers described how coaches "went out of their way" to supply them with needed materials, such as e-mailing resources to them on a Saturday, for example. Some felt that work-

Table 2
Percentages of respondents agreeing with statements about the literacy coaches across time

	Fall 2006 (N=48)	Spring 2007 (N=62)	Spring 2008 (N=54)
The coach was very willing to help me when I requested help.	93.8	100	100
I think my coach has a deep understanding of the material.	93.8	95.1	100
Overall, I found my coach’s advice to be very helpful.	89.6	98	100
The coach’s primary role is to help me.	85.4	95.2	n/a
I can confide in my coach.	82.6	95.2	98
It was hard to find time to work with the coach because of her schedule.	27.1	21.3	n/a
I do not really need a coach to implement the [lessons]	25.5	25.8	32.7
It was hard to find time to work with the coach because of my schedule.	16.7	59.7	n/a
I am comfortable having a coach model strategies in my classroom.	n/a	50.0	98.2
I don’t think my coach really understands what it’s like to teach the content I teach.	14.9	6.4	11.5

Data source: RBS Survey.
**n/a Indicates that the question was not asked on the survey.*

ing with coaches raised their confidence, allowing them to implement the strategies they had learned in the course; many relied on the coach for moral support. “She was so eager to do anything

that we needed,” said one teacher, “whether it was modeling, or just one-on-one conversation... She was our backbone to push us through the semester.” Another teacher stated, “I must say that I’m more confident that I now have something [with which] to reach my kids.”

Numerous teachers cited additional benefits of receiving feedback from observations, and those who previously complained of inaccessibility during the early phase of the intervention later described the coach as very accessible. One teacher said that her coach had “been so available for me...we’re just basically working as a great team together.” By the end of the program, teachers in all nine focus groups shared positive views about the coaches, and advised other teachers to avail themselves of literacy coaching support. One teacher stated:

The literacy coaches are there to help you and sometimes we as teachers, as secondary teachers, we don’t like to open our classrooms up to other people to come in and show us things.

Many teachers also reported that the strategies they implemented in class with the coach’s help were effective in raising student engagement and achievement. Some pointed to improvements in students’ comprehension of word problems, writing, or willingness to take intellectual risks, while others stressed the impact of strategy use on increasing the enjoyment of classroom exercises. One teacher felt that choral reading, for example, helped students “to be less afraid to read aloud.” Another stated:

I’ve almost reinvented myself in order to teach them some of the strategies that I’ve learned here, and they’ve been very beneficial. [Students’] writing has improved. A lot of their communication skills have improved, even their communication skills with each other... It’s been beneficial.

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In sum, the majority of survey and focus group respondents across the two-year period described coaches as dedicated and resourceful individuals who helped boost their confidence and willingness to try new things in the classroom, which they felt resulted in higher student engagement levels. Initial concerns about accessibility and scheduling conflicts dissipated over time, and most respondents cited specific ways in which the literacy coach provided valuable assistance.

Teacher Implementation of Literacy Strategies.

The researchers analyzed the baseline and follow-up TISQU survey responses of 30 intervention participants and the 34 comparison teachers who did not participate in the intervention. The survey first provided contextual information about the demographic characteristics and licensing/tenure status of study respondents, summarized in Table 3.

Teachers also indicated on a five point scale (with 1 corresponding to *never*, and 5 corresponding to *almost always*) how frequently in the past school year they used each of 24 literacy strategies. No baseline differences in the frequency of strategy use emerged between intervention and comparison teachers. Paired T-tests showed that both groups reported higher mean responses at follow-up on several strategies; however, ANOVA results showed significant differences favoring the intervention group with regard to four areas: (1) showing relationships with graphic organizers, (2) establishing a purpose for teaching text, (3) modeling the use of thinking maps, and (4) using cooperative learning groups. Table 4 summarizes teachers' mean baseline and follow-up scores for these four strategies.

Results show that although intervention teachers provided lower baseline mean responses than comparison teachers on these strategies, their mean responses at follow-up had surpassed those of the comparison group. In fact, intervention teachers reported a higher mean frequency of strategy use than their counterparts on all 24 items at follow-up. The ANOVA results reported in Table 5

Table 3
Characteristics of Two-Year Intervention Completers and
Control Group Teachers (N=64)

	Intervention Group (N=30)		Control Group N=34	
	#	%	#	%
Female	24	80.0	23	67.6
African American	26	86.7	29	85.3
Age				
20-29 yrs	10	33.3	10	29.4
30-39 yrs	13	43.3	12	35.3
40-49 yrs	2	6.7	6	17.6
50+ yrs	4	13.3	5	14.7
Unknown	1	3.3	1	2.9
Years Worked in Occupation				
Less than 2 yrs	8	26.7	2	5.9
2-4 yrs	5	16.7	9	26.5
5-7 yrs	3	10.0	8	23.5
8-10 yrs	7	23.3	4	11.8
More than 10 yrs	7	23.3	11	32.3
Current Level of Education				
BA/+15 Credits	14	46.7	15	44.1
MA/+15 Credits	14	46.6	18	53.0
Unknown/Ed Specialist	2	6.6	1	2.9

Data Source: RBS Survey, Fall, 2006

Table 4
Baseline and Follow-Up Mean Scores of Intervention and Comparison Teacher Respondents for Selected Literacy Strategies

	Intervention Group (N=30)		Comparison Group (N=34*)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Show relationships of words/ concepts using graphic organizers or thinking maps.				
Baseline	3.20	1.85	3.48	1.44
Follow-Up	4.33	0.66	3.88	0.82
Establish the purpose for reading a text selection				
Baseline	3.33	1.81	3.67	1.56
Follow-Up	4.17	0.95	4.00	0.83
Model use of thinking maps to construct written summaries of selected text.				
Baseline	2.80	1.73	3.03	1.53
Follow-Up	4.07	0.83	3.55	1.00
Use cooperative learning groups.				
Baseline	3.57	1.69	3.58	1.48
Follow-Up	4.30	0.70	3.81	0.98

Data Source: TISQU Survey, Fall, 2006 & Spring, 2008.
**The number of respondents answering each item fluctuated from 31 to 33.*

Table 5

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Intervention and Comparison Teachers Year 2 Follow up, Frequency of Self-Reported Literacy Strategy Use

	df	F	Significance
Show relationships of words/ concepts using graphic organizers or thinking maps.	1,61	3.247	0.019
Establish the purpose for reading a text selection	1,61	0.553	0.046
Model use of thinking maps to construct written summaries of selected text.	1,60	5.003	0.029
Use cooperative learning groups.	1,60	4.222	0.0444

show that differences in mean responses between intervention and comparison respondents at follow-up were significant (see Appendix A for all strategies reported).

Student Impact

The teachers in this study were linked to 3,353 students who had matched baseline and follow-up state test data. Of these students, 1,712 students were linked to the 30 intervention teachers and 1,641 students were linked to the 34 comparison teachers in this study. Approximately 46% (N = 1,553) of the 3,353 students also completed baseline and follow-up ITBS tests that were analyzed for this study. Of those students, 795 students (51.2%) were taught by intervention teachers and 758 students (48.8%) were taught by comparison teachers. Only those who attended a content teacher's class for more than half of the instructional year were included in the analysis. Students typically had up to four or five content area teachers (English/language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science).

Table 6
Baseline and Follow-Up* Mean Test Scores of Students Taught by Intervention and Comparison Teachers

	Intervention Group		Comparison Group	
	Baseline	Follow Up	Baseline	Follow Up
State Test (N=3,353)				
Sample Size	N=1,712	N=1,712	N=1,641	N=1,641
Reading Scale Mean Score	504.53	514.46	507.95	518.72
[SD]	[31.4]	[32.2]	[31.95]	[32.8]
Range	325 – 591	330 – 610	325 – 591	330 – 604
Mean Number of Items Correct	35.3	34.6	36.8	36.2
[SD]	[10.4]	[9.9]	[10.9]	[10.5]
Range	7-63	7-62	4-63	9-62
Mean Performance Level	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1
[SD]	[0.54]	[0.55]	[0.56]	[0.57]
Range	1 - 3	1 - 3	1 - 3	1 - 3
Iowa Test of Basic Skills				
Sample Size	N=795	N=795	N=758	N=758
Reading Scale Mean Score	198.41	208.24	202.12	213.01
[SD]	[21.8]	[25.2]	[23.4]	[26.8]
Range	157 - 270	154 - 290	147 - 303	153 - 314

Data Source: State test scores and ITBS scores.
**Baseline and follow-up tests were administered in the Spring of 2007 and 2008, respectively.*

Table 6 shows the mean state and ITBS test scores for students linked to intervention and comparison teachers. ANOVA results showed that comparison group students obtained significantly higher mean reading scores than intervention students on the state test at baseline ($F = 9.8$, $df = 3352$, $p < .05$) and follow-up ($F = 14.42$, $df = 3352$, $p < .05$). Similarly, comparison students also scored higher than intervention students on the ITBS total reading scores at baseline ($F = 10.4$, $df = 1552$, $p < .05$) and follow-up ($F = 13.0$, $df = 1552$, $p < .05$). While results are statistically significant, the differences are not substantively meaningful considering the mean number of correct items on the state test at baseline and follow-up for both groups of students is within a point or two of one another.

Although state test scores were higher among comparison school students, the magnitude of the difference at follow-up was only five mean points. The difference in mean number of correct items was even closer—34.6 for intervention students and 36.2 for comparison students—and a few students from the intervention group obtained higher scores (up to 610) than students in the comparison group (whose maximum score was 604). The mean performance level of “2” on the state test indicates that students, on average, had not mastered the material and instead were defined as “approaching proficient” (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2009).

Scores from the ITBS followed the same pattern, where students taught by comparison teachers had higher ITBS scores at both baseline and follow-up than students taught by intervention teachers. ANOVAs and linear regression did not show a significant intervention impact on student achievement scores. Predictably, students’ baseline test scores were significantly correlated with their follow-up scores; including grade level and gender with pre-test scores accounted for approximately 44 % of the variance in outcomes. Race was not included as a covariate because of the homogeneity of the group, in which 95% of students were identified as African American.

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Researchers are currently conducting additional analyses to determine the extent to which other contextual variables affected students' achievement. Specifically, hierarchical linear models that take into account school-, teacher-, and student-level factors are being specified to glean additional insight into associations between the literacy coaching that teachers received, and student outcomes.

Study Limitations

Readers should be mindful of the study's limitations before drawing conclusions about the impact of coaching on teaching and learning. First, teachers' self-reported strategy use was not corroborated by other independent measures. The authors are still in the process of analyzing a wealth of classroom observation data. Although there was a significant increase in the percentage of treatment teachers who reported using a few specific strategies at follow up, the "ceiling effect" that emerged at baseline means that both treatment and comparison teachers reported frequently implementing certain literacy strategies even before the intervention, which seems unlikely. Despite baseline characteristics of the two groups of teachers, it is also possible that teachers who volunteered to participate in the program were innovators who were more likely than other teachers to experiment with literacy strategies in their content classes. Finally, while the state and ITBS test scores were higher among comparison school students, the magnitude of the difference was small: five points on the state test and seven points on the ITBS measure. ANOVA and linear regression results did not show a significant effect of the intervention on student test scores. However, additional variables must be added to the model to determine how much of the variance is explained by those contextual factors.

Discussion

Quantifying the daily activities of literacy coaches demystifies their true roles in secondary schools and helps stakeholders

set realistic expectations, rather than making assumptions about what coaches actually do (Calo, 2008). The coaches in this study attempted to document the various work tasks they performed throughout the day. However, it was difficult to do this accurately and consistently, given the fluidity and volume of tasks (many of which are characterized by informal social interactions) and the time it takes to record one's work. Because serving teachers took priority over logging work tasks, it is likely that coaches underestimated the work they performed to benefit teachers directly. For example, although the researchers considered writing e-mails to be an administrative task, the correspondence may have included links to helpful curricular resources or advice about managing class during a literacy activity.

The coaches in this study engaged in practices that are consistent with the literature. For example, at least 43% of the coaches' tasks involved working directly with teachers, compared with 48% of coaches in a study by Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2007). In another study, the realization that Reading First coaches spent 28% of their time working directly with teachers helped developers adjust their expectations of the role of coaches, and it suggests that work content can vary widely across school settings (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). The fact that lesson modeling accounted for only 1.2% of the tasks in our study invites further examination into which stages of the coaching cycle are most beneficial to those teachers who value the coach's contributions, but demur when offered the chance to observe the coaches' implementation of strategies in class.

Although results do not show a direct link between literacy coaching and student achievement, the actual difference in scores of students from the two research conditions was quite small. The lack of empirical evidence linking literacy coaching and student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2007; Greene, 2004) compels researchers to find better ways to measure these relationships and to estimate first the effects of coaching on teachers' perceptions, confidence, and implementation of strategies that have demon-

strated promise in raising literacy proficiency among students. It may take three to five years for student achievement gains to manifest (Shanklin, 2009). In our study as well, additional analysis of the students' scores over time is needed before concluding whether the use of strategies and/or literacy coaching support had an impact on reading skills.

Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of literacy coaching through an analysis of daily coaching logs, teacher perceptions, teacher self-reported strategy use before and after coaching support was provided, and outcome data of students linked to participating teachers. The results showed that although teachers held positive perceptions about the impact of coaching and strategy use on students' engagement levels, no significant changes were detected after analysis of test scores. An examination of how students transfer the use of strategies in the classroom to independent reading (thus measuring the "takeaway" component of student learning) would provide insight into the potential for real student gains. As the emphasis in research on coaching shifts to measure impact on students, further exploration will create a lens through which we can view more fully the potential effects of literacy coaching.

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Appendix A

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Intervention and Comparison Teachers: Frequency of Self-Reported Literacy Strategy Use, Year 2 Follow-Up

		Sum Sq	df	Mean Sq	F	Sig.
Have students read aloud from core subject area texts and/or supplemental texts daily for at least five minutes per period	Between Groups	0.485	1	0.485	0.645	0.425
	Within Groups	45.927	61	0.753		
Identify "bridging books" (part story and part information)	Between Groups	0.001	1	0.001	0.001	0.977
	Within Groups	93.427	61	1.532		
Ask higher order questions and require students to justify their answers	Between Groups	0.589	1	0.589	1.702	0.197
	Within Groups	20.782	60	0.346		
Pre-test students before the beginning of a new unit of instruction	Between Groups	0.005	1	0.005	0.007	0.932
	Within Groups	44.269	60	0.738		
Discuss and analyze new vocabulary before reading	Between Groups	0.812	1	0.812	1.545	0.219
	Within Groups	32.045	61	0.525		
Show relationships of words/concepts using graphic organizers or thinking maps	Between Groups	30247	1	3.247	5.794	0.019
	Within Groups	34.182	61	0.56		
Create elaborate, and sort subject-related vocabulary word list	Between Groups	0.502	1	0.502	0.562	0.456
	Within Groups	54.482	61	0.893		

Appendix A, continued

Establish the purpose for reading a text section	Between Groups	0.437	1	0.437	0.553	0.46
	Within Groups	48.167	61	0.79		
Have students read in pairs	Between Groups	0.853	1	0.853	0.821	0.369
	Within Groups	62.389	60	1.04		
Model for students, and provide guided practice with feedback on oral retelling strategies of selected subject area texts	Between Groups	0.177	1	0.177	0.162	0.689
	Within Groups	66.712	61	1.094		
Model use of thinking maps to construct written summaries of selected text	Between Groups	4.269	1	4.269	5.003	0.029
	Within Groups	52.048	61	0.853		
Link students' background knowledge and experiences to new vocabulary/ concepts	Between Groups	0.474	1	0.474	0.842	0.363
	Within Groups	33.8	60	0.563		
Model new learning strategies for students	Between Groups	2.011	1	2.011	4.222	0.044
	Within Groups	28.585	60	0.476		
Differentiate instruction using multi-leveled materials	Between Groups	1.764	1	1.764	2.341	0.131
	Within Groups	44.466	59	0.754		

Appendix A, continued

Teach students to ask questions before, during, and after reading text selections	Between Groups	1.643	1	1.643	2.528	0.117
	Within Groups	38.357	59	0.65		
Provide guided practice for students trying out new learning skills with peer or teacher feedback	Between Groups	0.755	1	0.755	1.197	0.278
	Within Groups	37.842	60	.0631		
Provide instruction on the different forms of writing found in content area textbooks	Between Groups	2.3	1	2.3	1.701	0.197
	Within Groups	81.135	60	1.352		
Offer small group instruction and practice several times per according to students' achievement levels in reading	Between Groups	2.572	1	2.572	1.712	0.196
	Within Groups	88.641	59	1.502		
Use the writing process as part of content learning	Between Groups	3.839	1	3.839	3.441	0.069
	Within Groups	66.935	60	1.116		
Adapt instruction for students having special needs	Between Groups	0	1	0	0	0.984
	Within Groups	41.742	60	0.696		

Appendix A, continued

Use cooperative learning groups	Between Groups	3.714	1	3.714	5.079	0.028
	Within Groups	43.139	59	0.731		
Use oral reading in subject area materials	Between Groups	0.813	1	0.813	0.975	0.327
	Within Groups	50.042	60	0.834		
Use testing data to identify students' reading levels	Between Groups	1.965	1	1.965	2.405	0.126
	Within Groups	49.019	60	0.817		
Use direct, explicit instruction when teaching new reading/study skills related to my core subject area	Between Groups	0.142	1	0.142	0.168	0.684
	Within Groups	50.842	60	0.847		

The Easy, the Difficult, and the Almost Impossible

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Abstract

Coaches are an increasingly important component in school reform. Coaches are able to encourage educators to make some changes easily, but other changes are more difficult to implement. This study looks at the adoption of coached practices in childcare centers and home care facilities along the Texas-Mexico border through the lens of change theory (Hall & Hord, 2006; Rogers, 1983). Changes that were easy, difficult, and almost impossible to implement were analyzed according to five perceived attributes: (1) relative advantage, (2) compatibility, (3) complexity, (4) trialability, and (5) observability (Hall & Hord, 2006). The results of the study indicate that change theory can help coaches understand which practices will be the most difficult to implement. This information can then help them modify the practices and implementation plans to encourage adoption of the desired changes.

Coaches, especially literacy coaches, are becoming increasingly involved in school change. Large-scale reforms in New York City, Philadelphia, Dallas, Los Angeles, Denver, Boston, and other cities have included coaching components (Borman & Feger, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Russo, 2004), and coaching has been supported through national mandates, such as No Child Left Behind (2002). Coaches have become important components of reform for several reasons. First, there is little evidence that the typical “one shot” models of professional development have any lasting effects

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on gains made by students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Second, teachers report that they find these workshops boring and irrelevant, that they forget 90% of what was presented to them, and that they want more and better inservice support (Miller, 1998). Third, research has demonstrated that the quality of professional development impacts teacher knowledge, beliefs and practices (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Duffy, 2004; Richardson, 1996). Although coaching as a means of professional development was enacted with scant empirical evidence to support it (Sailors, 2008), the field is beginning to emerge as a viable option for the professional development of teachers (Sailors & Price, in press).

Current research points to coaches as change agents. However, even though coaches can easily encourage educators to adopt some new practices, they have an almost impossible time getting other practices adopted even when the coaches, educators, and conditions are the same in both situations (Kontos, Howes, Galinsky, 1996; Pianta, 2006). Change theory helps to explain the differences in the difficulties faced by coaches, and it provides a framework for modifying coaching to improve the implementation of effective practices. This study examines the practices that are easily implemented and those that are almost impossible to implement through the lens of change or diffusion theory. The study specifically explores the adoption of practices implemented through professional development and coaching in daycare centers and home-care facilities in a low-income, primarily Spanish-speaking area along the Texas-Mexico border.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is change or diffusion theory as proposed by Hall & Hord (2006) and Rogers (1983). The implementation of change in an educational setting is complex and involves many factors, including educators, administrators, organizational climate, change facilitators (coaches), time, and the attributes of the innovations themselves. This study focuses on the

attributes of innovations as they are perceived by educators. There are five different perceived attributes of innovations that determine how easily and quickly they are implemented (Hall & Hord, 2006; Rogers, 1983). The first attribute is the relative advantage of the new practice over the current practices. Is there something better about the new practice than what is already being done? The second attribute is compatibility with the rest of the program, along with the educators' needs and cultural values. Based on his or her values, does the educator see a need for this change? The third attribute is complexity. Hall and Hord believe that many new programs fail because policymakers and administrators view changes as simple when they are really complex. When this type of "complexity misperception" occurs, "there will be less understanding of the need for extensive implementation support" (2006, p. 75). The fourth attribute is trialability. Can the educator try out the new practice on a short-term basis without making a long-term commitment of time, money or other resources? The fifth attribute is observability. Can the educator easily see the results of the new practices? If the educator can see the results and they are positive, then the educator is more likely to fully implement the change. When the answer to some of these questions is "no," then the coach knows that change is likely to be more difficult, and he or she can make adaptations in the implementation plan (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Review of Literature

Although other coaching research has not used change theory as a theoretical framework, it does support the importance of the five attributes (Hall & Hord, 2006; Rogers, 1983). In case studies of effective coaches, Steckel (2009) found that coaches needed to show teachers evidence that proposed changes would benefit students more than current practices before they implement the new practices. One of the most effective coaches in this study worked by first modeling strategies with students that were likely to have positive outcomes; their teachers were able to observe the strate-

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gies in action. After teachers saw the practices work in the classroom, the coach would explain the rationale for the strategies.

In another case study of a coach, researchers found that reading strategies that differed most from current practices and beliefs were the most difficult to implement (Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008). The coach in this study had difficulty convincing teachers to implement phonological awareness and phonics strategies because these strategies conflicted both with the meaning-based core reading program that the district used and also with the teachers' beliefs in a whole language approach to early reading and writing instruction. A coach in another study had difficulty convincing a teacher that running records could provide valuable information for instruction (Rainville & Jones, 2008). Instead of seeing the benefits of the running records, the teacher viewed them as something to finish as quickly as possible and hand in to the administration. These studies all support the attributes of change (Hall & Hord, 2006), especially those of observability, compatibility, and relative advantage.

Methodology

The research reported here is part of a larger program designed to provide high-quality professional development and coaching to early childhood educators working in private and faith-based childcare centers and homes in a low-income, primarily Spanish-speaking area along the Texas-Mexico border. Seventy percent of the families using these childcares received subsidies for child care. The educational range of the participants was from high school diploma through graduate degree, with 35% of the educators having college hours. Seventy early childhood educators participated in the study. All of the participants volunteered to be part of the program. There were also 12 coaches and three supervisors who conducted the professional development and coaching.

The program consisted of 12 professional development sessions of seven hours each and a minimum of two hours of coach-

ing following each professional development session. The professional development sessions focused primarily on preparing the children academically for school, especially in the area of literacy. However, sessions on classroom environment, classroom management, child development, and other topics of interest to early childhood educators were also included. A nationally-recognized early childhood curriculum was provided to each early childhood educator, and professional development also included sessions on how to implement the curriculum.

Coaching was conducted one-on-one at the daycare centers and homes. The purpose of the coaching was to help the early childhood educators implement the strategies presented during the professional development sessions. In most cases the early childhood educators received professional development and coaching from the same person. The instructional specialists/coaches also received instruction in early childhood practices, adult learning, coaching, and other relevant topics before and during the program. The instructional specialists collected the data for this study at the end of the second cohort, using a coaching checklist. The coaching checklist was created based on the topics of study of the professional development program. The items were context-specific in that they reflected the content of the particular program. This data captured the degree of implementation of 39 items that were targeted in the professional development workshops and follow-up classroom support. The items were rated on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The instructional specialists used this checklist throughout the second cohort to determine areas of need for coaching. They received guides and were trained by external consultants on what each category meant and how to assign a rating to each indicator in their respective classrooms. The rating was overseen by the coaching supervisors and the directors of the program.

Data were collected in 70 early childhood settings. These settings represented educators who participated in at least 11 out of 12 professional development sessions and taught children

between the ages 30 months to 5 years, 11 months old. An example of the rubric for assessment (item 30) is listed in Table 1.

A score of 2 and 4 was included to allow the raters an intermediate response, defined as being in-between the ratings that had descriptions. We analyzed the averages of the data collection across participating educators.

Table 1
Item 30: Educator assesses children formally and informally

Rating 1: Educator does not assess students formally or informally	Rating 3: Educator assesses students informally, but does not take notes or record findings of progress	Rating 5: Educator regularly assesses children informally using observations, samples of children’s work, and conversations. Educator takes notes or keeps portfolios. The educator also uses some formal assessment such as alphabet recognition to measure student progress.
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Results

The coaches reported their scores for each early childhood educator on all 39 items following the last professional development classroom session. The scores were reported on a scale of 1 to 5 and averages were calculated for each item. Table 2 indicates the averages for all of the 39 items.

Discussion

The data were analyzed using the attributes of the innovations (Hall & Hord, 2006; Rogers, 1983). Rather than analyze all 39 items, we focused on those items that were almost fully implemented (three items with a score of 5.0), those that were

Table 2
Implementation Rates

Practices	Average Implementation Rating 1 (low)-5(high) N=70
1. Points out sounds in language during daily activities	4.0
2. Explicit phonological awareness lessons	3.5
3. Uses manipulatives to teach the alphabet	4.0
4. Promotes alphabet knowledge during daily activities	4.5
5. Teaches phonics to appropriate children	3.0
6. Points out concepts of print during read aloud	3.5
7. Points out concepts of print during writing	4.5
8. Conducts true conversations with children	4.5
9. Develops vocabulary during daily activities	4.5
10. Uses hands-on activities and pictures to develop vocabulary	4.5
11. Current theme is obvious throughout the room	4.5
12. Scholastic materials are used to support theme	3.5
13. Reads aloud to children	4.5
14. Reads aloud appropriately	4.5
15. Supports English language learners in their native language as needed	5.0
16. Uses strategies for English language learners to improve students' English	3.0
17. Includes all children in activities regardless of language	4.0
18. Uses manipulatives to teach math	4.5
19. Provides opportunities & materials for math exploration	4.5
20. Uses Scholastic materials for math exploration	3.5
21. Children's work is displayed	4.5
22. Examples of educator writing with students displayed	4.5

Table 2, continued

23.Scholastic materials used appropriately	3.5
24.Environment supports language and literacy	4.5
25.Appropriate time for whole group instruction	4.0
26.Whole group instruction is developmentally appropriate	4.5
27.Centers set up in room	5.0
28.Writing and reading materials in centers	5.0
29.Established routines for center use and transitions	4.5
30.Procedures and rules	4.5
31.Schedules and routines	4.5
32.Children follow procedures and routines	4.5
33.Early childhood educator encourages children to solve own problems	3.0
34.Assesses children formally and informally	3.0
35.Uses assessments to design instruction and meet needs	2.0
36.Discussion with families during pickup/drop off	3.0
37.Written communication with families	3.0
38.Family meetings	2.0
39.Teacher uses language appropriately	4.5
Average across all modules	4.0 (SD=.778)

implemented at a lower than average level (3.0, six items) and those that were barely implemented (2.0, two items) by the 70 educators in the study. These items were selected because they reflected the extremes in the level of implementation. In this analysis, the educators’ perceptions of the changes were the focus, rather than evidence supporting the effectiveness of the practices themselves (Hall & Hord, 2006; Rogers, 1983). The perceptions of the educators are summarized in this article; perceptions were reported from discussions with the educators and coaches. All five of the Hall & Hord attributes were considered in the analysis, but only those that seemed to apply most to each item are discussed.

The Easy

Two of the easy changes that scored 5s had to do with setting up centers and placing reading and writing materials at all centers. Based on the responses from the educators and coaches, the complexity, trialability, and observability attributes seemed to apply most. These practices were perceived as relatively simple, especially when the coaches came to help the early childhood educators set up the classrooms. For example, setting up the classroom sometimes involved moving furniture around so that centers were more accessible to children. Educators could try out these changes and move furniture back to its original state if they did not like the arrangement. As soon as the children entered the rearranged room, educators could observe their reactions to the new arrangement. Likewise, a significant part of the funding for the project involved purchasing reading and writing materials for the classrooms. Because books were provided as part of the project, it only made sense that “reading and writing” materials were easily implemented. The coaches reported that educators were finding ways to bring additional materials into the classroom as part of the literacy environment. Educators could immediately gauge children’s responses to the materials (and centers). Furthermore, we suspect that the educators were motivated to continue to build their reading and writing centers by children’s positive responses to the centers (and materials).

Another relatively easy practice to implement during this study was the use of Spanish by educators to support English language learners when needed. The compatibility and relative advantage attributes seemed most important here. Rogers (1983) emphasizes the importance of cultural beliefs and norms in implementing change. These will vary from one setting to another. In this particular setting, most of the educators were bilingual and they were accustomed to using English and Spanish to communicate with the children. Using Spanish to briefly explain something to children was compatible with the educators’ existing beliefs. In addition, there was a relative advantage to the educators and

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children when the children could understand what the educator was saying and what he or she wanted them to do.

The Difficult

Two of the practices that scored three out of five, or 20% below the average, concerned communicating with families verbally and in writing. The educators did not perceive a relative advantage to spending time communicating with families, especially when it might take time away from the pressing needs of the small children in their care. Although research indicates that family involvement does provide benefits to children and educators (Epstein, et al., 2002), these benefits are often long-term and not immediately observable to educators. Therefore, the early childhood educators did not see any immediate advantage to increasing communication with families.

Another practice scoring a “three” was “uses strategies for English language learners to improve students’ English.” These strategies were difficult to implement because many of the early childhood educators believed that children should be immersed in as much English as possible as soon as possible. Historically, the privileging of English over other home languages has been the mindset of many in South Texas. Therefore, the educators’ beliefs may be due to the societal norms. Likewise, many families in the area intentionally place their children in care centers in which English is the language of instruction, as they believe that an early start in English will help their children succeed in school. Regardless of the reason, these beliefs are in direct contrast to research in the area of English language learners (Cummins, 2007). In this case, providing instruction in the home language and providing extra accommodations for English language learners in order to support later English development was a difficult practice to implement because it conflicted with the educators’ cultural beliefs and values.

Lack of observability and relative advantage made it difficult to implement practices in which educators encouraged young

children to solve their own problems. It was much easier and quicker for educators to tell children how to solve a problem, such as a dispute over a toy, rather than allow the children to solve it on their own. Research indicates advantages to teaching children to solve their own problems in the long run (Denham, 2006), but the advantages are not immediately observable. We believe that it may also take more time to teach educators to implement this practice because it may require a paradigm shift in educators. Therefore, this practice is more difficult to implement than other practices.

Teaching phonics to appropriate children was also a difficult practice to implement, probably because of its complexity and lack of compatibility with current practices. Coaches discouraged educators from using familiar tools such as worksheets and flash cards to teach phonics. Other methods of instruction, such as sorting activities, were more complicated and less familiar to the educators. In addition, most of the educators had mixed-age and ability groups in which only a couple students were ready for phonics instruction. Providing instruction to only one or two students made its relative advantage less apparent.

The Almost Impossible

Practices involving assessment of children and use of assessment in designing instruction fell under both the difficult and almost impossible categories, scoring 20% to 40% below the average practice implementation rate. Several attributes may have contributed to the difficulty in implementing assessment. The educators perceived the assessments as complicated and time consuming with little overall advantage. Although educators often informally observed children and made changes in practices based on those observations, they did not see the advantage of using more structured assessments. In addition, the advantages of using assessments and designing instruction based on the results of the assessments are often long-term and not immediately observable. Bean (2002) writes that teachers often feel that too much emphasis

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is placed on assessment and "...they see little value in taking time from instruction for administering such tasks" (p. 11).

Coaches in this study also had an almost impossible time getting educators to have family meetings. As mentioned in the discussion of communication with families, the benefits are often long-term rather than immediate. The relative advantages are not apparent. In order to have family meetings, educators would need the support of the daycare administrators and the families. Unlike many of the other practices in this study, family meetings involve expenses, including overtime pay for employees and providing refreshments to encourage families to participate. The payoff for these expenses was not immediately obvious.

Limitations

A number of factors may have entered into the change process. For example, based on coaching logs, more time was spent on the items that were best implemented, but it is a "Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?" question. Because educators influenced how coaches spent their time, did they spend more time on certain items because of positive perceptions or were there more positive perceptions and higher levels of implementation because more time was spent on these items? Other factors that could have influenced the results include director support for classroom changes, availability of appropriate resources, family expectations, and ages of children in the classroom. Future research might answer these lingering questions.

Implications

In this study, we examined coached practices that were easy, difficult, and almost impossible to implement through the lens of change or diffusion theory. The five attributes of innovations helped to explain why early childhood educators generally implemented or did not implement the desired practices in this particular setting. By analyzing practices that coaches want to implement in the future, coaches can predict which ones will be easiest and

most difficult to implement. According to Rogers (1983), looking at innovations in this way “can be of great value to change agents seeking to predict the reactions of their clients to an innovation...” (p. 211). In addition, he explains that change agents, such as coaches, can adapt their strategies when they know in advance that a change may be difficult to implement in a particular setting. As Burkins (2007) puts it, “The emotion surrounding the reason to change has to be stronger than the fear surrounding the prospect of change” (p. 149). Coaches can reduce that fear by breaking changes that are seen as complex by the educators into smaller, less complicated parts. They may also choose to implement changes that are more compatible with existing practices first before trying to implement practices that do not fit as well into the educators’ current beliefs. As success and trust builds, the coach can then introduce more complex practices or practices that are not as compatible with the educators’ immediate needs. When some teachers can’t see the relative advantages of a new program or activity, Hall & Hord (2006) recommend that one or two teachers pilot the idea so that other teachers can observe the change in another classroom before trying it themselves.

Conclusion

Coaches are faced with implementing school, district, and even national reforms with teachers. Change theory offers an additional tool for coaches trying to implement new programs in classrooms. By talking to teachers and administrators about proposed changes, coaches can determine their perceptions in light of the five perceived attributes of change. When some of these perceptions are negative, coaches can modify their implementation strategies, such as making the relative advantages more obvious, using pilot projects, showing video clips of teachers using the strategies, or beginning with easier changes before moving on to more challenging ones. In addition, they may be able to alter the changes themselves by breaking them into parts or modifying them to be more compatible with teachers’ existing belief systems.

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Coaches who take teachers' and administrators' perceptions into account prior to implementing changes may find the process of change becomes easier and more changes are adopted successfully.

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Reading Coaching Discourse: Practical Applications

Sally Frances Heineke

Abstract

This study employed tape-recorded coaching discourse and individual post-interviews to explore the one-on-one coaching interactions of four elementary teacher/coach dyads. An interpretive analysis was conducted, followed by a structural analysis of coaching episodes utilizing Well's (1999) discourse analysis methods and a socio-cultural perspective. Cross-case analysis revealed factors impacting coaching as a mode of professional development. Selected findings and their practical applications to literacy coaching practices are highlighted in this paper: fracturing of the coaching role, counterproductive coaching roles, the value of high-quality content in one-on-one coaching, and dominance as a pattern of discourse.

Curiously, I browsed through my personal file folders labeled “portfolio” and “professional development” wondering how many certificates of completion I could find documenting my participation in the gazillion workshops I have attended over more than 20 years as a professional educator. My search uncovered 92 certificates, but there is no telling how many such documents have fallen by the wayside as files have been packed and consolidated through half a dozen moves. Next, I wondered how many of these professional development exercises served as a catalyst of change for my own practices. One literacy presentation immediately stood out in my mind, but only a few workshops actually influenced my practices over the years. Presenters may have been interesting, but they were not a part of my real world. It had been

up to me to take what I'd heard and translate it into something meaningful in my own unique teaching situation. The challenge of transferring theory or even practical instructional advice into my own practice was not often realized.

As one component of a new paradigm for professional development, coaching has come to the front lines, promising to bring teacher learning opportunities into schools and individual classrooms. Instead of depending on a myriad of workshops to provide teachers with all they need to hone their practices, coaching is designed to offer teachers ongoing support as they transfer theoretical and practical learning into instructional practice. This study was designed to explore the one-on-one interactions of reading coaches and teachers to examine if and how their coaching dialogue provides such support.

Research Project

Accountability. With the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2001), accountability for student progress has become a matter of public record. To avoid sanctions, schools must show that all students are making “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). The disaggregating of student test data continues to bring to light both individual students and sub-groups of students who are struggling readers. NCLB calls for schools to set goals, making annual plans to address the needs of students who perform below grade level expectations. Because research has shown a strong relationship between teacher quality and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000), improving the quality of instruction for all students has become an important touchstone in school improvement efforts.

Coaching viewed as a key to teacher change. Because teacher quality has been shown to impact student learning profoundly, an increased focus on professional development has emerged (Dole, 2004). However, effective professional development calls for teacher learning opportunities that go beyond one-shot workshops and simple skills training. For teachers to be prepared for the complex,

constantly changing conditions of today's classrooms, they need professional development that facilitates teacher reflection and collaboration focused on student learning (Duffy, 2005; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In accordance with this new paradigm, the National Staff Development Council (2001) issued revised standards for staff development, which were organized around Guskey's (2000) dimensions of content, context, and process and emphasizing the critical role each dimension plays in producing high quality professional development. These standards endorse job-embedded staff development and the utilization of a variety of strategies to engage teachers in the learning process, such as demonstration lessons and coaching.

To address the literacy gaps in their students' learning, many schools have decided to employ literacy or reading coaches. The expectation is that these coaches will provide ongoing professional development and classroom support for teacher change. However, more research on literacy coaching is needed to explore pertinent questions and to justify the continued expense of employing and supporting the work of literacy coaches (Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, Grogan, 2006; Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse National Advisory Board, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Rainville, 2007; Smith, 2007).

Purpose of Study

This study begins with the idea that one-on-one coaching is a key component in literacy coaching (Kinnucan-Welsch et al. 2006; Nowak, 2003; Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders, & Supovitz, 2003). Its purpose is to examine the coaching interactions of four reading coaches in context to both explore what happens during one-on-one coaching discourse and to evaluate whether these interactions support teacher learning, and if so, how they support teacher learning.

Participants

Participants in this study included four reading coach/teacher dyads. Each of the eight participants has been assigned a pseudonym which will be used in this report. The dyads worked in different elementary schools within one school district located in the southeast United States.

Data Collection

Taping. Each coach/teacher dyad audio-taped their coaching dialogue during a three-to-six week period. These taped conversations were transcribed, and a copy of the transcript was returned to each participant. Subsequently, the researcher conducted individual interviews. The reading coaches and teachers had opportunities to discuss the transcripts of their coaching dialogues and to provide information about themselves and their views on reading coaching. Participants also discussed questions related to coaching as a support for teacher learning within their schools.

Researcher's log. In addition to the taped coaching conversations and interviews, I maintained a detailed log of decisions made about data collection and analysis, providing a layer of reliability. Furthermore, I recorded my own thoughts and reactions to the data and its analysis facilitating objectivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Analysis

Interpretational. Data from the transcripts of the coaching discourse and interviews were read and reread. Pertinent information was gleaned from the data and exhibited in matrices for viewing and retrieval, thus reducing and summarizing the data sets (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Next, I studied the matrices, and analytic text was written and conclusions and interpretations were drawn.

Structural. Transcripts of the coaching dialogue also underwent a structural analysis modeled after Wells' (1999) discourse analysis. This process broke each conversation down into episodes, sequences, exchanges, and moves. For each episode,

(discourse on one topic) the type of exchanges and moves, the functions and prospectiveness of the moves, and the number of utterances within each episode were noted on a data display. The prospectiveness of the moves refers to their capacity to extend the discourse toward a greater understanding. For example, moves that explain, evaluate, clarify, request, and so forth, expand the discourse and have the potential to further the thinking of both parties. Expanding and extending the discourse makes it possible for talk to be transformed into progressive discourse or joint meaning making (Wells, 1999; Nowak, 2003).

Cross case analysis. Finally, data from the case studies were compiled and exhibited on matrices where the discourse of each dyad could be compared and contrasted to one another. Overarching themes and commonalities were noted across the case studies. Although this paper will not serve as a complete or exhaustive review of the study and its findings, it will highlight a few of the findings and the practical coaching applications derived from these findings.

Findings: Coaching Roles

Variety of roles. Although the four reading coaches involved in this study shouldered multiple roles and responsibilities, the study revealed six roles that these coaches had in common. Each of the coaches carried out some (a) *administrative* responsibilities. Tasks that called on the reading coach to direct or manage, such as directing and managing the school's reading intervention program or directing and managing a literacy grant, were classified as administrative. Along with these tasks, any responsibilities that called on the reading coach to evaluate teachers or monitor their job performance were also considered administrative in nature. The four coaches varied in the type and number of administrative tasks they shouldered, but all of them played some administrative role in their schools. All of the reading coaches worked with teachers to (b) *determine the interferences* of struggling readers. They also provided some (c) *reading intervention* for students. However,

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these reading coaches spent a small percentage of their time teaching students. All four coaches served teachers as a (d) *resource* by helping teachers locate materials and by providing ideas for their classroom reading instruction. A portion of the coaches' time was spent in (e) *testing responsibilities and data analysis*. Closely related, coaches also facilitated data meetings. Finally, all coaches were involved with teachers in one-on-one (f) *instructional coaching*.

Implications for Practice

Fractured coaching. Observing three middle school literacy coaches, Smith (2006, 2007) found that coaches participated in such an array of roles and responsibilities that they rarely found time to spend in one-on-one coaching. Smith coined the phrase “fractured coaching” to describe this dilemma. The coaches in this current study took on many roles and responsibilities; however, they did find time for one-on-one coaching. The proportion of time spent in one-on-one coaching compared to the time spent on other literacy-related activities varied among the coaches and appeared to be dependent on a number of factors, including the extent of their other responsibilities and the time of year. This research was conducted during April and May, and coaches were very busy with responsibilities related to high-stakes testing, data analysis, and data meetings.

One coach, Ms. Hall, cited a list of responsibilities that seemed endless. Among other tasks, Ms. Hall directed the implementation of a home/school connection literacy program, motivational programs to encourage children's reading, and a school-wide summer reading program. One day, while I was at the school, Ms. Hall was busy making certificates to honor students' achievements across content areas and grade levels. Another coach, Ms. Little, talked about being immersed in the tedious and lengthy task of updating a computer-based testing system to coordinate the assessments with a newly adopted reading program.

An analysis of the data revealed that the two coaches, Ms. Miller and Ms. Benton, who cited the shortest list of roles and

responsibilities, were also the coaches whose teachers, Ms. Talbot and Ms. Rogers, attested to the most professional growth, crediting an extensive list of new instructional practices to working with their reading coaches. In contrast, the other two teachers in the study, Ms. Clarke and Ms. Wright, did not attribute much professional learning to working with their coaches. In fact, Ms. Clarke said she had not learned anything from her coach. Thus, considering these four dyads, the coaches whose work was the most widespread across multiple responsibilities seemed to have facilitated the least teacher learning, whereas the two coaches who appeared to have limited roles and responsibilities were able to facilitate more professional growth through their coaching.

Roles working against each other. It may be possible that some of the coaches' administrative activities actually worked against their instructional coaching role. In their research on coaching, Poglinco et al. (2003) noted ongoing tension in the relationships between teachers, coaches, and principals due to uncertainties about whether the coaching role was more collegial or administrative in nature. Administrative roles are often associated with issues of power and positioning. Rainville (2007) asserted that issues of power and positioning are always a challenge in negotiating coaching relationships.

Third grade teacher, Ms. Talbot, spoke of her coach, Ms. Miller, monitoring the reading block to ensure that teachers were following mandated guidelines. She talked about having her "hand slapped" by Ms. Miller and, consequently, altering some of her practices. Although Ms. Talbot apparently took this in stride without allowing it to interfere in her relationship with Ms. Miller, such was not the case with two of the other teachers. Ms. Clarke and Ms. Wright both spoke of negative coaching experiences. Ms. Clarke described a coach who tried to control everything and thought of herself as being on a higher level than the teachers. Ms. Wright talked about a former coach who had looked down on the teachers, criticized their practices, and ordered them to make instructional changes. Both teachers shared these experiences as

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examples of what coaches should *not* do. When coaches shoulder administrative roles, issues of power and positioning may be magnified. All of the coaches and teachers in this study emphasized the need for trusting, safe relationships with teachers as a foundation for one-on-one coaching. It seems that some administrative roles could actually interfere with developing trusting coaching relationships with teachers. Therefore, this study serves to support coaching literature, which suggests that coaches should not be put in positions where they are expected to monitor or evaluate teachers' practices (Vogt & Shearer, 2007).

Findings: Topics

Variety of topics. Across the four dyads, topics discussed during the recorded coaching discourse encompassed a wide spectrum. Some of the coaching episodes focused primarily on instructional topics, and others focused primarily on topics related to testing. Topics related to reading instruction or reading practice included phonics, first grade students' tracking habits, utilizing readers' theater scripts, revamping a program for motivating students to read, and comprehension instruction. Topics related to testing or test scores included a conversation about maximizing the testing situation when administering DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2002), benchmark tests, students' reading rate scores, and several conversations discussing the results of DIBELS spring benchmark testing.

Implications for Practice

Importance of content. The professional development value of some of the recorded coaching discourse in this study was questionable, but other discourses seemed to facilitate professional growth. For example, discussing at length which students might be nervous during testing and the order in which students should be tested to maximize the testing situation is not a coaching conversation that will extend teacher learning, nor does it have the capacity to increase student learning. In another example,

the reading coach helped a teacher sort her students' DIBELS benchmark scores according to the scores that paralleled students' progress monitoring scores and those that did not. The coach and teacher did not discuss the student needs indicated by the scores or attempt to identify instructional implications. They did commiserate together over the disappointing results of the testing. This is yet another example of a coaching discourse that did not appear to increase teacher or student learning.

On the other hand, a different dyad discussed comprehension instruction. In one episode Ms. Talbot (third grade teacher) excitedly shared evidence that the new methods she had implemented for teaching comprehension strategies had born fruit, with Ms. Miller (reading coach) citing a student's recent spontaneous utilization of comprehension strategies. In a later episode, Ms. Talbot commented to Ms. Miller that she would like to make plans for integrating comprehension strategy instruction into her science and social studies lessons. These coaching episodes not only had the *potential* to increase teacher learning and student achievement, but rather documented Ms. Talbot's professional growth and at least one student's improved comprehension skills.

Findings: Patterns of Discourse

Dominance. Analysis of discourse patterns included patterns of dominance. Dominance was determined by noting the proportion of contributions of the coach versus the contributions of the teacher for a number of indicators including utterances, initiating exchanges, interruptions, and suggestions for later actions. In all four dyads coaches dominated the proportion of contributions in all of these indicators, with the exception of interruptions. Teachers interrupted slightly more often than coaches in two of the dyads; however, in all four dyads, the ratio of interruptions was close to even. One might expect teachers to interrupt more often than coaches, considering that coaches dominated the total number of utterances contributed in three of the four dyads. Ms. Hall was the one coach who did not contribute the majority of the

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utterances. She equaled the number of utterances of her teacher, Ms. Clarke, with each contributing 50% of the talk. One coach, Ms. Little, spoke 80% of the utterances in her dyad's discourse while the other two coaches contributed 65% and 67% of the utterances, respectively.

The coaches in all of the dyads contributed the majority of the initiating exchanges during their recorded discourses, and they made the majority of the suggestions for later actions. When a participant initiates an exchange, he/she is setting the course of the discourse, and when a participant suggests a later action, he/she may be influencing future instruction. Ms. Little, who contributed 80% of the utterances, also contributed 90% of the initiating exchanges and, additionally, contributed 100% of the suggestions for later actions. This coach was at the extreme end of a continuum of dominance. However, overall, the reading coaches talked more; initiated exchanges more often; interrupted as much as, if not more than, the teachers; and made the majority of the suggestions for later actions. Hence, a pattern of coach dominance was documented in the 18 taped episodes.

Implications for Practice

Teacher talk and reflection. Teachers need time to verbally "try out" new concepts and suggestions. As professionals, they need the opportunity to contribute to coaching discussions, to reflect on their own practice, and to think through how new research-based practices can be applied in their own classrooms. Teacher reflection and discussion is limited when coaches dominate the discourse.

Teacher learning. Speech serves as a tool in the learning process as we bring together previous understandings and new concepts (Cazden, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wells, 1999). If coaches dominate the talk during coaching discourse, opportunities for teachers to question, reflect, clarify, compare, and formulate an opinion are decreased. If mastering an isolated pedagogical skill is the goal, then teacher reflection may not be as

necessary, but if teachers are working on more complex issues, teacher talk should be encouraged as an important tool for learning.

Discussion of Findings: Intentional Coaching

Purpose for Reading Coaching

Teacher learning leading to increased student learning. It is not easy to show that professional development leads to increased student learning. Guskey's (2000) model, adopted by the National Staff Development Council (2001) as a foundation for its revised standards, depicts the links between professional development and student learning by defining the dimensions (context, content, and process) that impact the effectiveness of staff development. With these dimensions as a framework, selected findings from this study have been highlighted and practical applications to literacy coaching have been discussed. As in all high-quality professional development, the findings discussed point to the need for one-on-one coaching to be well planned and intentional in order to support teacher learning.

Intentional One-on-One Coaching

Context-refining roles. Confirming what has been noted by previous researchers (Dole, 2006), this study revealed that reading coaches shoulder a wide variety of roles and responsibilities. Similar to Smith's findings (2006, 2007), this research indicates that carrying many roles and responsibilities distract coaches from their primary professional development roles. Additionally, the negative coaching experiences shared by two of the teachers participating in the study suggest that administrative roles that are defined by power and evaluation tend to interfere with building confidential, trusting relationships. Thus, these findings imply that all stakeholders, including policy makers, university professors developing reading coaching programs of study, administrators, literacy coach supervisors, and literacy coaches, need to intentionally emphasize the coaches' professional development

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role and eliminate roles and responsibilities that cast coaches as monitors, evaluators, and/or administrators.

Content-topics. It is important that the time coaches allot for one-on-one coaching (professional development) be maximized by ensuring that the content of their coaching meets quality standards. Joyce and Showers (2002) advocated the importance of content. They reported that as they have worked within schools to implement high-quality professional development, they limited their topics only to those that had been shown to have the greatest impact on student learning.

Therefore, to increase the quality and effectiveness of the content dimension of coaching, it is important that coaches evaluate the topics being considered for coaching interactions. The topics discussed in the coaching discourses taped for this study were *not* equally valuable in terms of teacher learning. Time available for one-on-one coaching discourse is limited for teachers as well as for coaches, so it makes sense that coaches intentionally focus only on worthwhile topics that have the potential to increase teacher learning, and, consequently, student learning.

Discourse pattern-dominance. The literature on professional development supports the need for teachers to reflect on their practice and to discuss the ideas being presented during professional development (Richardson & Anders, 1994; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008; Dewey, 1933; Duffy, 2005; Kinnucan-Welsch, 2005; Schon, 1987). In this study coaches tended to dominate the discourse, minimizing teacher talk. However, coaches can learn to modulate their coaching discourse. By planning ahead, coaches can intentionally develop strategic questions designed to provide the opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practices in light of new research, to verbalize their reflections, to question, and to discuss. Coaches can also intentionally choose moment-by-moment verbal moves, continually building progressive discourse. By doing so, coaches will take advantage of the teachers' speech as a tool for learning. Simultaneously, coaches will acknowledge teachers' thoughts and ideas as worthwhile and valuable. By

actively engaging teachers in thoughtful, progressive, one-on-one coaching discourse, both teachers *and* coaches will have a greater opportunity to build meaning as they learn together.

Conclusion: Implications and Limitations

The practical implications derived from this study are limited by the scope of the study. What is suggested from the cross case analysis of these four case studies in one county of the southeast United States may or may not be applicable to other coaching situations. Further research, including looking at one-on-one coaching discourse in other regions and at various times of the year, is needed to further substantiate these findings and the practical applications discussed in this paper.

In summary, findings from this study indicate the need for literacy coaching to be more focused and intentional. Building on Smith (2007), coaching roles need to be further refined so that coaches' times and energies stay focused on supporting teachers' professional development. Coaches also need to be aware of the relative value of coaching topics and refuse to get sidetracked on topics that do not have the potential to impact teacher learning. Along with Nowak (2003), this study suggests that for reading coaches to best facilitate teacher growth, they will need to be less dominant during one-on-one coaching discourse. Instead, coaches need to learn how to encourage joint meaning making or progressive discourse, thus facilitating teachers' understanding of complex instructional issues and, ultimately, the implementation of best practices in literacy instruction.

The professional growth of one third-grade teacher, Lucy Talbot, stood out among the four teachers in this study and will serve to illustrate the potential of instructional coaching as professional development. Ms. Talbot's enthusiasm for the instructional innovations she had recently incorporated into her classroom practice was refreshing. Elaborating on discussions from the recorded coaching discourse, Ms. Talbot spoke about attending a workshop with her reading coach and colleagues centered on

implementing comprehension strategy instruction. Although the information provided in the workshop sounded good, she vehemently explained that without the subsequent ongoing, day-to-day support of her reading coach, Ms. Miller, she would never have implemented the suggested practices. In reference to Ms. Miller's coaching, Ms. Talbot said, "I couldn't have done it without her, I can tell you that ... going to a workshop, and then a week later jumping completely head first into it... it would've never been done ... " (Interview Transcript 3, p.5). This kind of testimonial to the benefits of coaching serves as an impetus for continued refinement. Although this study suggests a number of areas wherein coaching needs to become more focused and intentional, examples such as this one serve as a reminder that coaching does have potential as a means of job-embedded professional development that may trump the ongoing accrual of one-shot workshops.

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Literacy Coaching Practice

Effective Literacy Coaching: A Journey, Not a Destination

Rita M. Bean

Abstract

This paper presents a review of demonstrably effective literacy coaching practices. The lessons provided are practical advice for both experienced and novice literacy coaches. They are: coaches must be able to expect the unexpected; effective coaching requires a qualified coach; coaching must be intentional and opportunistic; coaches need to know how to make haste slowly; and teachers are both a target and agent of change. These lessons are based in research, reviews of existing literature, and years of personal experience and the experience of colleagues in roles as literacy support professionals. While the paper acknowledges that there are a number of unique factors that anyone involved with coaching initiatives will need to deal with in any given school, the attempt has been made to provide lessons that are as broadly applicable and generalizable as possible. The intent of this paper is to provide strategies by which to improve the effectiveness of literacy coaches, while reducing the stress and pressure that may derive from ineffective coaching practices.

Those involved in coaching in schools recognize that every day brings something new: a new problem, an unexpected request, or an unusual response to a coaching activity. In that sense, coaches find themselves on a journey that, like any other trip, has its peaks and valleys, its detours and roadblocks, and its unanticipated rewards, similar to seeing a rainbow after a rain-storm. In this paper, I discuss five lessons that I believe are important for those involved in coaching. Not only coaches themselves, but also administrators and teachers need to be aware of what

coaching means to the school, to themselves, and to students. These lessons are based on research related to literacy coaching, including some conducted by my colleagues and myself in our work with Reading First in Pennsylvania. In this paper, I also share ideas gained from interactions with coaches at all levels, kindergarten through grade 12, and in all sorts of schools, including those in urban districts as well as in small, rural schools. Although there is a general understanding that coaches serve to support teachers by providing job-embedded professional development that leads to improved classroom practices and student learning, there are also many differences in how coaches work in schools and in the perceptions of teachers and administrators about coaches' roles. Regardless of differences, these five lessons provide some universals that may be useful to all those involved with coaching initiatives.

Lesson 1: Coaches Should Expect the Unexpected

For those who are new to the position, the expectations of a given school may be quite different from what the new coach believes are the job requirements. Even with a job description, the beliefs and cultural norms of the school may require the new coach to make modifications in her expectations of how to coach. In other words, not all schools or teachers are as ready for coaching as others; they may not have clear notions of what it means to have a coaching program in the school. School personnel, teachers and principals often have different perspectives about what coaching means and what coaches should do. And some coaches aren't as well prepared for the coaching positions that they have accepted.

For example, in interviews that we conducted with 20 Reading First coaches in Pennsylvania (Bean, et al, 2008), we found that initially, all 20 felt that they had extensive understanding of reading, reading instruction, and assessment, and they were prepared to support the instructional work of teachers. However, coaches were less comfortable with their understanding of how to work

with adult learners and how to deal with the climate or culture of the school. Specifically, they weren't certain about how to work with teachers who were not receptive to coaching or with principals who often did not have a clear understanding of what coaches were expected to do in the school. They also felt it a challenge to manage the many *other* tasks that they were being asked to do, such as writing reports, keeping the logs required of coaches, spending time assessing students, and entering assessment data.

Of these 20 coaches, only 50% felt that the coaching position in their school was clearly defined initially. Several coaches who felt that the position was well understood by all indicated that they had participated in the grant writing process to obtain funding for coaching, and, as one coach stated, "the job was written for me... no one else has the qualifications." Of those who felt that the position was not clearly defined initially, four indicated that the position has evolved and there is now a clear understanding of coaching.

During the interviews, we asked coaches to talk about their experiences prior to taking a coaching position. Only seven of the 20 coaches were internal hires, that is, they had taught in the schools in which they served as coaches; the remainder were new to the school, the students, and the teachers in that school. The majority of the coaches felt comfortable going into new schools, although they acknowledged that there could be some minor problems. Coaches new to their districts elaborated as follows:

- *Good that there are no previous perceptions, although a few teachers wondered why I got the job.*
- *Good and bad; had a clean slate, but had to learn the dynamics of the building, the people and schools; some still see me as an "outsider."*
- *It was hard to establish that I know something.*

Coaches who were new to a school, but from within the district, indicated that they had had previous professional relation-

ships with teachers in the school (i.e., had led some professional development meetings), and one coach indicated that it was an advantage “to not know the staff, but a disadvantage to not know the students.”

Those coaches who had been teachers in the schools to which they were assigned felt that they had credibility with their colleagues, although one coach indicated that “I had to observe close friends and lost a friendship because of the coaching experience.” In other words, coaches new to the school as well as those who have worked as teachers in the school each face issues of acceptance and credibility, and they must think about how to establish themselves in their new roles as coaches.

Lesson 2: Effective Coaching Requires a Qualified Coach

Frost & Bean (2006), in discussing the “gold standard” for qualifications of literacy coaches, indicate that effective literacy coaching requires individuals who have strong literacy backgrounds—e.g., a master’s degree in literacy (with reading specialist certification, if available)—and are successful classroom teachers. Frost & Bean support the recommendations of the International Reading Association (IRA) (2004), which call for literacy coach candidates to have experience working with adults and to be able to facilitate teacher reflection, in addition to possessing in-depth knowledge about literacy. Although many school districts do employ individuals with those qualifications, such candidates may not be available in all cases. Also, some districts have different perspectives about the skills and abilities required for effective coaching, especially at the secondary level. Some educators at the middle and high school levels believe, first and foremost, that literacy coaches should have in-depth knowledge of an academic discipline (science, English, etc.); for them, the understanding and knowledge about literacy can be developed by providing professional development support. For example, in the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (Bean & Eisenberg, 2009), coaches who are hired are required to participate in an intensive profes-

sional development program (i.e., the Penn Literacy Network), which provides knowledge and understanding of literacy development and instruction. Research conducted by Elish-Piper and L'Allier suggests that for literacy coaches who work in the primary grades, a reading teacher endorsement is critical (Elish-Piper & L'allier 2007; L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2008). They found that the highest average student reading gains occurred in classrooms supported by coaches who held such a certification. We certainly need additional research that looks more closely at the relationship between the qualifications of coaches and their effects on changes in teacher practices and student learning.

The committee developing the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals 2010 has been debating the issue of qualifications for literacy coaches in its revision process. Several possibilities have been discussed at committee meetings: separate the literacy coach role from the reading specialist role, establish the literacy coach role as an “add-on” to the reading specialist role, or maintain the reading specialist label as the broad umbrella term but expand it to include the coaching role. At the present time, the committee is working to develop a list of elements and indicators that maintains the reading specialist role and is including coaching requirements. The list will also recognize that such requirements will be entry-level, and that those who wish to coach should have classroom teaching experience before agreeing to serve as literacy coaches.

Lesson 3: Coaching Must Be Intentional and Opportunistic

I recognize that coaches do more than coach, which I define as engaging in activities related to working with teachers—either individually or in groups—to support their instructional efforts. Coaches' other duties may include coordinating services for students, entering and analyzing data, preparing assessment reports, working with the principal to make leadership decisions about professional development, selecting or developing materials for

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instruction, scheduling, and more. In this section, however, I address the “coaching” role of coaches specifically.

Certainly, coaching must be intentional. Coaches need to make decisions about which teachers they will coach, about what, why, and how. For example, a coach may decide to work with all first grade teachers in the beginning of the year because the school has set a goal of improving oral language of students, especially in the first grade. She may decide to do some mini-lessons during the grade level meetings to help teachers understand how they can better develop students’ listening and speaking vocabularies. Based on this meeting, the coach can provide teachers with some options about next steps. The coach may model in some classrooms, plan with other teachers, or co-teach with others. She may also let teachers know that she will be visiting classrooms after several weeks to see how students are doing and to evaluate the extent to which the students seem to be benefiting from the instructional focus. So, why the differentiation in how the coach works with teachers? First, individual teachers differ in their professional needs, and may benefit more from one coaching activity than another. Second, by giving teachers options or choices, the coach is respectful of how the teacher as an adult learner prefers to learn, increasing the possibility that the coaching experience will be a successful one.

Another coach, in thinking about her coaching emphases, might decide that she needs to work with two novice teachers who have limited experience in teaching reading. She may choose to spend time in both classrooms, working alongside the teachers for the entire reading block, perhaps for two or three days per week for several weeks. During the remainder of the week, she can post a schedule inviting other teachers to sign up for a conference or to request in-classroom support.

Coaches also need to seek opportunities to coach. They should be accessible and approachable so that teachers are willing and able to make requests easily and comfortably. By accessibility, I mean that a coach should be a presence in the school. Teachers

should know where the coach's office is located and how to access her (phone, email, posted schedule); they should know that they can count on the coach to respond to requests quickly and efficiently. In the Reading First in Pennsylvania initiative, we found that teachers frequently made requests of coaches, and often these requests took place in hallways or during bus or cafeteria duties. One coach, for example, stated, "I got caught by a first grade teacher as I was signing in who said, 'I'm glad to see you....I have a child....' So we talked as we walked down the hall." Such an interaction may lead to more intensive or intentional coaching, or the question may be answered in that brief interaction. We like to call this "on-the-fly" coaching because it highlights the importance of coach accessibility and the importance of what we call opportunistic coaching. Another approach that coaches can use as a means of being accessible is that of classroom walkthroughs. Many coaches indicated that they walked through each of the classrooms at least once or twice a week, talking informally with teachers and students. Such an activity not only makes the coach visible to the teacher, but also to the students. Further, coaches will get a more extensive picture of what is occurring in classrooms during times that they are not doing more formal observations.

However, coaches must be more than accessible (physically present); they must be approachable. In other words, teachers must feel comfortable talking with coaches and sharing with them their concerns or problems about instruction, classroom management, or specific students. Coaches do this with their demeanors. They have respect for teachers and their instructional responsibilities; they work as colleagues, trying to problem-solve together, and, as indicated previously, they provide teachers with choices in terms of how they will interact, or strategies that may be useful for improving instruction. Also, as some coaches have indicated, being approachable means taking time to listen as teachers talk about themselves and their families, or their professional concerns or issues. This is not to say that coaches need to spend exorbitant

amounts of time in personal conversations, but rather that they understand that at times, teachers' personal lives affect their willingness and abilities to commit to specific coaching activities. For example, a teacher with a sick child or one who is dealing with stress at home may be less receptive to a coach's requests at a particular time. In summary, coaches have a responsibility to develop interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills that establish them as colleagues who are in the schools to support teachers in their efforts to provide effective and meaningful instruction for students.

Lesson 4: Coaches Should Make Haste Slowly

A colleague, upon hearing me make this statement, asked whether it was a colloquial expression used by those from Western Pennsylvania! Actually, others who write about educational change have also emphasized the importance of "going slow to move fast." These two statements mean that when a change is proposed in an organization, individuals within that organization have varying reactions to such changes, from outright resistance to a "let's go for it" attitude. Teachers and administrators in a school are no different. They need to be given opportunities to see the merits of the change and to agree to work in new and different ways. Coaching, which is a new and different role in a school, asks teachers to make their teaching more public, to open their classrooms and themselves to new ideas about instruction. In some cases, coaching hits at the heart of what teachers know and do. In that sense, it can be threatening. The notions presented previously about the readiness of the school for coaching and the accessibility and approachability of the coach provide some ideas for how the coach can introduce "coaching" to teachers. In addition, coaches often indicate that it's more effective if they work first with teachers who request their support, especially teachers who are leaders in the building, who will be able to share with others the benefits of their experiences with the coach. Often these voluntary coaching episodes will generate interest in coaching by other teachers.

Bean (2004) describes three levels of intensity to help coaches think about how they might differentiate their coaching, identifying a range of activities from those in Level 1, which are informal and helpful in building relationships (e.g., serving as a resource to teachers), to those identified as Level 2, which begin to look more closely at areas of need (e.g., co-planning, analyzing student work). In Level 3, activities are more intense; there is an in-depth look at instructional practices in the classroom, often with accompanying feedback and discussion. Coaches may be able to use this system as a means of differentiating their coaching activities.

In working with administrators, coaches need first to seek their advice and counsel about the focus of coaching. For example, what is the vision or what are the goals for the school, that grade level, etc.? How can I be helpful to teachers in achieving those goals? Second, they must keep administrators informed about their efforts, what they perceive as successes, and also any challenges that exist. Administrators don't want to be blindsided or hear about possible negative experiences from teachers, parents, etc. Coaches have an obligation to share their work with the leaders of their buildings, but that communication needs to be respectful of the coaching role; that is, coaches are not evaluators and therefore do not discuss what they have seen in the classrooms of specific teachers. Their focuses should instead be on what they are doing to improve instruction, (i.e., "we need to continue our focus with comprehension strategies at the second grade level. I'm planning to share with the teachers some ideas about how to improve the quality of the questions they are asking").

Making haste slowly relates to coaches' work with teachers and administrators, and in addition, recognizes that there are changes in coaches and how they coach over time. As mentioned previously, coaches need to start slowly to build a level of trust. Such trust can be built by holding one-to-one meetings with teachers, especially at the beginning of the year or project, asking them to talk about their goals for students, what they need to accomplish those goals, and how the coach might be helpful. In

research conducted in Reading First Schools (Bean & Zigmond, 2007), we found that coaches changed what they were doing from year 1 to year 3. In year 3, the 30 coaches we followed decreased the amount of time spent doing assessments and entering data, decreased time going to professional development sessions, and increased the time spent in individual coaching. We hypothesize that these coaches, over time, had built a sense of trust and a culture that permitted them to do more coaching. A caution, however: we found that there was also an increase in time spent in administration, suggesting, that as coaches build longevity, they may be asked to handle other tasks that are more administrative or managerial in nature. Such is the dilemma of being a veteran educator—whether teacher, coach, or administrator.

Lesson 5: Teachers are Both Targets and Agents of Change

This final lesson is one that, in a sense, summarizes many of the notions discussed previously. Although coaches are in schools to support teachers in their instructional efforts, they also need to make the teacher a target of change. Unless teachers believe that coaching is effective and follow through on various ideas, little will change in the classroom. In other words, it is the teacher who makes things happen. Coaches generally are not given the “authority” to demand change. They are leaders by influence. In that sense, coaches must be able to nudge, persuade, and inspire teachers to make changes in their classroom practices.

Coaches must understand that part of their role is to build leadership capacity in the school, (i.e., to develop teacher leadership). Michael Fullan (2001, p. 137) states, “your leadership in a culture of change will be judged as effective or ineffective not by who you are as a leader but by what leadership you produce in others.” Coaches too can develop such leadership in others. They can ask teachers to share in grade level meetings or workshop sessions what they do to differentiate instruction or to build vocabulary, etc. They can ask teachers to present student work samples at grade level meetings and to discuss commonalities and differ-

ences in student work, as well as in the activities that produced that work. They can ask a classroom teacher who has excellent management strategies, for example, to meet with another teacher while the coach takes over the classroom for a period or two.

Thinking about this aspect of the coaches' role demands a different sort of thinking about one's role as coach. It implies that the coach should build within a school a cadre of teachers who are also leaders. This is not to say that the coach would work herself out of a job. There is always teacher turnover, novice teachers, or even new initiatives or approaches to learn. But it provides the coach with a group of like-minded teachers who understand the goals of the school and have developed skills, understandings, and dispositions that have facilitated growth in student literacy learning. The more the coach can build commitment to a common vision, the more successful—and more positive—is the coaching role at that school.

In summation, I have chosen to describe five lessons that coaches have indicated are important to themselves, administrators, and teachers. These are not the only lessons that one could identify as important (there are many more, of course), but I hope that these five lessons provide a framework for reflective thinking about coaching and also some specific ideas that can be useful to schools in which coaching serves as a professional development model. In the beginning of this article, I mentioned coaching as a journey...and indeed, it is. Each day, coaches learn more about what they are doing and how they do it; they learn what to do and what not to do. I close with the words of a former graduate student: "...as a coach, I'm a work in progress."

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Designing and Implementing an Adolescent Literacy Initiative

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Abstract

Developing and implementing an effective adolescent literacy initiative is a complex undertaking. It requires the creation and communication of a common vision of how best to increase adolescents' literacy skills while supporting principals and teachers who are involved in an ongoing process of change. The steps taken by one school district, a new literacy coordinator, and a team of novice teacher/ literacy coaches to design, implement, and evaluate an adolescent literacy initiative incorporating a coaching component are described in this article. Insights on building leadership capacity and developing teachers into coaches while engaging students within a culture of literacy are provided.

The author, formerly a high school English teacher from within the district, was appointed the district literacy coordinator and given the task of designing and directing a district-wide adolescent literacy initiative for the 2008–2009 school year. The plan was to focus on improving instruction for students in grades 7–12 within a rural North Louisiana school district. There were no designated literacy coaches in place and no plans to hire coaches. The literacy coach's task was to build an effective literacy program from the ground up using existing personnel within the current infrastructure.

The school district serves approximately 6,600 students and employs 573 teachers. It includes one large central high school, one large junior high school, an alternative high school, and three small rural schools which serve approximately 2,500 students in

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grades 7–12. Approximately 58% of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 49% of public school students are white, and 50% of public school students are black.

Establishing a Theoretical Base

Reading is a willful act, viewed by some adolescents as pleasurable and by others as an activity to avoid. Therefore, it becomes important that students are intrinsically motivated to read and that they are actively engaged while reading (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Students cannot merely passively word-call, but must willfully and mindfully participate in the reading process for active reading and authentic engagement to occur. Students labeled “struggling readers” in middle and high school might be labeled more accurately as disengaged and unmotivated to read (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Constructivism (Dewey, 1916, 1944) therefore provided the conceptual framework for this initiative centered on purposeful student engagement and active reading as foundational to unlocking achievement.

Lave’s situated learning theory also contributed to the theoretical base for this adolescent literacy initiative (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave conceived learning as not only being individually constructed, but as being *situated* within a cultural and social context. Many researchers noted that reading motivation and engagement of students fluctuated depending on the social context of the reading as well as the personal relevance of the text (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Ivey & Broadbuss, 2001).

Establishing a theoretical basis with student engagement at the core would require the creation of cultural and social contexts within each school that were conducive to active literacy engagement. Such a literacy infrastructure would develop when teachers in schools began to incorporate literacy habits and classroom practices that motivated adolescents to read, while simultaneously raising student achievement across the curriculum.

Developing a Model

Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes (2007) created an implementation model that proved particularly useful in conveying to others the focus of the new literacy program as conceptualized by the literacy coordinator. In the form of a five-pronged star, Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes' "Leadership Model for Improving Adolescent Literacy" (p. 17) is a graphic representation of a literacy plan that accurately positions student motivation, engagement, and achievement in the center (see Figure 1). The star's five points reference the five action steps of the model and serve as a framework for the planning and implementation of this literacy initiative. The five action steps include: (a) implement a literacy action plan, (b) support teachers to improve instruction, (c) use data to make decisions, (d) build leadership capacity, and (e) allocate resources. The center of the star and two outer rings are inscribed with the leadership model's three goals: (a) student motivation, engagement, and achievement (center of the figure), (b) integrating literacy and learning across content areas and through literacy interventions (inner ring), and (c) sustained literacy development by including the school environment, parents, the community, and district (outer ring).

Closely aligned to the Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes (2007) leadership model is Guth and Pettengill's (2005) essential literacy principles of a successful program. Guth and Pettengill's notion of an effective literacy program includes access to a wide variety of interesting materials, instruction that builds both the desire and skill to read, informative assessment, modeling and application of literacy strategies, help for struggling readers, teacher knowledge of literacy needs, and a home-school connection (p. 14). This triangulation of theory, current research, and models of implementation provided validation to the literacy coordinator, as well as a clear direction for the initiative.

Implementing a Literacy Action Plan

It was important to communicate the perceived vision and

Figure 1
Leadership Model for Improving Adolescent Literacy

Taking Action: A Leadership Model for Improving Adolescent Literacy



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This model comes from *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders*, published by ASCD, 2007.

goals of the new literacy plan to all stakeholders. The theoretical and conceptual design of the literacy initiative was presented first to the district superintendent of schools and the secondary supervisor. The five components of the proposed literacy initiative were discussed and the requirements related to the realization of each component addressed. A literacy plan that was data-driven, engaged students, supported teachers, and built leadership capacity would require the administration's support as well as a significant allocation of resources. Both administrators agreed to fully support and fund the fledgling adolescent literacy effort.

With the approval of district administration, the proposed plan was next introduced to the district's six secondary principals. The district, with approximately 2,500 students in grades 7–12, includes one large central high school with grades 9–12, a small alternative school and three small rural schools grades 7–12, and one large junior high school grades 7–8. All six principals fully agreed to the initiative, offering vital motivational and instructional leadership for their schools. Buoyed by the principals' keen interest and consistent support, the first year of the literacy endeavor proved to be an unprecedented success. Without total principal commitment and participation, full implementation of the initiative's goals would have been unlikely.

The principals also recommended teachers to serve as members of a district "literacy team." These volunteer teachers agreed to work as a team to promote literacy both at their respective schools and across the district. Since most of the teachers were serving for the first time as literacy coaches, they fell into the "Good Enough for Now" category of coaching competencies by Frost and Bean (2006). All but two of the teachers were certified in English language arts. All had some years of teaching experience and successful collaboration experience. Most importantly, all teachers were eager, hard-working, and willing to learn.

The literacy coordinator created a list of recommended goals for literacy instruction from research such as that found in the *Reading Next* meta-analysis (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). At the

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initial fall meeting, secondary principals selected three literacy goals from the list of 10 to target during the 2008-2009 school year. Since the district was seeking better vertical alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, developing a common literacy language PK-12 had previously been identified as a need. The principals also recognized that a recently revised state curriculum with an emphasis on new content literacy strategies would require training for teachers on how best to pair literacy goals with content learning. State test scores for middle and upper grades in the district revealed deficits in academic vocabulary development, so principals agreed that a program focusing on the direct instruction of academic terms would be a priority. Therefore, the first three targeted goals selected by the secondary principals were (a) incorporate common literacy terminology for cross-curricular literacy learning, (b) pair literacy goals with content learning goals in all classes, and (c) adopt a school-wide content vocabulary program as the focus goals for year one of the initiative.

Incorporate Common Literacy Terminology for Cross-Curricular Literacy Learning

The lowest district scores on state tests were consistently those items that required students to formulate short answers or to “read and respond.” Many students exhibited uncertainty when asked to define responses based on test-taking terms such as analyze, trace, formulate, or infer. Bell’s *12 Powerful Words* (Bell, n.d.) provided strategies for teaching students such common literacy and test-related verbs. The “powerful words” were: “trace,” “analyze,” “infer,” “evaluate,” “formulate,” “describe,” “support,” “explain,” “summarize,” “compare,” “contrast,” and “predict.” These verbs were adopted by the district to be taught as Words of the Week (WOW) at all secondary schools. Across schools and the curriculum teachers displayed posters of the WOWs in their classrooms and used them on tests, reviewing previous WOWs along with each new word. Students gained test-taking confidence and the district developed a common literacy language.

Figure 2

Daily Literacy Non-Negotiables for Noticeable Districtwide Gains

Daily Literacy Non-Negotiables for Noticeable Districtwide Gains

1. Expect your teachers to be the primary literacy role models for their students.
2. Expect teachers to read to and with students every day.
3. Provide a literacy-rich, print-rich school environment that engages students.
4. Schedule time daily for students to read independently with accountability.
5. Incorporate common literacy terminology for cross-curricular literacy learning
6. Pair literacy goals with content learning goals in all classes.
7. Maximize reading practice time during after school tutoring and remediation.
8. Schedule teachers and classes to facilitate collaboration and peer coaching.
9. Adopt a school-wide content vocabulary program.
10. Anchor literacy learning with meaningful experiences and enriching activities

Pair Literacy Goals with Content Learning Goals in All Classrooms

The state curriculum for Louisiana was recently revised to include 18 content literacy strategies designed to increase literacy skills while simultaneously meeting content learning objectives. Descriptions of the selected strategies developed by Dr. William Brozo may be found online at the state web site (www.doe.state.la.us). Teachers are encouraged by the state to incorporate them within content instruction across the curriculum at all grade levels.

The principals agreed to include teacher training directed by literacy team members during regularly scheduled monthly

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faculty meetings and to monitor the implementation of the new strategies. Literacy team members served as coaches by modeling two or three strategies at each faculty meeting, and additional modeling was done in the classroom. Literacy team members then continued to work with teachers across the curriculum as they tried the new content literacy strategies in their own classes. Literacy team members communicated and then demonstrated the effectiveness of incorporating literacy strategies in all content classes (Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2007).

Adopt a School-Wide Content Vocabulary Program

The Louisiana Revised Comprehensive Curriculum included several content literacy strategies related directly to vocabulary development, including vocabulary cards, vocabulary self-awareness, and word grid (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.). Robert Marzano's (2004) research-based program for teaching academic vocabulary was adopted by the district as a primary resource for developing a knowledge base and instructional strategies related to vocabulary. All literacy team members read *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement* (Marzano, 2004) to gain research-based recommendations related to building student academic background knowledge, while teaching vocabulary both indirectly and directly. The district purchased enriching and engaging periodicals to encourage wide reading, which develops students' background knowledge and supplements textbooks. Teachers developed lists of core academic terms essential to comprehending the content of their subject. These terms were taught directly to students, along with the words of the week, throughout the school year. Many teachers created "word walls" using the terms and followed the six-step program of direct vocabulary instruction as described by Marzano (2004).

Supporting Teachers to Improve Instruction

The literacy team, literacy coordinator, and all secondary principals met with supervisors and administrators in the fall and

again at mid-term to make certain that district leadership shared and maintained the emerging literacy commitment and vision. The district cohort met as a team with the coordinator after school hours six times during the year. Ongoing job-imbedded collaboration between team members and the coordinator was carried out during planning periods at schools. Conversations were generally related to joint problem-solving and finding ways to address the needs of the district or schools as they emerged. The strengths and needs of individual schools as well as the district were identified, and a preliminary assessment was made as a sort of snapshot of each school. The literacy coordinator, principals, and team members read *Creating Literacy-Rich Schools for Adolescents* (Ivey & Fisher, 2006), and they discussed one of the five characteristics of literacy-rich schools at after school meetings. Team members reflected on how best to align their schools with Ivey and Fisher's recommendations for developing a climate and culture of literacy. The team chose the book's "Quality Indicators for Secondary Literacy" rubric as a means of measuring not only each school's current status, but success in becoming a "literacy-rich school for adolescents" over the course of the year.

The literacy team was the essential component of the initiative. They addressed the initiative's goals by providing teacher training throughout the year in both formal professional development meetings and through informal collaboration and modeling of the three district literacy goals. With the support and collaboration of literacy team members, teachers at each school moved toward independently applying the new literacy strategies, vocabulary programs, and word of the week activities in their classrooms. This "gradual release of responsibility" (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) method of professional development proved highly successful. Principals mandated, monitored, and documented the implementation of the three primary district literacy goals and strategies.

The literacy team members were gaining experience performing literacy coaching tasks while the district was building leadership capacity through growing a team of experienced future

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literacy leaders. Principals asked teachers to come by during their planning periods to observe literacy team members' implementation of literacy strategies in their classrooms. Team members then consulted with those teachers, offering support and encouragement as they in turn tried out the new strategies. The enthusiasm and synergy created by this group of passionate and dedicated professionals cannot be overestimated. Their commitment to literacy spread throughout their schools and the district, inspiring fellow teachers to get on board the literacy train, and the trip was an unforgettable experience for teachers and students alike.

The literacy coaching model utilized by the district is most closely aligned to Knight's partnership approach to Instructional Coaching (Knight, 2007). Team members as novice coaches developed working partnerships with principals, teachers, and other team members through teacher training, modeling, and observation of peers. Throughout the first year, support and collaboration developed and strengthened relationships across schools and the district.

Using Data to Make Decisions

The district adopted utilized the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI, n.d.) as a means of determining individual students' reading levels as well as measuring gains in reading levels over the course of the school year. The SRI was administered to all students, grades 6–9, at the beginning, mid-year, and end of the 2008–2009 school year. The percentage of students reading at or above grade level by the end of the year increased at each school in the district, with three schools showing gains of 10% or more.

Literacy leadership, curriculum, and instructional strategies were also evaluated. The literacy coordinator, principals and literacy team members used the Quality Indicators for Secondary Literacy (QISL) assessment tool found in *Creating Literacy-Rich Schools for Adolescents* (Ivey & Fisher, 2007, pp. vii-xii) to measure five essential components of a literacy-rich environment. Each of the five areas included in the QISL contains an essential question

followed by a series of indicators in the form of a rubric. The five areas to be evaluated were English language arts classes, content area classes, sustained silent reading/independent reading, intervention and support for struggling readers, and leadership/school-wide support. Team members completed the QISL for each school at the beginning of the school year, mid-year, and at the end of the year. Leadership/school-wide support showed significant gains over the year, while intervention and support for struggling readers was a continuing need across the district.

The librarian at the junior high wrote that sales at her spring book fair jumped by 25% over previous years. She also commented that more students bought books rather than posters or erasers. Indicators such as these reflect positive changes in student attitudes toward reading.

Building Leadership Capacity

Teachers who had not been trained as literacy coaches developed their leadership capacities by being willing to learn and assume the role of coaches at their schools. Although they were perhaps inexperienced with leading others, they conducted teacher training sessions, and prepared and presented literacy workshops at local, regional, and state conferences. They also worked with individual teachers and modeled instruction for entire faculties. They were vital to the success of the program.

In the end-of-year survey principals were asked: "How helpful have the literacy team members assigned to your school been in implementing the initiative?" Responses were "very helpful" (66.7%), and "somewhat helpful" (33.3%). Literacy team members completed questionnaires at the end of the school year. In response to "What did you learn this year about dealing with teachers, administrators, and students?" one wrote: "I learned that colleagues are a lot like my students ... I must be sure and ask/encourage those people to communicate their thoughts up front ... instead of assuming what silence (even verbal agreement!) means ... it was easy to do my job when my principal was the one man-

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dating and monitoring; I was observing and assisting teachers and didn't get the resistance."

Allocating Resources

Funds earmarked for the adolescent literacy initiative were used to pay stipends for literacy team members and other teachers who attended training outside of school. The literacy initiative account paid literacy team members' reading conference expenses and also covered the purchase of multiple copies of texts used during the year, including *Creating Literacy-Rich Schools for Adolescents* (Ivey & Fisher, 2006) and *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement* (Marzano, 2004).

Social studies teachers purchased historical fiction to read along with learning units of corresponding time periods. The annotated classics and Bluford titles available from Townsend Press were an affordable way to fill shelves with engaging books. These books created a reading sensation at every secondary school. At a dollar per book and with 15 titles to choose from, some students who had never finished a book read all 15. Schools purchased multiple copies of each title. Three schools read *The Bully* as a "Big Read" while simultaneously teaching a unit on anti-bullying. Every teacher, coach, administrator and staff worker read along, primarily aloud, with the students every morning for eight days during home room. The shared reading experience was rated an unqualified success by both students and school personnel.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

One literacy team member shared this note, received along with a book from a student on the last day of school:

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for the book! I have already begun to read it. You have changed my life forever and I thank you

for that. Before I stepped into your classroom, I didn't enjoy reading, period. I was one of those students who would print off Spark Notes just to get by, but you changed me. About two weeks after school started, something clicked. I had to pick up a book everyday! The enjoyment of reading is one of the best gifts I could ever be given. I really enjoyed all the books you referred to me throughout the year. I have recently started my own collection of books and found one I knew I had to give you. Khalad Hosseini, the author of *The Kite Runner*, explains the harsh lives for women and their journey to gain freedom. I think this book would be a great addition to your collection, because with our troops over in the Middle East, it gives students, like me, a better understanding of those peoples' lives. Again, thank you for everything. You are the best teacher I have ever had ... truly.

Sincerely,

Amanda (A. Pipes, personal communication, May 2009)

May this student's note serve as a reminder to us all that literacy is more than acquiring a set of skills, and that we must keep our students at the heart of all we do. We are privileged to engage adolescents in literacy, so that they too will say "the enjoyment of reading is one of the best gifts I could ever be given." The focus in this era of high-stakes testing and accountability is too often on content and skills, not students. A paradigm shift may be required in order to reengage the disengaged and to create a climate and culture that supports adolescent literacy.

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The Content-Focused Coaching® Model in Early Childhood Literacy: Preparing Early Childhood Coaches to Assist Preschool Teachers to Read Aloud Using the Text Talk® Approach

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Abstract

A multi-year partnership between the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh and the Early Childhood Program of a large urban school district introduced preschool teachers in 101 classrooms to the Text Talk® approach to reading aloud and used the Content-Focused Coaching® Model (CFC) to prepare early childhood coaches to support teachers' learning about Text Talk®. This paper provides a brief overview of the Text Talk® approach and the CFC model and highlights the design of the professional development provided to the early childhood coaches. Using a gradual release of responsibility paradigm, the CFC initiative engaged coaches as learners of the literacy and coaching content while providing scaffolded support on the way to independent practice. The coaches studied and learned to enact Text Talk® read-alouds, were prepared to facilitate professional development to introduce Text Talk® to teachers, and learned to engage teachers in a pre-conference/lesson/post-conference conferring cycle to support their implementation of Text Talk®. Some lessons learned and next steps in the work are discussed.

The Content-Focused Coaching® Model in Early Childhood Literacy: Preparing Early Childhood Coaches to Assist Preschool Teachers to Read Aloud Using the Text Talk® Approach

The Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*, identifies “the single most important activity for building [the] understandings and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children” (IRA & NAEYC, 1998, p. 3). To capture the power of reading aloud to preschool children, the Institute for Learning (IFL) at the University of Pittsburgh launched a multi-year partnership in 2007 with the Early Childhood Program in a large, urban school district. Using the Content-Focused Coaching® Model (CFC), the IFL designed a system-focused professional development initiative for the district’s 101 preschool classrooms focused on the Text Talk® approach to reading aloud. Developed by Isabel Beck and Margaret McKeown at the University of Pittsburgh, Text Talk® engages children in the kind of rich, decontextualized storybook discussions perfected in their research (Beck & McKeown, 2001; 2006; McKeown & Beck, 2003; 2006). The CFC initiative introduced the district’s early childhood teachers to the Text Talk® approach. It also prepared the early childhood coaches with both literacy content and coaching training to support the teachers in enacting Text Talk® read-aloud discussions in their classrooms. Five district role groups participated in this effort: a central office early childhood leadership team, the early childhood coordinators, the early childhood coaches, the early childhood teachers, and the assistant teachers. Some initiatives intended to assist teachers in enacting high-quality read-alouds have had uncertain results due to the “thin” scope of the intervention—only a few hours of training and limited or no follow up (Teale, 2003). The comprehensive CFC initiative was designed to provide the depth, sustainability, spread, and ownership characterizing initiatives that successfully go to scale (Coburn, 2003).

We will begin with a brief overview of both the Text Talk® approach and the CFC model. We will then focus on the design of the literacy and coaching professional development initia-

tives provided to the early childhood coaches, who were directly responsible for taking this work to the teachers. We will conclude with lessons learned from this initiative and next steps in moving this work forward.

A Brief Overview of the Text Talk® Approach

In the Text Talk® approach to reading aloud, Beck and McKeown captured from the literature, and from their own extensive research, the nature of the texts and talk that are most effective in supporting young children's comprehension and language development. As Teale (2003) cautions:

Reading aloud is a significant instructional activity in early childhood education. But we should not merely think that a read-aloud is a read-aloud is a read-aloud. The choice of how much, what, why, and how to read are all enormously important factors influencing the effect of reading aloud on children's literacy learning and their attitude toward reading (p.135). What counts is what actually happens during the activity—the kinds of books that are being read and the nature of the children's experiences with those books (p.122).

The IRA and NAEYC Joint Position Statement also asserts that certain features characterize a high-quality read-aloud experience, specifically, engaging children as active participants in discussing a text and asking children analytic questions about the text. "It is the talk that surrounds the storybook reading that gives it power" (IRA & NAEYC, 1998, p. 3). It is not just any talk that reaps these benefits, but talk that engages children in constructing meaning from decontextualized language. That kind of talk about text is a hallmark of the Text Talk® approach. "Researchers suggest that the most valuable aspect of the read-aloud activity is that it gives children experience with decontextualized language, requiring them to make sense of ideas that are about something beyond the here

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and now” (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 10). Built around high-quality texts with “grist,” the Text Talk® approach engages children in rich and rigorous discussions (Beck & McKeown, 2006). Children are prompted to use Accountable Talk®, in which they attend and respond to the ideas of their classmates, explain their thinking, connect ideas, and cite evidence from the text (Resnick & Hall, 2001). Each text is divided into segments about which children are assisted to develop central ideas in response to open-ended questions such as “What’s happening now?” “What do we know about Fletcher?” “What are the children up to?” Children use the language of the text to construct meaning along the way, rather than relying on pictures to discern the meaning or waiting until the end of the story to discuss it.

Research also suggests that “the ways in which teachers read aloud to children make a difference, that reading aloud does not necessarily come naturally to educators, and that early childhood teachers can benefit from guidance in how to read aloud” (Teale, 2003, p. 129). A Text Talk® lesson plan provides a supportive structure for teachers by including the stopping points for discussion, the initial open-ended questions, the ideas to be elicited, possible follow-up questions, the pictures to be shown, and the vocabulary to be addressed. Table 1 (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 14) describes the way the components of reading aloud are handled in the Text Talk® approach.

A Brief Overview of the Content-Focused Coaching® Model

The Content-Focused Coaching® Model prepared the early childhood coaches to support the preschool teachers’ implementation of the Text Talk® approach in their classrooms. CFC is a practice-based professional development model (Ball & Cohen, 1999) that is designed to promote student learning by coaching teachers. It uses a set of core issues in lesson design and reflection to plan, enact, reflect on, and refine rigorous, standards-based instruction (Bickel & Artz, 2001; Staub & Bickel, 2003; Staub, West & Bickel, 2003; West, 2009).

Table1
Components of the Text Talk® Approach

Components	Text Talk® Approach
Selection of Texts	Stories that exhibit an event structure and some complexities of events to provide grist for children to build meaning.
Initial questions	Interspersed open questions require children to describe and explain text ideas, rather than recall and retrieve words from text.
Follow-up questions	Questions scaffold students’ thinking by using their initial responses to form questions that encourage elaboration and development of initial ideas.
Pictures	In general, pictures are presented after children have heard and responded to a section of text.
Background knowledge	Invitations for background knowledge are issued judiciously to support meaning building rather than encouraging students to tap into tangential experiences.
Vocabulary	Some sophisticated words are selected for direct attention after reading and discussion of the story is completed.

Literacy coaches are steeped in specific literacy content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and habits of reflective practice. Using the criteria for coaching practice, coaches are prepared to support teachers in small, on-going professional learning groups and in individualized pre-conference/lesson/post-conference conferring cycles. CFC uses a gradual release of responsibility paradigm (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), in which coaches and teachers are supported as learners with scaffolded support on the way to independent practice. Recently, an Institute of Education Sciences-funded study of the CFC model in a medium-sized urban school district focused on grades four and five was conducted.

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The results of the study support the efficacy of the CFC model in advancing student achievement in reading comprehension in those grades (Matsumura, Garnier & Resnick, 2008; Matsumura & Garnier, 2009; Matsumura, Sartoris, Bickel & Newlin, 2009).

Design of the Professional Development Initiative *Coaches as Learners of the Text Talk® Approach*

The early childhood coaches were first engaged as learners of the Text Talk® approach before they were prepared to take that learning to teachers. In whole-group professional development sessions led by the IFL facilitator, coaches studied the Text Talk® approach through a rigorous sequence of modules that engaged them in the following ways:

- Reading the research foundations for Text Talk®
- Studying prepared Text Talk® lessons
- Exploring the challenges of text selection for a Text Talk® read-aloud
- Analyzing the central ideas in texts
- Studying research on robust vocabulary instruction (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; 2003; Beck, McKeown & Omanson, 1987)
- Identifying Tier Two words in Text Talk® texts
- Designing their own Text Talk® lessons

Coaches as Models of the Text Talk® Approach

It is not enough to learn *about* the Text Talk® approach. To be able to support the learning of others, coaches needed to be able to *enact* a Text Talk® discussion with children. To get this practice, each coach chose a partner teacher, and engaged her students in one or two prepared Text Talk® read-aloud discussions. Coaches experienced firsthand the benefits and challenges of using this approach with very young children.

Coaches as Facilitators of Professional Development for Teachers

Following the practice of the Text Talk® approach, the coaches were systematically prepared to work in three-person teams to facilitate small group teacher professional development on the Text Talk® approach in district-wide teacher institutes. The teams then studied the modules they had experienced as learners from the perspective of facilitators, examining the challenges this learning presents. They were taught to prompt and support Accountable Talk® among adult learners using module materials provided by the IFL facilitator (agendas, task sheets, PowerPoint slides, research articles, videotapes). These teacher institutes engaged teachers in becoming familiar with Text Talk® research, understanding the format of a Text Talk® lesson plan, and getting a videotaped vision of a Text Talk® read-aloud with preschool children. The coaches also facilitated a Text Talk® discussion in every teacher's classroom, providing another opportunity for teachers to become familiar with the Text Talk® approach. Furthermore, these model lessons built credibility for this approach by demonstrating the children's ability to engage with texts in this way.

Coaches as Learners About Conferring Individually with Teachers

Occasional teacher institutes on district-wide in-service days and one model lesson are not sufficient professional development to support teachers in enacting the Text Talk® approach with confidence or competence. While the CFC model intends for coaches to work with teachers both in small, ongoing learning groups and through individualized conferring, this district's geography and schedule did not permit teachers to come together in learning groups. Thus, the early childhood coaches in this district were prepared to support the teachers' learning about Text Talk® only through individualized pre-conference/lesson/post-conference conferring cycles.

This preparation, similar to the coach Text Talk® content preparation, followed a gradual release of responsibility curve. The

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coaches studied the CFC model, became familiar with the CFC criteria for coaching practice, observed live models of pre-conferences, engaged in role plays, and analyzed video examples of the entire CFC conferring cycle. They learned how to use the Core Issues of Lesson Design and Reflection (a component of the CFC) to frame their conferring conversations. They also explored ways to build trust and co-accountability, as well as ways to handle interpersonal issues in their relationships with teachers. Again, with a partner teacher, the coaches practiced each of the components and accompanying skills in the CFC conferring cycle.

To further support the coaches' learning and capitalize on the professional learning community that had developed among them, the CFC initiative introduced coaching labs as another opportunity for practice-based professional development. The coaches were organized into small, balanced coaching lab groups, with one coach stepping forward as the host coach each time. Meeting at the partner teacher's school, the lab group observed the host coach conferring with the teacher through a complete CFC pre-conference/lesson/post-conference cycle. Afterwards, the IFL facilitator led the coaches through a series of reflections. Relying on descriptive notes taken during the CFC conferring cycle observation, the coaches used the CFC evidence-based reasoning protocol (McCarthy, 2008) to reflect on:

- Evidence of the children's learning
- Evidence of the enactment of the prepared Text Talk® lesson plan
- Evidence of the element of coaching the host coach had established as her focus problem of practice
- A reflection on the participant observer coaches' own learning
- A reflection on the coaching lab process itself

To build the capacity in this district to sustain coaching labs as an on-going professional development structure, the IFL facilitator

tor also prepared district early childhood personnel to facilitate coaching labs. This preparation engaged district facilitators in a sequence of direct training, followed by participating in, and debriefing, a series of labs led by the IFL facilitator. Finally, coaches were prepared by apprenticing as lab facilitators with IFL support and feedback.

Lessons Learned

Literacy Lessons Learned

While the Text Talk® approach to reading aloud is deceptively simple on the surface, the decisions and analyses that are required to choose an appropriate text, and to craft a Text Talk® lesson plan are complex. Our experience with introducing the Text Talk® approach to the Early Childhood Program in this district has led us to these five preliminary conclusions:

1. It is challenging to find books appropriate for a Text Talk® discussion with preschool children. Many books written for young children include a repetitive text structure, use rhyming words, are alphabet or counting books, do not include a forward-moving event structure, have a choppy sentence structure, rely on pictures to carry the story ideas, or are books designed to teach the alphabet or counting. Many books with “grist” that are good candidates for a Text Talk® read-aloud discussion are too long or too complex for young children. It is more supportive of early childhood teachers and coaches, especially in the early stages of their learning about Text Talk®, to have the Text Talk® books chosen for them rather than asking teachers or coaches to choose the books themselves.
2. It is equally, if not more, difficult to design a Text Talk® lesson appropriate for young children. Decisions include:
 - Which ideas are central to the children’s comprehension of the text and which might distract them?

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- Which vocabulary is important to support their comprehension of the central ideas and will be useful in daily conversation?
- Which vocabulary can be ignored without interfering with the flow of ideas?
- Which pictures must be shown to clarify an idea in the text or support the children's thinking after discussion?
- Which pictures might be confusing or add little to the children's understanding?
- Which concepts in the story require advance background knowledge and which may not?

The design of a Text Talk® lesson may be instructive for early childhood coaches or teachers in terms of advancing their learning about the structure and function of each lesson component. However, it may not be realistic for early childhood coaches or teachers to design their own Text Talk® lessons until they have sufficient support and experience using prepared lesson plans.

3. Supporting coaches and teachers with prepared Text Talk® lesson plans does not result in a stilted or "scripted" facilitation of Text Talk® discussions with children. Instead, coaches and teachers are using the Core Issues of Lesson Design and Reflection to adapt the prepared lesson plans to the needs of each group of children, to determine supportive grouping arrangements, to anticipate difficulties and misunderstandings, to identify additional vocabulary and background knowledge needed, and to devise demonstrations and other concrete ways to support children's comprehension. Without diluting the power of Text Talk®, coaches and teachers are developing a deeper understanding of what makes it effective with young children, and are taking ownership of this way of reading aloud.

4. One of the most challenging moves for a teacher leading children in a Text Talk® discussion is asking the kinds of follow-up questions that probe and extend children's thinking, rather than jumping in to supply a missing "answer." More professional development focused on this instructional move is necessary and will be a focus of the work in the coming school year.
5. Initial coach and teacher misgivings about using the Text Talk® approach with very young children were largely allayed as they gained firsthand evidence that their children can indeed engage with texts in this way. It is important to be clear, however, that books can be read aloud for many instructional purposes: to have fun with fanciful words, to feel the rhythm of the language, to act out a story, or to engage in an author, illustrator or content study, etc. Reading a book using the Text Talk® approach to support comprehension is just one purpose among many. Books that are read aloud using the Text Talk® approach can be read many other times for different purposes. Teachers need to understand the developmental benefits of Text Talk® but not feel constrained that it is the only way to read aloud to young children.

Coaching Lessons Learned

Introducing the CFC coaching model to support the Early Childhood Program's district-wide implementation of the Text Talk® approach to reading aloud gave a much-needed focus to the role of the early childhood coaches in this district. Our ongoing assessment of the initiative identified three features that made the most difference to the coaches in being able to carry out this work:

1. The coaches welcomed the opportunity to be supported as learners of the literacy content before being asked to support the learning of others.
2. The coaches needed the opportunity and the time to be

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prepared as facilitators of adult learning with access to coherent, rigorous, well-designed materials.

3. The collaborative, collegial nature of the CFC initiative promoted the development of a professional learning community in which the coaches felt safe to put their practices forward in order to advance their own and their colleagues' learning.

Changes in the district's early childhood coaching practice attributable to the CFC initiative are summarized in Table 2.

Next Steps

The extent to which this CFC literacy and coaching initiative achieved the depth, sustainability, spread, and ownership that Coburn (2003) describes has largely been influenced by the early childhood central office leadership team. In the spirit of co-accountability, the members of this team participated as learners in all of the CFC professional development, and many participated as facilitators along with the coaches at the teacher institutes. They made programmatic decisions about the allocation of resources, which conveyed the importance of this initiative and made the work possible. These resources included hiring replacement teachers, purchasing the Text Talk® books for every classroom, and devoting scarce coach and teacher professional development time to this work.

Despite these efforts, the Early Childhood Program leaders need to find additional solutions to the use of coaches as substitute teachers. The large number of teachers (101), the limited number of coaches (15), and the significant amount of time the coaches spend serving as substitutes significantly reduce coaches' abilities to support teachers in individual conferring cycles. Without time to confer with teachers on a regular basis, it is unlikely that all teachers will receive the sustained support they need to enact effective Text Talk® read-alouds.

Table 2
Comparison of Practices

Previous Practice	Current Practice
Teachers were unsure or hesitant about working with literacy coaches, wary that the relationship would be unprofitable at best and evaluative at worst	Teachers are eager to work with coaches in the structured CFC style. They see the practice as collaborative and see evidence of learning for the children.
Coaches were used in non-coaching activities - to substitute for absent teachers, to file paperwork, to administer tests and screenings, deliver materials, etc.	Coaches spend more time working with teachers and less time on administrative tasks. The district has not yet solved the problem of needing to use coaches as substitute teachers.
Coaches were spending little time working with teachers individually or in small learning groups.	Coaches have more time to engage individual teachers in the CFC conferring style, but are unable to organize teachers across classrooms into small learning groups.
Coaches' work with teachers did not have a consistent literary focus.	Coaches consistently work with teachers around the implementation of the Text Talk® approach and the development of opportunities for talk throughout the day.
There was little opportunity for coaches to come together to support coaching practice.	Coaches engage in on-going coaching labs to advance their coaching practice.
Large group professional development for teachers addressed various content.	Coaches lead coherent large group professional development for teachers directly related to understanding and implementing the Text Talk® approach.

Even if individualized conferring occurred on a more regular basis, it alone is not an efficient way to move the work forward (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, Keeling, 2009). Working with teachers one by one does not harness the collegial power inherent in small, ongoing learning groups in which teachers exchange ideas, solve problems together, read and discuss research articles

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to enhance their understanding of Text Talk®, and analyze videotapes of their own practice. The Early Childhood Program leaders could achieve more depth and ownership in the implementation of the Text Talk® initiative if they could find ways to bring coaches and teachers together in ongoing learning groups.

Finally, the early childhood leadership team is committed to expanding the scope of the CFC initiative. Teale (2003) notes that important consideration must be given to the “place” of the read-aloud in early childhood instruction, making it an intentional learning opportunity rather than just a time filler between activities. With that in mind, we are moving forward in the coming school year to integrate Text Talk® read-alouds into each of the 10 units of the district’s Early Childhood Program curriculum. The texts have been chosen carefully to enrich and expand the children’s thinking about the unit themes, and they are linked conceptually in a way that supports the children’s ability to make connections across texts. See the Table 3 for the unit themes and Text Talk® book selections. Each unit plan includes ways to extend the learning from the Text Talk® books throughout the day, such as in classroom play centers or snack table conversations. The coaches will continue to be supported as learners and facilitators, and they again will play the central role in assisting teachers to understand and implement this new work as the initiative moves toward sustainability.

Table 3
Text Talk® Unit Books by Theme

Early Childhood Program Curriculum Unit Themes	Text Talk® Unit Books	Authors
UNIT 1: WHO WE ARE	<i>Geraldine's Blanket</i>	Holly Keller
	<i>Owen</i>	Kevin Henkes
	<i>Peter's Chair</i>	Ezra Jack Keats
UNIT 2: MAKING FRIENDS	<i>Nutmeg and Barley: A Budding Friendship</i>	Janie Bynum
	<i>Zen Ties</i>	Jon Muth
UNIT 3: FAMILIES	<i>Dogger</i>	Shirley Hughes
	<i>Too Many Tamales</i>	Gary Soto
UNIT 4: FOOD	<i>Jody's Beans</i>	Malachy Doyle
	<i>Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story</i>	Helen Cooper
UNIT 5: NEIGHBORHOOD	<i>Franklin's Neighborhood</i>	Paulette Bourgeois
	<i>Destiny's Gift</i>	Natasha Tarpley
UNIT 6: TRANSPORTATION	<i>Franklin Rides a Bike</i>	Paulette Bourgeois
	<i>Katy and the Big Show</i>	Virginia Lee Burton
UNIT 7: ANIMALS AROUND US	<i>My Buddy</i>	Audrey Osofsky
	<i>Floss</i>	Kim Lewis
UNIT 8: NATURE	<i>Fletcher and the Falling Leaves</i>	Julia Rawlinson
	<i>Fireflies!</i>	Julie Brinckloe
UNIT 9: WILD ANIMALS	<i>Fox</i>	Kate Banks
	<i>A Mama for Owen</i>	Marion Bauer
UNIT 10: HEALTH	<i>Arthur's Tooth</i>	Marc Brown
	<i>Gregory the Terrible Eater</i>	Mitchell Sharmat

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Making Writing Count: Writing as a Means of Improving Mathematics Learning

Wolfram Verlaan

Abstract

This paper aims to draw attention to the role of writing in the subject area of mathematics, especially writing's potential for improving mathematics instruction. First, this paper presents a rationale for improving mathematics education, along with a look at literacy in the area of mathematics. It then provides a survey of several articles that focus specifically on the benefits of writing in the mathematics classroom. Finally, it suggests one method, with examples, of how writing can be implemented effectively to improve student learning in the mathematics classroom. Although this paper provides examples applicable to basic secondary math instruction in the middle grades, the methodology presented is easily customizable across the K–12 curriculum.

Conventional definitions of literacy have typically included the ability to read and write and might include the ability to perform some basic level of mathematical operations, sometimes referred to as the “three Rs” of education. The first of these three, reading, is arguably the primary concern of literacy coaches and literacy consultants in the context of such initiatives as Reading First. Reading has historically received much national attention, such as in the aftermath of Rudolf Flesch’s 1955 book *Why Johnny Can’t Read*, which voiced concern over the problems of our nation’s public education system.

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More recently, the third “R,” arithmetic, or mathematics, has begun to claim more recognition as a segment of the education system needing improvement. Meanwhile the middle “R,” writing, has largely remained an afterthought. Donald Graves (1978) made his plea decades ago to “Balance the basics: Let them write.” However, calls such as these have gone largely unheeded, as evidenced by the recent publication of the National Writing Project’s *Because Writing Matters* (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006), which makes a similar argument for writing yet again.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how writing can benefit the learning and teaching of mathematics. I start by addressing the rationale for improving mathematics education and examine issues associated with literacy in mathematics. I focus specifically on recent calls for students to demonstrate the ability to communicate mathematical knowledge. In addition, I consider the extent to which integrating the literacy aspect of communication in mathematics has been effective, and I provide a survey of articles that have addressed the efficacy of combining traditional literacy concepts with mathematics vis-à-vis writing. Finally, I describe one method of introducing writing into a mathematics curriculum and discuss the potential benefits that assignments of this type have for mathematics instruction and learning.

The Calls to Improve Mathematics Education

Indications that the United States was not leading the world in the education of its citizenry were first highlighted by the 1983 Department of Education report, *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983). This report raised concerns about how well our public education system was preparing students. Comparisons were made of the American education system to what were viewed as the superior education systems of other countries. This report indicated that especially in the areas of math and science, the United States expected and performed at much lower levels of student achievement than other countries. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study report (Martin & Kelly, 1997) confirmed the

negative impact of these lower standards in the United States, as demonstrated by our students' poor showing in math and science abilities when compared with students of other countries.

Also contributing to the prominence of the mathematical achievement issue have been changes occurring in the global economy, concomitant with the development of the computer age. Lucrative information technology jobs can now be performed from remote locations, allowing American companies to outsource these jobs to countries that have labor forces that are both cheaper and more skilled. Because mathematical ability is a key requirement for many jobs in the ever-expanding information technology field (almost every four-year computer science degree requires math coursework equivalent to a mathematics minor), it has become increasingly clear to leaders in business, politics, and education that the public education system is not producing enough graduates with the necessary skills to compete with a global work force in the scientific and technological marketplace, the marketplace of the future.

To complicate matters, not only has our public education system lagged behind those of other countries, but it has also been characterized by large gaps in the educational achievement between students from different ethnic and socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds. Data convincingly show that minority and low SES students have been lagging behind white students of higher SES, particularly in the areas of reading and math (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The U.S. population is becoming ever more diverse: those from minority backgrounds are becoming a larger percentage of our population, and the percentage of those categorized as low SES continues to grow. It has become clear that eliminating this educational achievement gap between the different segments of society will be necessary if Americans are to compete effectively in the global marketplace. As a response to this achievement gap, the United States passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002. This act ordered states to eliminate the achievement gap between minority students and white

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students by improving the public education system so that all students eventually meet a proficiency standard. Unfortunately, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that the implementation of NCLB seems to have had little, if any, effect either on closing the achievement gap or raising the overall level of education in the US (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

Because this achievement gap has been measured in terms of reading and math skills, the contribution of writing to literacy has received much less attention. While many people typically include writing along with reading as integral components of a standard definition of literacy, the role that writing plays in the public's conception of education seems less well defined than the roles of reading or mathematical ability. The interrelationship of these three standard components of literacy has evolved over time, and effectively integrating them so that they support each others' goals has posed a significant challenge to the educational community. However, the challenge of integrating these three aspects should not deter us from investigating how they are interrelated, nor from studying how each may be taught to support the development of the others. For example, recent studies indicate that writing has been effective in improving reading comprehension (Joshi et al., 2008), and reading comprehension seems to be strongly correlated to mathematical problem solving ability (Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2008).

Quantitative Literacy

Historically, knowledge of mathematics, for most of society, has not been nearly as integral to the concept of being literate as was reading and writing ability—literacy in its conventional sense. Indeed, even today one can be considered very literate in the conventional sense, learned even, while professing to have no knowledge of mathematics. In the past, in-depth knowledge of math was typically required only of those who were specializing in a field that required mathematical skill, such as science or engineering.

During the first half of the 20th century, in the later stages of the industrial age, math-intensive fields of work and study began to expand. The advent of the computer and technological age of the last half of the 20th century prompted another surge in demands for jobs requiring mathematical skill. Due to the increase in these types of jobs, the level of mathematics completed in high school has become a strong predictor of one's future income (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003). Mathematical skills are now deemed necessary for one to compete for valuable jobs in the global technological economy. In addition, the computer age has generated vast amounts of data that are used in all aspects of our daily lives. Understanding how these data are being used and the implications of this use is crucial to being an informed member of a democratic society (Steen, 2001).

For those in the field of mathematics education, the concept of quantitative literacy, or "numeracy" as it has been termed, has evolved over the years in similar fashion to the concept of conventional literacy. Numeracy is viewed as a deep understanding of the concept of numbers and how that concept is used and influences our society. The field of mathematics education has faced problems in recent years similar to those of conventional literacy education in that many students do not seem to be mastering mathematical skills (let alone the larger vision of acquiring numeracy). As with conventional literacy, a gap exists between different segments of society in this regard. Moreover, although the achievement gap still persists in reading, the one that has gained much attention of late is the achievement gap in math. One third of students entering college are required to take remedial math courses to prepare them for basic college math courses such as algebra or statistics (Greene & Winters, 2005).

Proficiency in math places explicit cognitive demands on the student in addition to reading comprehension. Math education in public schools has focused on teaching math skills and procedures to students without ensuring that they develop a deep-rooted understanding of the principles underlying the mathematical

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operations. NCLB (2002) mandates, which emphasize the need to ensure that students pass standardized tests, have tended to drown out calls by such organizations as the National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTM) for curriculum to be developed and delivered in a manner that promotes more than just a procedural understanding of mathematics. Although many states have aligned their math curriculum goals with standards proposed by NCTM (2000), these standards aren't being effectively implemented, as evidenced by test scores showing no noticeable change over the last 20 years in the gap in high school math achievement as measured by the NAEP (NCES, 2005). Perhaps the largest indicator of the lack of quantitative literacy among graduates of our public education system is the seeming inability of students to adequately interpret and express quantitative values and thinking in their writing (Lutsky, 2006; Schield, 2006). It is these communication skills that demonstrate the conceptual quantitative understanding that businesses are seeking in their employees (Taylor, 2007).

Math education, like literacy education, has been largely influenced by constructivist theories (cf. Piaget, 1977; Steffe & Cobb, 1988; von Glasersfeld, 1995; Vygotsky, 1987). Calls abound for discovery learning of mathematical concepts and principles. Just as writing and communication are seen to be integral to the construction of knowledge in conventional literacy (Spivey, 1997), communication about mathematical concepts is regarded as a key component of the mathematics curriculum. Communication is described in the Principles and Standards of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000) as discussion of and writing about a math topic as ways of organizing and clarifying one's thinking and understanding of the concept being studied. However, when it comes to assessing mathematical knowledge, writing about math concepts, though encouraged, is relegated by NCTM to informal as opposed to formal assessment. In other words, even though writing is considered an integral part of knowledge construction, and even though our students lack a deep understanding of mathematical concepts,

as well as the ability to communicate them, writing is still not an accepted and integral part of the nation's public education math curriculum. A review of the *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* revealed little published research over the last ten years specifically in the area of writing and math. Though some research exists concerning cognitive links between communication and mathematical knowledge, it is largely confined to oral communication.

Writing in the Mathematics Classroom: Teacher Experiences

Although there have been few formal research studies published that investigate the role between writing and mathematical learning, this does not mean that successful classroom experiences of incorporating writing in the teaching of mathematics have not appeared in the literature. A representative sample of articles indicates that writing in the mathematics classroom is effective in improving mathematical understanding.

In an action research project conducted at a high school in a suburban Illinois community, researchers demonstrated that instruction in mathematical language, combined with the use of prompts requiring written mathematical explanations, resulted both in improved writing ability and improved mathematical skill (Hackett & Wilson, 1995). Another article discusses an interdisciplinary writing project in which students wrote stories containing math problems (Albrecht, 2006). By helping to build on their math successes through writing, these experiences positively changed some of the students' self-perceptions about their math efficacy. In another article, Burns (2004) found that writing in the math classroom enhances the clarification and organization of student ideas and provides insight into the students' learning processes. Another study showed that using essay tests in math and math portfolios at the high school level resulted in increases both in students' math performance and in the teachers' assessments of their knowledge (Brandenburg, 2002). Yet another article observed that an interactive approach by the instructor in writing responses to

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written student questions allowed middle school students to feel less inhibited in asking more questions in a written format, which led to improvements in their mathematics understanding (Albert, Mayotte, & Cutler-Sohn, 2002).

Articles discussing the benefits of incorporating writing into the mathematics curriculum typically cite student improvement as a result of writing in the math classroom, both in terms of student understanding of mathematical concepts and in terms of students' perceptions of themselves as math learners. Moreover, the articles invariably indicate that writing provides the instructor valuable diagnostic and assessment information regarding the students' thinking processes that would otherwise not be available.

Writing in the Mathematics Classroom: One Method Described

Although writing in the mathematics classroom can take many forms, for the purposes of this paper the most important questions to be addressed are: What instructional goals will writing serve?, What products will students be asked to generate?, And what instructional methodologies, including scaffolding and feedback, will be employed to help students generate these products? Questions such as these form the foundation of a reflective teaching practice—the more clarity an instructor has concerning the answers, the more effective the instruction is likely to be.

Arguably one of the main goals of writing instruction is to assist students in the clarification and precision of their thinking processes through the correct or acceptable use of language. This should also be one of the goals of writing instruction in the mathematics classroom. Teachers of writing will be the first to acknowledge that generating precision of thinking via the written word poses a difficulty for students, even when they are writing about a topic of interest or something they enjoy. In writing instruction, the goal is to have students connect thoughts and thought sequences in a logically organized manner so that the reader should have no difficulty understanding how one thought transitions into the next. For example, explaining in detail how, and

to what extent, various factors contributed to the precipitation of a complex historical event such as the First World War would require clear, precise and organized writing. A piece of writing that serves this purpose would demonstrate not only mastery of the material, but a thinking process that allows the material to be effectively communicated. Moreover, the process of creating this piece of writing would require the writer to construct a thorough and deep understanding of the material being communicated. Similarly, in the mathematics classroom, students are often asked to demonstrate a precise and logical thinking process during the development of proofs. Those who have experience with teaching mathematical proofs will probably also acknowledge the difficulties this activity typically poses for students. However, the benefits of having students create proofs for mathematical concepts, such as those encountered in geometry, are that the students gain precision and clarity in their thinking about a concept, and through the act of constructing the proof, they develop a sense for the logical sequence of steps necessary to solve problems involving the concept. It has been my experience that one way to make writing effective in the mathematics classroom is to have the writing take the form of a proof or explanation. In other words, students write explanations for mathematical concepts and problem solving processes using mathematical language so that, just like the history example, it not only becomes clear to the teacher that they understand the concept or process being written about, but even more importantly, by the very act of writing about the process or concept, they construct a deeper understanding of it.

Having stated one of the main purposes of utilizing writing in the mathematics classroom, the teacher should have a clear idea of what the writing products will consist of before the students are asked to produce them. What these products look like will necessarily vary depending on the age of the students and the complexity of the concepts being written about. For the purposes of this paper, I will utilize examples from middle grade mathematics, specifically those concepts comprising some of the foundations

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of algebra. Although in isolation many of these basic concepts are seemingly simple, the fact that they build on each other and become interrelated for the purposes of problem solving necessitates a thorough understanding of each of them. For example, real number arithmetic, which includes both positive and negative numbers, may seem relatively simple in isolation (those who have taught it know that it is *not*), but a true mastery of the concept of how positive and negative numbers are combined is a necessary foundation for many of the procedures involved in solving single step and multi-step equations—isolating variables, combining like terms, distributing terms, and so forth—are standard fare in most pre-algebra curricula.

My personal experience in teaching these foundational concepts is that requiring students to explain or justify a problem solution by writing a simple four- or five-sentence paragraph using mathematical language provides both a meaningful learning experience for the student and a valuable assessment instrument for the teacher—specifically, this serves as an instrument to determine student comprehension and precision of thinking, rather than simply a grade assignment. However, just as students need writing instruction in other subjects to generate succinct and coherent work, they also require similar instruction in writing about mathematics, where clarity and precision are of equally great importance.

For writing instruction, one method that has been found to work well in scaffolding the translation of the thinking process into written language is the use of graphic organizers. These organizers can be used to prompt students to generate a logical sequencing of thoughts for the purposes of constructing a short response, a paragraph, or even an essay. Because mathematical problem solving also involves the sequencing of thoughts, graphic organizers can be used in a similar manner in the mathematics classroom to help students grasp or master a concept or problem solving process. Although students are frequently required to take some form of notes during mathematics instruction, includ-

ing definitions, sample problems, and processes, my experience has been that when students attempt to apply the concepts by actually working through problems, students often do not refer to the concepts or processes they were asked to write down during note-taking. This can be frustrating for the instructor because the written processes presented in mathematics textbooks that students are sometimes asked to write down as notes are often elegantly stated methods of succinctly communicating a concept or problem solution. Moreover, students are typically not asked to justify solutions to the problems they are asked to do for homework – “showing one’s work” for a problem is not quite the same as a written justification for a particular solution sequence. Furthermore, students often struggle with difficult concepts such as the addition and subtraction of positive and negative numbers, and for some, it may take weeks or months for a basic concept such as this to be fully understood and assimilated for the purposes of problem solving.

To help link the verbiage in their notes to the concepts being learned, the use of graphic organizers enables students to utilize the written language of their notes and textbooks in developing a justification for problem solutions, thereby strengthening and making more precise their thinking processes. In other words, students can make use of graphic organizers as scaffolding devices to develop written justifications for a wide variety of mathematical concepts as they explain problem solving procedures.

Although it is difficult to prescribe exactly where in the instructional sequence to introduce the use of a graphic organizer, I would advocate for its use as early as possible. My experience with the example I presented in this paper, integer arithmetic, is that the students I am currently teaching, who have had varying degrees of exposure to integer arithmetic, have indicated that generating explanations in a written format (see figures 1–4) has been helpful to them in clarifying the process of adding and subtracting positive and negative numbers. They also stated without

solicitation that this type of instruction would have been useful during their first exposure to positive and negative numbers.

The following example illustrates the use of a graphic organizer in the instruction of integer arithmetic. Students had already been instructed in the definitions of the term, “opposite” of a number and “absolute value.” They had also previously been exposed to the language contained in the “rules” and “steps” involved with adding positive and negative numbers (see Figure 1). This language is typical of that used to describe the process in many mathematics texts.

Figure 1
Rules and Steps

Rule1: Adding numbers with the same sign:

Step1. Add their absolute values

Step2. Use the sign of the numbers in the result

Rule2: Adding numbers with different signs:

Step1. Find the difference of their absolute values

Step2. Use the sign of the number with the greater absolute value in the result

Rule3: Subtracting numbers

Step1: To subtract a number, add its opposite

Step2: Follow the rules for adding signed numbers

The purpose of the graphic organizer the students were given was to help them use the concise mathematical language contained in the “rules” and “steps” to create a written explanation for how to perform integer arithmetic on a specific pair of numbers. To help students create their own responses, the graphic organizer included a section with the “rules” and “steps” language at the top of the handout. In addition, a set of labeled blanks were provided for each problem—spaces on the right for the numerical solution and spaces on the left for the written justifications for each of the steps. First, students were taken through the problem solving and step justification sequence as a whole class exercise.

Each rule was demonstrated with one or more example problems. In Figure 2, we see an example of a problem solved in this manner via the use of the graphic organizer. In this case, we have the subtraction of a negative number. Subtracting negative numbers is one of the more difficult concepts to master in basic mathematics, but the application of the first step of the subtraction rule makes it logically consistent with the other rules: “To subtract a number add its opposite.” However, this step then invokes another rule to be followed, one of the two rules for adding—in this case, adding numbers with the same sign.

Students often confuse real number addition and subtraction rules with multiplication and division rules where “two negatives make a positive.” Having students write the rule or step

Figure 2
Graphic organizer

Rule: <u>Subtracting -11 from 3</u>	Problem: <u>$3 - (-11)$</u>
Rule/Step: <u>To subtract -11, add</u> <u>it's opposite, or +11</u>	Rewrite/Solve Problem: <u>$3 + (+11)$</u>
Rule/Step: <u>To add #'s w/ the same</u> <u>sign add their absolute</u> <u>values</u>	Rewrite/Solve Problem: <u>$3 + 11$</u>
Rule/Step: <u>Use the sign of the</u> <u>#'s in the result.</u>	Rewrite/Solve Problem: <u>14</u>

applicable to each part of the problem solving process reinforces the concepts they are trying to master (in the example in Figure 2 the concept of absolute value is used to determine the sign of the result). Students need guidance as to what rules or steps should be written in the blanks to justify the numerical manipulations being utilized, and it is helpful as the concept is being introduced that they be instructed in this procedure, line by line, for one or more instances of each type of problem.

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The goal of such scaffolded instruction is for students to acquire the ability to generate a verbal explanation independently for each part of the problem-solving sequence by employing the mathematical language they have been practicing. Figure 3 contains an example using less scaffolding: a student explanation to an operation in which a larger number is subtracted from a smaller number. This utilizes the subtraction rule as a primary starting point, which invokes the “adding the opposite” step. This is different from the previous example in that the subtraction translates to having to add numbers with *different* signs. A key step in adding numbers with different signs is the finding of a difference (a subtraction) between the absolute values of the two numbers as part of the problem solution. In figure 3, the student solves the problem correctly but fails to use language in the written explanation that explicitly states the step of finding a difference between the absolute values of the numbers involved.

Figure 3
Student writing without subtraction mentioned

Problem: $24 - 32$

Solution: $24 + (-32)$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1-32 | -1+24 | \\ -8 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 24 - 32 \\ 24 + (-32) \\ |032| - |1+24| \\ \quad \swarrow -8 \end{array}$$

Explanation: Since I'm subtracting 32 from 24, I have to get the opposite of 32, so now it's -32 . Then I have to get the absolute values, so it would be $1-32 = 1+24$. The answer would be -8 because you take the sign of the bigger number, so that number is -32 .

Although this omission of the “difference” step may indicate a difficulty with concise language usage (a universal challenge in writing instruction), it may also signal a blind spot on the part of the student to the requirement of the actual step of finding the difference. This blind spot may manifest in more complicated prob-

lems, such as combining terms containing variables and coefficients, addition and subtraction of positive and negative fractions, decimals, and so forth. A return to the use of the graphic organizer for a similar problem and/or a revision of the writing would potentially help to clarify the student's thinking and reinforce the rule to be applied. In Figure 4, this student explicitly states in the explanation that one must find the difference of the two numbers ("subtract the absolute values"), however, the writing could still use more precision and mathematical language.

Figure 4
Student writing with subtraction mentioned

Problem: $24 - 32$

Solution: $24 + (-32)$

$$\begin{array}{r} 32 \\ - 24 \\ \hline 8 \end{array}$$

Explanation: Since I'm subtracting 32 from 24 I have to add it's opposite which is -32. Then, subtract the absolute values of -32 and 24, and after that use the sign of the number in the result which is -8.

Graphic organizers lend themselves well to mathematics because of the procedural nature of the skills being learned. To produce a written justification of the steps involved in a problem-solving sequence helps the student clarify and make precise those steps, and it allows teachers to assess where gaps may exist in the student's understanding of the concepts being learned. As can be seen from the examples, there is a distinct difference between the more scaffolded writing of Figure 2 and the less scaffolded writing of Figures 3 and 4, in terms of the precision of the mathematical language being employed. This discrepancy is to be expected during the process of writing because it may be difficult, if not impossible, to have students achieve the clarity of thought and precision

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of language that one might expect of a mature writer. The same is true across all disciplines. However, by scaffolding writing instruction through the use of aids such as graphic organizers, mathematics instruction can be reinforced by the constructive nature of the writing process. Graphic organizers can easily be developed for any number of mathematical concepts and procedures. Moreover, by the very act of developing a graphic organizer, a teacher often learns a great deal about how to improve the delivery of instruction. When mathematics is taught in the classroom, teachers do not just point at numbers but use language to explain the concepts symbolized by those numbers. The act of writing about mathematics allows students to take ownership of that same language so that they are able construct a more thorough understanding for themselves than they otherwise might.

Conclusion

The globalization of the world's economy and the ability to locate jobs anywhere in the world via the Internet has forced our population to be able to compete for these jobs on a worldwide scale; hence, our public education system must also compete with the education systems of other countries. Due to the ever-increasing technological demands of emerging job opportunities, math and science education has become critical to our ability to compete in the global economy. The level of mathematical reasoning and understanding in the graduates of our public school systems is a key area in which this country's public education system is lagging behind those of many other countries. Writing in the math classroom, though advocated for by the NCTM and other mathematics organizations, is often overlooked due to both the structure of our public education system and the time constraints that compliance with NCLB (2002) mandates has placed on this system. That writing is effective in the math classroom seems to be universally accepted by mathematics instructors who have used it. However, the presence of writing as a formal part of the math curriculum is currently lacking. Also missing are research studies

confirming the beneficial links between writing and the development of mathematical reasoning and understanding. Not only will making writing a formal part of the math curriculum provide a benefit to both students and teachers, it will also provide a much more ready venue for conducting research into the efficacy of writing in the development of mathematical reasoning and understanding.

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Personalized Professional Development through Coaching

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Abstract

One common role for literacy coaches is to provide literacy-related professional development for teachers. This is often a challenge for many coaches, as they work with both novice and experienced teachers who may be either open to professional development or reticent toward change. To meet the needs of all teachers, it is critical that literacy coaches utilize a wide variety of professional development formats. This article presents a variety of professional development approaches that can be utilized to meet teachers' literacy-related needs: demonstration lessons, book study groups, videotaped student observations, video-based self-reflection, intra/inter-classroom focused visits, lesson study, literacy content mini-lessons, and gallery walks. An overview and tips for the effective implementation of each approach are provided.

The professional development of teachers has the potential to impact student learning dramatically. However, this promise is largely unmet due to a lack of appropriate and effective professional development activities that meet teachers' needs. In a study reported by Hill (2009), fewer than 25% of teachers indicated that the professional development activities in which they had participated during the previous three years had impacted their teaching.

Literacy coaching, with its personalized approach to professional development, has the potential to positively impact student learning through individualization. Often, large groups of teachers participate in impersonal "workshops" presented by

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consultants from outside the school district. In contrast, coaching provides for a variety of professional development activities that have a more direct and immediate impact on teachers' work with their own students.

Following a presentation I gave on the coaching cycle and using demonstration lessons, one literacy coach in the front row raised her hand timidly and asked, "But how can I possibly do demonstration lessons with *all* the teachers in my building? The principal expects me to provide professional development to everyone, and I just don't have enough time!" The other literacy coaches in the workshop voiced similar concerns. They were overwhelmed with the professional development responsibilities of their current roles and were looking for alternatives and ideas. According to the coaches, there seems to be an unwritten "understanding" among many school administrators that literacy coaches "do demonstration lessons," among their many other responsibilities. Efforts need to be made to reframe the perception that literacy coaches "facilitate professional development," and this may or may not include the use of demonstration lessons.

In organizing professional development for teachers, literacy coaches must have a variety of activities available. While demonstration lessons can be one effective approach, there are many other professional development options that can meet teachers' needs. With a range of activities to choose from, coaches can differentiate professional development to best meet the needs of individual teachers. In addition, using a wide array of activities allows the coach to address the concerns of a greater number of teachers, in a variety of formats, including one-on-one coaching, small group activities, and large group activities.

Effective Professional Development

Much has been written about the characteristics of effective professional development. Researchers agree that for teachers to engage in effective professional learning opportunities, activities must meet certain criteria (Brandt, 1988), such as to:

- Be personally meaningful
- Be challenging
- Be developmentally appropriate
- Provide opportunities for choices and teacher control
- Build on teachers' prior knowledge and experiences
- Provide opportunities for social interaction with colleagues
- Focus on acquisition of effective strategies
- Be delivered in a positive and supportive emotional climate
- Be job-embedded and ongoing in nature

Professional Development Alternatives

As part of the coaching cycle, literacy coaches work collaboratively with teachers to identify instructional strategies or content in which the teacher would like to gain additional expertise. Once this focus has been identified, there is literally a plethora of possibilities for professional development activities to meet the goals that have been jointly set by the teacher and coach. Possible alternatives include:

- Demonstration lessons
- Book study groups
- Videotaped student observations
- Video-based self-reflection
- Intra/inter-classroom focused visits
- Lesson study
- Literacy content mini-lessons
- Gallery walk

Table 1 provides a brief overview of each of these professional development approaches. Each approach differs in the time commitment on the part of the coach and the teacher, the "safety" offered to the teacher, who may not quite be ready to be coached, the level of teacher expertise, and other pertinent factors.

Table 1
Overview of Professional Development Approaches

Approach	Format	Description	Developmental Level	Coach's Time Commitment
Demonstration Lesson	Individual	Coach presents a demonstration lesson in the teacher's classroom, with the teacher's usual students	All teachers	Intensive
Lesson Study	Small Group	Pairs or teams of teachers work together to study effective lessons and implement them in their classrooms	All teachers; very effective for mixed level teams	Light
Video-Based Reflection	Individual	Teachers view videotapes of their own teaching, using a viewing guide to support their reflection and analysis	All teachers; very effective with recalcitrant or novice teachers	Medium
Videotaped Student Observations	Individual	Teachers view videotapes of students working in their classes; tapes are analyzed to determine level of student learning, misconceptions, use of strategies, etc.	All teachers; very effective with novice teachers or those who do not wish to be observed	Medium
Intra/Inter Classroom Visits	Pair	Teacher(s) visit classroom(s) of peers within the same school or in different schools in order to observe instructional approaches	All teachers; very effective for mixed level teams	Light

Book Study Group	Large Group	Teachers read the same professionally-related book and meet informally to discuss the book and its impact on or relation to their teaching and/or students	All teachers; very effective for mixed level groups	Light
Literacy Content Mini-Lessons	Large Group	Short presentations by the literacy coach on topics related to the school's literacy goals and teachers' needs; like mini-lessons for teachers	All teachers; very effective for mixed level groups	Medium
Gallery Walk	Large Group	Progressive activity in which teachers brainstorm responses to reading-focused topic-focused questions for further study	All teachers; very effective for mixed level groups	Medium

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When selecting an approach, coaches should ask themselves:

- Which approaches suit the personality, needs, and developmental level of this teacher?
- Which approaches have been used successfully or not successfully with this teacher in the past?
- Which of these approaches best fits the goal set with this teacher?
- Is this goal a focus for more than one teacher? If so, is there an approach that can effectively meet the needs of multiple teachers at the same time?
- What is the time frame in which the goal needs to be met?

Demonstration Lessons

As previously discussed, there seems to be a belief amongst administrators that literacy coaches are “supposed to” provide demonstration lessons for teachers. Although they may not be the best choice for every teacher, or the best way to meet all professional development goals, demonstration lessons can be an effective form of individualized professional development when judged so by the literacy coach.

Demonstration lessons are most successful for the in-class modeling of specific instructional strategies and approaches. For example, a coach may model a lesson using a think-aloud strategy to support students’ metacognitive development. Similarly, the literacy coach may model an effective guided reading lesson or ways to support students’ use of visualization or other comprehension strategies. In general, after the literacy coach has demonstrated the instructional strategy or approach for the teacher, the coach returns to the classroom at a later date to observe the teacher’s attempts at implementing the approach. Though time consuming, the follow-up observation is critical in order to provide ongoing support to the teacher, to assure that the strategy/approach is being correctly implemented, and to provide feedback and encouragement for the teacher’s attempts.

In preparing for a demonstration lesson, the literacy coach should provide the teacher with a lesson plan in advance. It is helpful to have students wear name tags so that the coach can call on them by name. Goals for the observation should also be established with the teacher. This is often overlooked, but it is imperative for a successful observation. What specific techniques, strategies and behaviors should the teacher look for as the coach is teaching? Providing the observer with an observation guide helps to keep the teacher focused on the instructional strategy or approach that is being demonstrated; without it, the teacher's attention may wander or he or she may focus on non-essential behaviors of the students or the coach.

One way to ease the time demands of demonstration lessons is to provide a demonstration lesson for more than one teacher at a time. For example, the entire third grade team of teachers may observe the coach during the same demonstration lesson, and then return to their own classrooms to try the approach. The coach would then follow-up with each teacher individually for implementation observations and feedback.

Some important points to consider when choosing demonstration lessons as a method of professional development are:

- Lessons must be **do-able** by the teacher (materials, time, students, etc)
- Lessons should include only **one or two new** instructional strategies or approaches
- **Lesson plans** and materials should be given to the teacher **in advance** for review and discussion
- An **organizer should be used to focus** the observers' **attention** on the important aspects of the demonstration lesson

Book Study Groups

We have all learned from Oprah Winfrey the power of the book club for encouraging reading. Establishing a book study

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group (or several different book study groups) with teachers is one way that literacy coaches can encourage teachers to engage in discussion about professional issues, teaching approaches, new curricula, and new instructional materials. One factor that may lead to teacher burnout is a feeling of isolation. A book study group provides camaraderie and is a powerful approach for building a professional community in a school. Book study groups are also a relatively inexpensive professional development option, and these are easily customizable to meet local needs. Groups of five to seven teachers seem to work the best in most circumstances.

Coaches may select the first book to be read or provide several options from which the participants can choose. As the book group progresses, participating teachers should be encouraged to share books they are reading on their own and to suggest books for future book study sessions. It is critical for teachers to feel ownership of the group. The coach should not be the leader, but an equal member of the group—the goal is to develop a professional climate in which all opinions are valued and accepted.

A key to a successful book study group is to establish a meeting and reading schedule that suits the needs of the participants. Some groups may meet before school once a week; others may meet after school once a month. There is no set time frame or structure. The best structure is one that facilitates the participation of the members. Furthermore, technology has now made it possible for book study groups to meet online instead of “live.” Shelfari.com is a website which allows participants to display a personal “bookshelf” containing books they have read or are currently reading. Participants share book reviews and can rate the books they have read. There is also a function which allows groups to get together to discuss books. Participation is free and does not require an extensive amount of technological expertise.

Tips for successful book study groups:

- Always buy at least one or two more books than you have

group members; usually there will be others who will want to participate after the group has started.

- Establish a set meeting time and schedule, and try not to reschedule or cancel meetings, or the group members will not feel that the activity is valued.
- Involve the school administrators (principal, vice-principal, etc.) and the support faculty and staff (librarians, speech pathologists, secretary, nurse, paraprofessionals, etc.) to encourage the development of a professional community that includes everyone in the building.
- Do not take too long to read the book—getting the pace right is important to avoid boredom.
- Plan and implement one book study group as a model, then step back and become a participant and facilitator for the next ones. Build ownership of the participants.
- Provide snacks.
- Explore online resources for coaches wishing to begin book study groups, such as one at http://sde.state.ok.us/Teacher/Master/pdf/Tips_Study_Group.pdf.
- Use book study kits from groups such as The National Council of Teachers of English, which has ready-made kits complete with books and discussion guides. See: <http://www.ncte.org/kits>.

Videotaped Student Observations

When working with teachers who are very wary of coaching, coaches find that using videotaped student observations is an effective strategy. Rather than focusing on the teacher, the coach videotapes students in the classroom as they are working during a lesson taught by the teacher. Think of this approach as the “fly on the wall” that can hear and see what the students are doing and saying when the teacher is not present. This approach places the focus on the students, not on the teacher, and alleviates many teachers’ anxieties about being observed or about being videotaped.

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Following the observation period, the teacher and coach both watch the video and discuss what the students are doing. For example, the focus might be on questions such as: Were the students on task? Did their questions indicate that they understood the reading selection? Were they using effective strategies? This line of questioning will inevitably lead to a discussion of the instructional strategies being used by the teacher and the impact of these strategies on student learning, providing an opportunity for the coach to help the teacher self-reflect on his/her teaching. If the teacher watches the video alone, using a video reflection guide sheet is an effective tool for focusing his or her attention on relevant aspects of the video. We all know that students often are not themselves when they are aware they are being recorded. To alleviate this problem, there are many very small cameras available that look more like cell phones than video recorders. Many schools are using these small devices, such as the Flip Mino Digital Camcorders (www.TheFlip.com), which record up to one hour of video, plug directly into a computer using a built-in USB connection, and have built-in, easy-to-use software—all for about \$160!

Video-based Self Reflection

Teachers who used video based a significantly larger portion of their analytical reflections on evidence, including samples of student work, test scores, and videotaped records. Teachers who did not use videos based their reflections on evidence less than half as often as those who used video, basing most of their reflections on subjective feelings, inferences or memories. (McConnell, et al., 2008, p. 40)

Just as the mini camcorders can be used to record students, teachers can also use them to record, watch, and reflect on their

own teaching. Inexpensive tripods are available for the mini cam-corders, so teachers can easily set them up and record their own teaching. Teachers and coaches can watch the videos and discuss the teachers' use of the instructional strategies that have been the focus of other professional development activities. This approach works especially well following a demonstration lesson. A teacher can watch his or her attempts to implement the instructional strategy, then adjust subsequent instruction accordingly. The videos can easily be e-mailed to the coach for feedback.

One benefit of this approach is that the coach does not have to be in the classroom at the exact time of the lesson. Using videos allows the coach to watch the video at a time of his or her choosing instead of being tied to the teacher's class schedule. As with the "live" observations, a video self-reflection guide sheet can be utilized in order to provide focus while watching the video. A guide can also be used to support the teacher's identification of evidence and to lead to identification of specific action steps for applying what is learned through the video reflection.

Intra/Inter-Classroom Focused Visits

Too often, teachers do not get enough time outside of their own classrooms to see what their colleagues are doing. Rather than the literacy coach being the center of every demonstration lesson, making use of the expertise of other teachers in the school or in a neighboring school makes a lot of sense. The coach should keep a list of teachers who have expertise in particular instructional strategies, who have their rooms effectively organized, or who have established useful routines for students, etc. The coach should also be prepared to:

- Keep notes during observations and make a list of teachers who might be excellent resources for other teachers
- Facilitate visits between teachers; match teachers according to personalities and observation area(s)
- Set up a pre-visit meeting with the observing teacher to set

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- up goals for visit, discuss observation strategies, etc.
- Set up a post-visit meeting to support reflection by the observing teacher and to help plan to implement observed strategies

This approach is specifically called a “focused visit” because there is always a goal for the observation. The observing teacher is interested in learning more about using a specific method of instruction, and the observation is organized around that goal. It is often helpful to provide the observing teacher with an observation guidesheet, similar to the one the coach would provide to the teacher who is observing during a demonstration lesson. Providing a focus to the visit is critical for its success.

Intraclassroom observations, within the same building, are often easier to schedule than interclassroom observations, which require visits to other school buildings; however, both can be highly effective. Intraclassroom observations assist in the development of a professional community in which the expertise of all members is recognized and shared. If scheduling is an issue in arranging a classroom visit, the coach can often assist by teaching the observing teacher’s class in order to provide time for that teacher to observe a colleague.

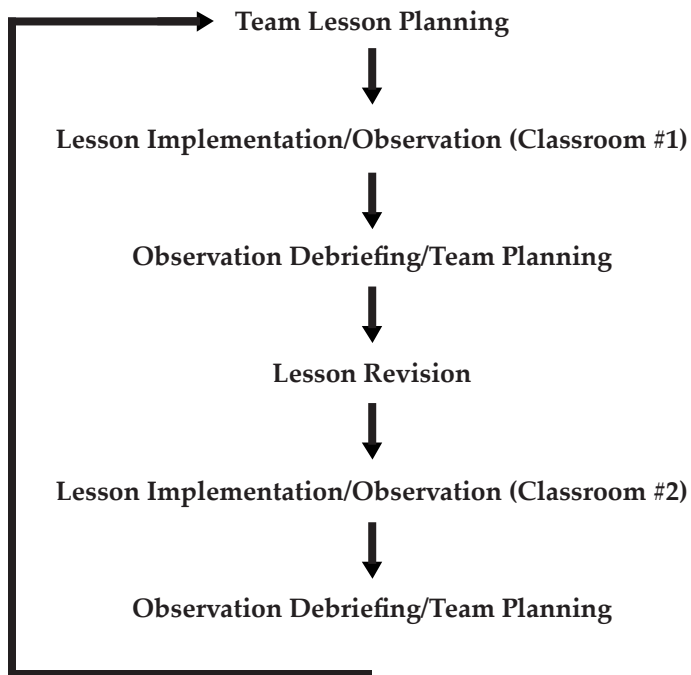
Lesson Study

In a lesson study, teachers work in small teams to develop and teach lessons. There are a variety of approaches to lesson study, but in general, the process is a cycle with steps similar to those in figure 1.

The literacy coach’s role in the lesson study process is to encourage the development of teams, to assist team members in learning and implementing the lesson study process, and to provide support, materials, and resources as the lesson study process progresses. In addition, when invited by the team, the coach may participate in observations and team planning sessions.

Lesson study is an effective approach for building professional

Figure 1



communities, as it supports the development of instruction-focused, collegial relationships amongst faculty. This approach also allows the literacy coach to make effective use of faculty expertise and to support professional development without being directly involved in every step of the approach. For additional information about lesson study, see Audette (2004) or <http://www.tc.edu/lessonstudy/lessonstudy.html>.

Literacy Content Mini-Lessons

Most literacy coaches are very familiar with the idea of teaching mini-lessons to students. The same approach is also highly effective when used to present instructional strategies to teachers. Mini-lessons should be about 15 to 20 minute presentations, related to specific literacy topics, and scheduled on a regular basis

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to encourage participation. For example, sessions may take the form of a brown-bag lunch meeting on the first Wednesday of every month or every other Tuesday for 20 minutes after school. Topics for the mini-lessons can be identified through needs assessments, observations, teacher surveys, or assessment data.

The key to making the literacy content mini-lesson effective is to focus on topics that are practical and hands-on—things that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms the next day. As with many of the recommended professional development approaches, these informal meetings help to develop a professional community, as teachers are meeting voluntarily to share ideas. It is not necessary for the literacy coach always to be the presenter; teacher expertise should be shared as well.

The coach's role in the literacy content mini-lesson approach is to:

- Collect and review data to identify potential topics
- Plan a practical schedule that will build a learning routine
- Watch for the teachers to implement the strategies that have been shared so their efforts can be reinforced

Gallery Walk

The “gallery walk” is a commonly used teaching strategy that actively involves students in discussion, consensus building, and writing. It can also be adapted for use as a professional development activity for teachers. In a gallery walk, the participants rotate from station to station, responding to questions that have been posed in advance at each station.

The gallery walk can be utilized to share and discuss ideas to address a literacy-related challenge. For example, if the teachers have agreed to focus on fluency development this semester, a gallery walk activity might involve them in answering questions such as:

- Why is fluency important to reading comprehension?

- How do students develop fluency?
- What instructional strategies and materials do you use to develop fluency?
- What questions do you have about supporting students' fluency development?

Small groups of teachers move from chart to chart, reading the responses left by the previous groups, discussing the posed questions, recording responses, and sharing information.

A gallery walk provides the literacy coach with information regarding professional development goals and assists in identifying the current status of related teacher knowledge and understanding of the issue. In addition, the sharing process itself provides professional development for the teachers as they share ideas, strategies, and materials. The questions raised during the process can also provide the focus for subsequent professional development activities.

Conclusion

Regardless of the professional development opportunities that are selected, coaches will find that one activity tends to lead to other activities. For example, a book study group may lead to a gallery walk, a videotaped self-reflection may lead to a demonstration lesson, or a literacy content mini-lesson may lead to a focused visit to another classroom. Death by demonstration lesson need not happen to you if you are a literacy coach. There are numerous options for effective and personalized professional development that can meet the needs of the teachers in your school.

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Developing a University Literacy Coaching Certificate Program

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Abstract

This chapter describes the development of a literacy coaching certificate program for a liberal arts university in western Wisconsin. The impetus for the program was the expressed need from statewide educators—and the common concern of the state reading association—that literacy coaches should be trained literacy specialists first, and then receive extended training in providing literacy coaching for classroom teachers. From a review of literacy coaching preparation programs, three components emerged as critical entities of the university's training program: Systems, Literacy Processes, and Relationships. The certificate program was developed by a team of seven educators in Wisconsin in representing various positions of literacy leadership and expertise. The definition of a literacy coach is included. The development of specific goals and objectives for each component of Systems, Literacy Processes and Relationships is presented.

The saying “necessity is the mother of invention” is true for the development of the literacy coaching certificate described herein. Educators in various capacities in the state of Wisconsin came together at the invitation of the lead author to develop a

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literacy coaching certificate program for Viterbo University in western Wisconsin, a small Franciscan liberal arts university. The impetus for the program was the expressed concern from several educators across the state, including the state reading association, that literacy coaches needed to be trained as literacy specialists first, and then to receive extended training in providing literacy coaching for classroom teachers. The lead author spent an academic semester examining various literacy coaching programs nationally, interviewing literacy coaches in a variety of settings and programs, and observing literacy coaching in progress. The results, presented to the university's graduate studies committee, were summarized as follows:

Three types of training programs for literacy coaching preparation emerged:

1. Reading First coaches, (NCRFTA, 2005; Cummins, 2006)
2. Literacy coaches trained through formalized models such as the Comprehensive Literacy Model at the University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR, 2009)
3. District and /or school literacy coaches not associated with any federal or formalized program (Moxley, & Taylor, 2006; Toll, 2005; 2006; Walpole, & McKenna, 2004)

The national Reading First legislation requires the use of literacy coaches. However, because Reading First funds were distributed to schools that were targeted as deficient, literacy coaches began their work with teachers who were associated with failure. This created issues of distrust and resentment. In such schools, literacy coaches may not have had time to undergo extensive training before beginning their coaching positions. In contrast, literacy coaches who participated in a model like the Comprehensive Literacy Model at UALR (2009), were able to be part of a team from their schools or districts. This team approach to literacy coaching had endorsement from school and district leaders, providing a more positive professional learning network within

the district. Finally, numerous school districts did not qualify for Reading First funds, nor did they have the financial means to train literacy coaches through the implementation of comprehensive models. As a way to extend professional growth and increase student achievement, these districts assigned literacy professionals to positions as literacy coaches. The knowledge, training and experience of these literacy coaches may range from very limited to very extensive. Also, while some literacy coaches may have had extensive training in literacy, their training and experience in professional development may be limited.

It was predicted that graduate students likely to enroll in a literacy coaching certificate program at this particular university would represent a combination of the three types of coaches, with more enrollees from the third type. The graduate studies committee granted approval for the development of a literacy certificate program with specific criteria. Participants must have a teaching license, a master's degree in education, and a current literacy specialist license from Wisconsin (or a license with comparable requirements from another state). The program would include a 6.0 credit course plus a 3.0 credit practicum to be completed within two years of completing the course.

Second, upon review of the literature available about literacy coaching, it was apparent that three components seemed to be critical entities of a training program: Systems, Literacy Processes, and Relationships (Casey, 2006; Dozier, 2006; Glickman, 2002; Hasbrouck, & Denton, 2005; Killion, & Harrison, 2005; Kise, 2006; Lyons, & Pinnell, 2001; McAndrew, 2005; Moxley, & Taylor, (2006); Toll, 2005; 2006; Walpole, McKenna, 2004). It was obvious that in numerous school districts, not only had educators been assigned as literacy coaches without in-depth training, but they also had superficial understanding of how school systems functioned. It would be important, therefore, to advocate for training that would not just prepare the coaches for the system, but would also lead to preparation of the systems for the coaches.

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A second area of training would include an advanced understanding of literacy processes. The literacy coach would be the contact person for assisting teachers of children with the most challenging, persistent literacy problems. It was imperative that the literacy coach possess a deep understanding of how children learn to read and the pedagogy necessary to attain it.

Finally, it was evident that literacy coaching was about interpersonal relationships. Literacy coaches would be required to scaffold teachers representing a variety of teaching, learning and organizational styles. Developing a relationship built on trust would allow that relationship to be sustained. Literacy coaches would need to know how to develop positive and effective relationships. Also, literacy coaches would have to know how to have difficult conversations and to develop the courage to continue conversations even when initial ones were not successful.

The Committee Process

The development committee was comprised of seven educators, including the lead author, who led the committee. It represented literacy specialists, consultants, and coach trainers trained through the comprehensive literacy model in Arkansas. Individuals for the committee were chosen because of their common theoretical grounding and expertise in one or more areas of literacy leadership. The selection process also ensured that all areas of the state were represented. Theoretically, the committee members shared the Vygotskian perspective that learning is socially mediated and is most successful when achieved within the learners' "zone of proximal development" (Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The diverse experiences, broad knowledge, and various personalities represented on the committee could attend to the unique needs of the coaches in training. The candidates who completed this training would need to be able to meet the needs of the numerous districts that did not qualify for federal monies, such as Reading First, and could not afford to engage the entire district in a university-based collaborative, but wanted to increase

student achievement by providing ongoing professional development for their teachers. A private consultant/literacy coach trainer worked with the development committee for three days, articulating the definition of literacy coach and helping to create goals for each of the three components (systems, literacy processes, and relationships). In subsequent meetings during the next academic year, the committee developed the objectives, instructional activities, and assessment procedures for each goal. Six of the seven committee members agreed to team-teach during the implementation of the first course, and each committee member was allowed to teach the components with which she felt most comfortable and had the most expertise.

Definition of a Literacy Coach

The creation of a definition for the term “literacy coach” required intensive conversations. Every word of the definition mattered and was mindfully added or deleted. The process of “wordsmithing” was difficult and required discussion as participants got a more thorough understanding of others’ views and ideas. However, it proved beneficial as participants come to know the views and ideas of others in a more thorough way. While the process required time, the committee began to meld as a truly collaborative team. It was recognized that the definition would set the standard for the future of what trainers would do and what participants would know and do when they became literacy coaches. The following definition of a literacy coach reflects the beliefs of this university in preparing literacy coaches and correlates with the position statements of the International Reading Association and the National Council for Teachers of English (IRA, 2004; 2006). The following definition was created by the committee for the University certificate program, and is not to be considered the only definition for a literacy coach:

[A] literacy coach is a reading specialist who is trained to provide explicit professional

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development to teachers in a variety of situations. Coaching is educator-centered in that a coach uses demonstration, observation, and engaged conversations related to specific teacher beliefs and classroom practices. Theoretically, within the constructivist view of teaching, the coach facilitates conversations with the educator within his/her “zone of proximal development.” The ultimate goal is to foster teacher growth and independent reflection that supports optimum learning for all students.

Goals

Specific goals and objectives were developed for each of the three components of systems, literacy processes and relationships.

Systems

The systems goals addressed the complexities of change, global views of a school district, district and school cultures, demographic factors, and need for congruency.

Systems Goal 1: Articulate an awareness of the political aspects and underlying culture of school systems: A beginning discussion of general principles related to organizational culture and group dynamics would provide an understanding of the systems in which coaches would work:

- Understanding change
- Continuing improvement
- Examining research of effective schools
- Recognizing the political structures within schools
- Identifying visible and invisible school cultures
- Recognizing who owns and uses “the power”
- Identifying positive and negative school leaders
- Articulating the role of family and community involvement

- Knowing the beliefs and values of the school
- Developing awareness of national and state academic and teacher standards

Systems Goal 2: Identify contextual factors that affect learning within a given community. The coach needs a global awareness, not just of a classroom, a grade-level team, or a school pod, but an understanding of the building, district, system, and community, including:

- Teacher demographics
- Demographic trends
- Demographics of the district and community
- Triangulation of assessment data
- Data-driven leadership and decision making
- How to create a positive literacy-rich environment
- Positive and/or negative current and recent staff development initiatives
- How to provide time for job-embedded staff development
- How to develop a job description

Systems Goal 3: Navigate within the school system to advocate for literacy instruction that facilitates PK-12 learning. This goal was created with the realization that school districts are imperfect and cannot accomplish all desired goals. The coach would need the skills to advocate for as much quality literacy learning as possible. Topics for this goal focused on developing the coach as a leader:

- Advocacy for effective seamless literacy instruction
- Self-efficacy (one's own personal beliefs about one's job and one's expertise)
- Development of self-empowerment
- Congruency in PK-12 literacy instruction
- Collaboration with other teachers
- Understanding leadership styles and personalities

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- Collaboration with principals, other administrators, and leadership teams
- Knowledge of the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) continuous improvement model
- Ultimate impact on student learning

Literacy Processes

An effective literacy coach needs to be secure in his or her understanding of the complex nature of reading and writing and have a strong knowledge base of effective literacy practices to be able to lead, guide, support and build teacher capacity. The literacy processes goals are founded on the best practices of intentional teaching and differentiated learning to develop self-regulated learners. A literacy coach who is grounded in the Vygotskian principles (Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978) is aware of the teacher's current literacy understanding and creates learning conditions to expand the teacher's thinking and practices.

Literacy Processes Goal 1: Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of literacy processes and learning theories. The literacy coach will most likely be the most knowledgeable person in the school, or perhaps even the district, about the complexities of literacy learning. It is imperative that the coach possess PK-12 knowledge of literacy acquisition and skills:

- Current professional literature, research and trends in literacy instruction
- Understanding of scaffolding and the "gradual release of responsibility" model
- Processes of literacy acquisition
- Literacy processes within the content areas
- Variety of group structures
- Brain-based learning and teaching
- Reciprocity of reading and writing
- Principles of differentiated instruction
- Importance of metacognition

Literacy Process Goal 2: Guide the teacher in identifying and implementing effective literacy practices. Moving from the theoretical knowledge of Goal 1, the emphasis in Goal 2 is the knowledge and implementation of practical strategies for accomplishing the work of literacy. The literacy coach guides a teacher in various ways depending upon the needs of the teacher and his/her current understandings and instructional practices. A literacy coach adopts a variety of approaches acting as a thinking partner with the teacher. A literacy coach may adopt different stances: questioning/probing, reflective listening, modeling and providing constructive and specific feedback. This component is not dependent upon a scripted program, but takes a child-centered approach based on developmental characteristics of readers and writers. The literacy coach equips teachers with the knowledge base of comprehensive literacy programming based on current research of best practices:

- Creation of a positive, literacy-rich environment
- Discussion of how to differentiate instruction
- Development of guided and probing questions
- Guidance in how to listen and respond reflectively
- Techniques for modeling and observing
- Journaling techniques
- Creation of coaching using DVD and other audio/visual technology
- Reflection upon one's own coaching by analyzing audio/visual technology
- Close examination of student work
- Attention to consistency, continuity, communication and change

Literacy Practices Goal 3: Guide a teacher toward independent reflection and generative application of instructional practice. The third goal of literacy processes shows the progression from the theoretical and practical to techniques for doing the work of the coach. One responsibility of the literacy coach is to develop reflective

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practice among teachers. Coaches model reflective practices and encourage teachers to reflect on their own teaching and student learning. New understandings developed within team meetings and professional learning communities lead to enhanced instruction and learning among teachers and their students. Reflecting upon practice, the learning and application leads to continuous improvement and positive growth. To attain this goal, literacy coaches were provided with examples, demonstrations and techniques in:

- Reflective journaling
- Guiding conversations
- Using e-mails and discussion boards
- Organizing and leading professional learning communities
- Techniques for collaborative knowledge building and consensus
- Facilitating book studies

Literacy processes Goal 4: Guide a teacher to understand on-going assessment, data analysis, and interpretation to support instructional decisions. The final goal of literacy processes attends to the essential techniques of assessment. The use of data is a key element of coaching. Data is collected from multiple sources, such as observational notes and formative and summative assessments. Together, the coach and teacher review data in order to make instructional decisions. The coach guides the teacher in the use of data to inform instruction through analysis of student work samples and observational notes. Use of multiple assessments lends itself to balanced decision making about students' needs, and it can inform next steps for instruction:

- Data based on developmental characteristics of readers and writers
- Observational data
- Formative and summative assessments

- Progress monitoring
- Multi-tiered assessment
- Student evidence
- Evidenced-based instruction and coaching

Relationship Goals

The necessity for positive interpersonal relationships within coaching was evident. The literature abounded with calls for healthy, vibrant relationships that would allow colleagues to work together, and accomplish achievement goals for their students. However, while a multitude of checklists and techniques for developing relationships could be informative, the uniqueness of the individual relationship between a coach and teacher can not be reduced to checklists and techniques. Each coach/teacher relationship is dependent upon, and fostered by, the unique characteristics of each human, as well as the unique circumstances and background each brings to the relationship. It was imperative that quality training for literacy coaches provide an understanding of how relationships work, how positive, collaborative relationships are built, and how to repair relationships that have been damaged or compromised. To achieve this goal, coaches would need to come to know themselves: their strengths, their needs, their styles, and their prejudices. The coach would need to practice relationship skills through the use of realistic scenarios. The practice would include focusing thoughts and developing the language to further the relationship with the teacher. The coach would need to be the one to take the lead in developing and maintaining positive relationships with teachers.

Relationships Goal 1: Communicate effectively with teachers, administrators, families, school boards and other stakeholders in a variety of situations. The first goal addressed basic communication skills with a variety of stakeholders:

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- Principles of adult learning
- Brain-based communication
- Use of language and word choice to convey accurate information
- Use of non-verbal cues
- Recognizing cognizance of the audience
- Organization and use of technology to advance discussions
- Use of protocols and norms for group work
- Acknowledging and using the family and community culture
- Knowing the philosophy of the school and district
- Disbursing the teacher impact on student learning

Relationships Goal 2: Identify and implement various ways to develop effective, collaborative relationships. The second goal extended communication skills to the fulfillment of sustaining collaborative relationships:

- Knowledge of team building and sustainability
- Identifying and expressing the value of others
- Showing professional respect
- Demonstrating the ethics (confidentiality and trust) of coaching relationships
- Fostering self-efficacy and self-esteem in others
- Facilitating the teacher's development of inner fortitude
- Becoming active and effective listeners
- Developing facilitation skills
- Navigating difficult conversations

Relationships Goal 3: Assist a teacher in identifying specific strengths and challenges and provide appropriate support. While the first two goals provided knowledge and skills about developing interpersonal relationships, the third goal provided practice in utilizing those skills in supporting teachers:

- Having focused conversations about one's teaching
- Being in the teacher's moment, i.e. scaffolding the teacher at his or her "point of reality"
- Providing appropriate professional resources and materials
- Utilizing self-assessment tools (e.g. Leaderships Assessment Profile, Meyers-Briggs, etc) to identify one's own style

Coaching Objectives

While attending to the goals and objectives of the three components of the program (systems, literacy processes, and relationships), the instructors collectively agreed that, given the information reviewed about successful literacy coaching, the coaches trained in this program must be able to achieve specific objectives (Casey, 2006; Duncan, 2006; Glickman, 2002; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; McAndrew, 2005; Toll, 2005; 2006; Walpole & McKenna, 2004). The intent was that the training would provide a clear model for each of these objectives. The following six objectives were targeted for use:

- *To work closely with classroom teachers to analyze and improve classroom practice.* Coaching involves the knowledge of systems, but it is in the building of relationships that fosters enduring collaborative work between a teacher and a coach.
- *To build capacity for literacy leadership.* Coaching requires knowledge of specific tenets of leadership and specific tools for moving forward.
- *To demonstrate best literacy practices.* Coaching requires knowing the best literacy practices and learning how to demonstrate them. Several trials may be necessary before effectiveness is attained.
- *To coach in an apprenticeship style that mirrors the workshop/apprenticeship model of literacy instruction.* Instructional demonstrations benefit both the classroom teacher and the coach as they enter together into an instructional event that

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is unique and new every time.

- *To create systemic change within the school culture by building the individual's internal capacity for supporting the change process.* Coaching involves working oneself out of a role in "center stage" to being a supportive "stage hand." This is accomplished by nurturing the creative talent of the individual teacher to bring about change within himself/herself.
- *To meet with teachers to listen to and learn about their concerns, strengths, needs, and efforts.* When coaches take time with teachers to understand fully how teachers operate in the classroom, and understand the rationales behind their actions, teachers will more likely reciprocate with their best efforts.

Roles of the Literacy Coach

The abundance of resources available provided ample information for delivering the required content knowledge. One key resource that allowed the participants to clearly understand the various roles of the literacy coach was one developed by the National Staff Development Council in Killion & Harrison's *9 Roles of the school-based coach* (2005). In it, they described nine roles available to effective reading coaches. They are: catalyst for change, classroom supporter, curriculum specialist, data coach, instructional specialist, learning facilitator, mentor, resource provider, and school leader. Each is discussed separately in the following paragraphs.

Catalyst for Change: How does one get teachers to think critically? The coach needs to keep current with the leading edge of knowledge about curriculum, assessment, knowing how to lead, and modeling continuous improvement in their own work. This means making practice public and encouraging evaluation by asking leading questions:

- How did this become practice?

- Whose needs are served?
- What is working? How do we know?
- What isn't working? How do we know?
- What will we do?

Staying current in research and practice demands that the coach, as a catalyst for change, focuses on vision, fosters continuous growth, and does not act alone. Sometimes the coach “plants seeds,” but he or she always seeks to maintain a balanced role.

Classroom Supporter: To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction, the coach uses a gradual release of responsibility by modeling or demonstrating, co-teaching, observing, and giving feedback, and then allowing the teacher to operate independently. Modeling is appropriate when something is new or if a teacher feels uncertain, disbelieves, or is concerned about how it will work with a particular group of students. It is also useful when an exemplar of the practice is needed. Demonstration is appropriate for visitors, making sure the demonstration is not overdone or taking student responsibility away from the teacher. Observing and offering feedback require meeting prior to observation in order to determine a focus for the observation. Meeting after the observation is necessary for debriefing and making decisions about next steps. A gradual release of responsibility requires that the coach does NOT remain a “crutch” for the teacher, but leaves the teacher in charge of student learning.

Curriculum Specialist: Consistency in the alignment of curriculum leads increased student learning. When teachers determine the essential questions and big ideas that are most important for students to understand, teaching is more effective and efficient for maximizing student learning. All teaching needs to be intentional.

Data Coach: The role of the data coach is to examine student achievement, perceptions (those of students, teachers and administrators), demographic information and data from processes, as well as products. Data are used to understand student strengths and weaknesses, and to identify instructional strategies, struc-

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tures, programs, or curriculum changes that may be required. Data are also used to determine the intervention needs of struggling and advanced learners. Many coaches use an intervention assessment wall to display both formative and summative data. Multiple indicators are used to determine student proficiency.

Instructional Specialist: In the role of instruction specialist, the coach aligns instruction with curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. Coaches know how students learn, and they model effective ways to differentiate instruction. The coach helps teachers know various instructional processes and ways that students learn. The coach co-plans, observes, and offers feedback about instructional strategies, classroom management, and student performance.

Learning Facilitator: As a learning facilitator, the coach expands the teacher's knowledge base and empowers the teacher to consider decisions that will increase instructional effectiveness. An effective coach constructs the learning process based on teacher need, school initiatives, learning preferences, and state standards, while honoring the uniqueness of adult learners. A coach leads conversations around teaching and learning issues and works with the principal and school improvement team to craft effective professional development opportunities. The literacy coach resists taking a "one size fits all" training approach.

Mentor: At the first level of support, the coach acts as a mentor to the novice teacher by providing access to district and school expectations and routines as well as to the resources available. In addition, the coach provides on-the-spot assistance. At the second level of support, the coach helps teachers expand instructional strategies, differentiate for diverse learners, and manage routines. At the third level of support, the coach works with the teacher to set professional goals for continuous improvement, reflect on practice, and implement curriculum. The challenge for the coach as mentor is to balance the time spent with the teachers who need each level of support.

Resource Provider: The coach gathers audio, visual, electronic,

and paper resources, makes them available to coaches, and highlights the relevance of particular information. The coach also encourages sharing of resources between teachers. The coach never gives the impression to teachers that because resources are offered, the teacher is a poor teacher and needs help. The coach remembers and reminds teachers that a resource is only as good as the people using them, and encourages an attitude of healthy critique.

School Leader: The school leader role does not refer to the principal/supervisor role. The purpose of this role is to work collaboratively with the school's formal leadership to plan, implement, and assess school change initiatives that ensure alignment, and focus on intended results. The teacher is the focus for change. Coaches must use skills of questioning, research, relationship building, and communication. They must also always take care that this role does not take over a role that should be held by others. In this role the coach will champion for quality teaching and learning by engaging in the following activities:

- Serving on school improvement teams and district committees
- Leading school committees
- Being a liaison to central office staff
- Coordinating services to teachers
- Facilitating discussions of significant school change while keeping the focus on students learning
- Facilitating alignment among various school improvement strategies

Conclusions

The first literacy coaching certificate program for this private university began in summer 2008 with the framework described in this document. Six of seven committee members who conceived and organized the framework taught the first 6.0 credit course in

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a team teaching format. Each student in the cohort had a master's degree in education, and a Wisconsin literacy specialist license. One important advantage is that the committee members had developed into a unified team during the development of the program. This camaraderie carried into the implementation of the program with the same unified focus. By the time of implementation, committee members had realized the unique strengths of their colleagues, and they were able to defer to each others' expertise. This committee was able to work on this program without personal rancor or professional jealousy.

Upon completion of the summer course, each student continued with a 3.0 credit coaching practicum and was matched with a course instructor for supervision. As the committee reflects upon the work of the first year, the lessons learned are being used to reshape parts of the course and practicum. New texts and studies are continuously being published, which will redefine the program as it proceeds into the future. The initial cohorts of students can also assist in recommendations for improvement. Hopefully, the process of refining never ceases, lest the training becomes trite and unresponsive to the reality of the participants.

The complex educational world of the 21st century requires careful attention to how children become literate. Congruent programs and collaboration amongst educators is essential. For children to attain the high literacy levels needed for this century, teachers must be continuously learning and honing their own skills, and the cadre of literacy coaches and supporters behind them need to be as knowledgeable as they can be.

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